

# St Bernadette's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102229
<b>Local Authority</b>	Harrow
<b>Inspection number</b>	323605
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Earish

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	420
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pamela Singh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David O'Farrell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Clifton Road Kenton Harrow HA3 9NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8204 8902
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8905 0738

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school admits pupils aged 4 to 11. Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, with around two thirds from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is above the national average. However, the proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below the national average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, problems with speech and communication, or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to that found nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools' Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark. The governors manage a before- and after-school club. As a voluntary aided Catholic school, the school has close links with the local parish church and community.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Bernadette's is a good school which has secured rapid and sustained improvement since the last inspection. This is due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who is very ably supported by other senior leaders, managers and the governing body. They have helped to create a very strong ethos that is driving school improvement and raising standards and achievement. Parents agree and are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of their children's education.

One good example of the impact of the excellent leadership is the way in which the school has responded to the needs of the increasing number of minority ethnic groups, including refugee and asylum seeker families, who have recently moved into the community. This has been achieved by constantly adapting the provision to capture the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and to raise their expectations of what they can achieve. This has been recognised through the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Standards are above average overall and all groups of children are achieving well. Pupils make consistently good progress in lessons because teachers use assessment information skillfully to set work that corresponds to their varying needs and abilities. This was an area of concern at the last inspection. Pupils who have difficulty reading and writing and those who speak English as an additional language also make consistently good progress because of the excellent support they receive. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now achieving exceptionally well from well below expected starting points. This is another significant success since the last inspection. Data for pupils in the current cohort in Year 6 show they are well on track to attain even higher standards this year.

Achievement is good because teaching is of a consistently good quality and the outstanding curriculum captures pupils' enthusiasm and interest, whatever their cultural background. Leaders at all levels are constantly looking for new and creative ways to improve the quality of provision. For example, they have developed novel ways to capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning through the innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT), including combining digital imaging, music and text. This has a very positive effect on pupils' motivation and sense of self-worth and contributes strongly to their outstanding personal development and relationships. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently and show initiative are undeveloped in some lessons, as a result of which the rate at which pupils make progress slows.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and feel safe. Safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed, which helps to provide a safe and secure learning environment. Their personal development is excellent, and they are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. They behave exceptionally well and are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. There are excellent systems to track their performance so that teachers can identify underachievement quickly and deal with it. Older pupils have exceptionally good knowledge of their individual targets and what they need to do to achieve them. They say they find this very helpful because 'it allows you to keep track of how well you are doing'.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children achieve exceptionally well against the levels expected by the start of Year 1. They start school with well below average skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, and many speak little or no English. Most children now start Year 1 with abilities similar to those expected for their age and a good number are better than this. High-quality induction arrangements help children become familiar with day-to-day routines quickly. Personal and social development is excellent. Children show immense understanding and kindness towards each other and work and play together harmoniously. The impact of high-quality teaching and learning can be seen in the exceptionally good progress which children make in their communication, literacy and language skills. Children genuinely enjoy learning and discovering through play because adults encourage them to make their own independent choices. The adults are also extremely good at building on children's responses during these activities to develop and increase their language and communication skills. For example, a group of children carefully built Princess (the pet guinea-pig) a new home out of building blocks and then took great delight in explaining the importance of all the home's features including its ramp and car parking bay!

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

- Ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils to work independently and to use their initiative, in order to sustain rapid progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average overall by the age of 11 and well above average in English. Achievement is good. The vast majority of pupils make consistently good progress or better. They meet their challenging targets. This is due to the rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress and the work of the subject leaders in monitoring and supporting learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now achieving exceptionally well against the national expectations. This is an excellent foundation for future learning and progress and is much improved since the last inspection. Standards are broadly average by the age of 7 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the rate of progress in Key Stage 1 is increasing because pupils in Year 1 are now building well on their exceptionally good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are making rapid progress from their starting points at the beginning of the year. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have difficulty with reading and writing are also making good progress during lessons. This is because of the excellent support they receive. The most recent information on the tracking of pupils' progress across the school confirms that sustained improvement continues.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are firmly based on the excellent relationships that exist within the school. Pupils behave exceptionally well and are polite and courteous. Outstanding arrangements for their care ensure that they are very well aware of the importance of healthy eating, staying fit and avoiding unnecessary risks both in school and in the world outside. Pupils participate fully in games, physical education lessons and the wide range of clubs the school

