

# St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122044
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314203
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Timothy Bristow HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Adamson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Teresa Morrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2001
<b>School address</b>	Beanfield Avenue Corby NN18 0AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 202491
<b>Fax number</b>	01536 407912

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the standard of teaching, the progress made by pupils, the quality of care, guidance and support, and pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors, pupils, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, the school's self-evaluation documents were scrutinised and samples of pupils' current and previous work were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Brendan's Catholic Primary School is of above average size. In 2007, the infant and junior schools amalgamated to form the primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is below average. Pupils are drawn from a wide area across Corby and surrounding districts, with many from wards of significant social and economic disadvantage. However, the proportion of pupils who have free school meals is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Brendan's Catholic Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral and social development underpins their excellent behaviour. It is nurtured by an excellent curriculum and by the very high quality of care for pupils' safety and well-being. Children enter the Reception class with standards that are in line with national expectations. They receive an outstanding start in the Reception classes and continue to make good progress throughout their time in school. In consequence, they achieve standards that are well above average by the time they leave Year 6.

Pupils' achievement is good. By Year 2, results for 2007 show they reach standards that are exceptionally high in writing and mathematics. This has been the trend for some time. Progress is not as rapid in Key Stage 2, but has accelerated considerably in recent years. Results for 2007 show that standards overall are well above average. Standards in science are lower than those in English and mathematics because the progress made by pupils is slower in this subject. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the teachers and the team of teaching assistants enable these pupils to make good progress. As one parent reported, 'I have a special needs child in school. All the staff have been excellent with him and he feels he is special because of this.'

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and talk with great enthusiasm about their English and mathematics lessons. The school takes great care to foster pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. In assembly, younger pupils demonstrate that they are able to reflect on and contemplate challenging ideas such as the reasons behind supporting charities in Africa. They demonstrate great respect, consideration and care for others. Attendance rates are average. The school has a range of procedures to improve attendance, but these are insufficiently focused on remedying the reasons behind absenteeism. Pupils have an extremely responsible attitude to their own safety and take great care to ensure that others are safe too. They report that incidents of bullying hardly ever happen and they talk very confidently about how to get help if they need it. Pupils take part in regular exercise and excel in local sporting competitions. A recent policy to ensure that older pupils choose healthy snacks is proving successful as many now do so. Pupils have good opportunities for taking some responsibility for the running of the school and are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. For example, they report that they appreciate the suggestion boxes they use in school and that adults are interested in their opinions and ideas. Pupils' good basic skills and their outstanding behaviour mean they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Teaching is good overall with some outstanding features. In Key Stage 1, the progress of pupils is very rapid because of some outstanding teaching. In Key Stage 2, teaching has improved considerably since the junior school inspection. Teachers have worked very successfully through the amalgamation of the junior and infant schools to ensure that standards and progress do not decline. Teachers make good use of assessment information to pitch work at the correct level for most pupils. Pupils demonstrate an excellent attitude to their learning, and teamwork and independence skills are well developed. Recently, a range of procedures has been adopted to improve learning, such as providing pupils with personal targets for improvement and encouraging them to judge how successful they have been in lessons. These procedures are not yet being used consistently in all lessons. The curriculum offers pupils outstanding opportunities to apply and practise English, mathematics and ICT skills in other lessons. A

comprehensive range of school visits, visitors and themed days, such as science days, excite and stimulate pupils.

Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the extremely caring and nurturing ethos of the school. As one parent reported, 'St Brendan's is not just a school but a community.' The school provides effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the gifted and talented. Groups of pupils who need additional support are well cared for because of strong links established with outside agencies. For example, school arranged for a speech therapist to work with a group of pupils on a weekly basis because it identified that this was a priority. Procedures for health and safety and child protection are rigorously applied. The school has recently introduced new measures to check more effectively on the progress of pupils. These measures have yet to have full impact.

The headteacher's strong leadership has maintained high standards of achievement and personal development. Improvements in teaching and learning have continued through the considerable disruption of amalgamation. In consequence, the school has demonstrated that it has outstanding capacity for future improvement. Other leaders in school demonstrate that they make a very effective contribution to the work of the school and are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are very knowledgeable and supportive. They have taken full advantage of training so that they are well prepared to hold the school to account for its work. The overwhelming majority of parents support and trust the work of the school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children in the Reception classes make excellent progress, particularly with their reading and writing skills. This comment from one parent sums up the views of many, 'My child is very happy and confident and enjoys school. We are very happy with St Brendan's and couldn't wish for a better start for him.' A highly skilled team is led expertly and children have an extremely exciting diet of activities that fully engages and stimulates them.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the rate of progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in science.
- Identify the underlying causes of absenteeism in order to raise the attendance rate.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Corby, NN18 0AZ.

Thank you for the help you gave me when I visited your school. You made me feel very welcome. If you remember, I came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. I enjoyed meeting you and thought you were extremely friendly and polite. You were excellent ambassadors for the school. I was pleased to find out that you all enjoy school so much. You are very kind and caring towards each other and feel extremely safe in school in the knowledge that an adult will always step in to help you if needed. You were very enthusiastic about the many exciting activities you receive. I know that you work hard and do well in your lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. In these subjects, you reach standards that are well above the levels typically found in other schools.

Your headteacher and the school governors have worked very hard to give you a good start to your education. Your teachers and teaching assistants take very good care of you and are continually looking for ways to improve your education.

I also think there are some things that the school could do better.

- Help some of the older pupils to do even better in lessons, particularly in science.
- Make sure that you all come to school every day.

You can help the school by trying your best to make sure that you come to school every day so that you do not miss any of the exciting lessons and activities on offer.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow HMI

17 March 2008

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