offers. Their commitment to healthy eating and regular exercise is recognised through the Healthy Schools' Award. The very active school council contributes extremely well to the smooth running of the school. Older pupils help to run lunchtime clubs and prepare rotas for looking after younger children in the playground. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are able to reflect on who they are as individuals as well as celebrate their own and others' cultures. They make an excellent contribution to the community. Considerable sums of money are raised to support charities and to send books to schools and libraries in Sierra Leone. Attendance levels are satisfactory overall. The school works extremely hard to improve attendance and this is steadily improving year on year. The Breakfast Club offers a good start to the day and makes a significant contribution to improving both attendance and punctuality. Pupils acquire literacy, numeracy and ICT skills rapidly, and are given excellent opportunities to develop their enterprise and teamwork skills. As a result, they are extremely well prepared for later life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is effective because teachers know pupils well, have high expectations of them and plan work that matches their individual needs and capabilities. This is a great improvement since the last inspection and is due to rigorous monitoring by senior leaders and managers. Lessons are very well planned and managed so that pupils make consistently good or better progress. In the very best lessons pupils are enabled to work together and learn from each other. Tasks are interesting, enjoyable and challenging because teachers use a variety of teaching styles and methods. Assessment information is used successfully to identify, track and support pupils' learning needs and to set group and individual targets. However, there are occasions when teaching fails to exploit fully the pupils' ability to work independently or to utilise their skills to explore ideas for themselves. Consequently, the rate of progress dips, particularly for those pupils who work quickly.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Throughout the school there is a strong focus on the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. Learning activities are challenging, relevant and exciting because subjects are linked together thematically to increase the pupils' enjoyment of their learning. In most year groups children learn from first-hand experiences and enjoy a very wide range of activities to support their learning, such as cultivating seeds and plants, working in the environment and making home-made jam. The curriculum meets the needs of the many diverse groups within the school extremely well. 'Parent ambassadors' and language specialists ensure that children who are at an early stage of learning English have full access to the activities and understand the curriculum fully. The school has received the Inclusion Quality Mark in recognition of its work in this area of its provision. Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well through personal and social education and focused curriculum weeks, which give children excellent opportunities to develop their self-awareness, personal skills and aptitudes. They proudly represent their school in sporting, musical and local events and have many opportunities to work and learn with children from other local schools.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school's motto that 'No one in its care is left out' is seen in everything it does. Pupils themselves say they feel extremely happy and safe at school and are confident of having someone to turn to if they have problems. Their parents overwhelmingly agree. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust and are reviewed regularly. The school's very good knowledge of individual pupils and their families enables it to meet their specific needs very effectively. Academic guidance is excellent. Monitoring of progress is rigorous and tracking reflects the precise progress being made. The school uses this information extremely well to target support to all groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English. Pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are given high-quality support by the learning mentor and art therapist. This enables them to take a full and active part in all school activities. Older pupils have exceptionally good knowledge of their individual targets and what they need to do to achieve them. This is being extended across all classes. Children thoroughly enjoy attending the before- and after-school clubs because the staff are deeply committed to meeting the pupils' personal and welfare needs, which they do very well.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership at all levels has enabled the school to meet the needs of a rapidly changing community. They have created a common sense of purpose among all adults and have overcome considerable barriers to learning. Leaders have tackled the issues from the last inspection report extremely well, which has resulted in sustained improvements in many areas of the school's provision. For example, they have raised pupils' expectations of what they can achieve by providing them with interesting and challenging activities. This has resulted in rapidly improving standards and achievement. Community cohesion is outstanding. The school has successfully reached out to the wider community, for example, through the work of the 'parent ambassadors' who represent the views of the different ethnic groups. This has helped raise parents' expectations of what their children can achieve and given them confidence to be involved in school life. One Polish speaker wrote that 'The school's management always keeps in touch with foreign-language children...and we feel treated equally with others and not left to our own devices.'

The school has an outstanding capacity to improve. Rigorous school review results in actions that are very well focused on raising attainment and creating a proven track record of sustained improvement. These are underpinned by rigorous quality assurance procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and for tracking pupils' progress.

Governance is outstanding. The chair of governors has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the issues facing the school and is very well supported by a very active governing body that is diligent at holding the school to account for its performance. They also manage the before- and after-school clubs very well.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

**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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B**

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

18 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's RC Primary School, Harrow, HA3 9NS

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, and your views and opinions have given us a lot of helpful information. We thought you might like to know more about what we found out.

Your school is giving you a good education, but we could see that it is getting even better. Here are a few of the things we liked most of all.

- Your behaviour is outstanding. You told us that you really enjoy school and we could see that you do!
- Your headteacher and the teachers are all working together exceptionally well to make your school even better than it is.
- You are taught well, and when you find work hard you are given the right sort of help.
- You are very knowledgeable about staying safe and how to live healthily.
- You really enjoy taking on responsibility and are very effective at representing your classmates on the school council.

To make your school even better, however, we are asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently. This will help you to make even better progress in lessons.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and by listening carefully to your teachers' advice. We are sure that you are ready for this challenge!

Yours faithfully

John Earish

Lead Inspector