

St Bernadette Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102423
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	323640
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	460
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Simpson
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Moss
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	160 Long Lane Hillingdon Uxbridge UB10 0EH

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Inspection number	323640

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress that all groups of pupils make
- the strengths in care, guidance and support, and pupils' personal development
- the impact of recent improvements to the curriculum in art and design, history, geography and design and technology.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work, and from a scrutiny of the school's documentation and progress data. Inspectors also analysed the parent questionnaires and met with senior leaders, groups of children, staff and governors.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Its intake is ethnically diverse, and the proportion of pupils from homes where English is not the first language is average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery. A breakfast club run by the school is available on-site. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency's Primary Quality Mark and the Activemark.

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 Catholic Primary is a good school. It has a strong Christian ethos and provides a warm welcome to its pupils and families.

Children enter Nursery with skills that are typical of three-year-olds. Excellent Early Years Foundation Stage provision ensures that children in Nursery and Reception make good progress across all areas of learning. Although their progress in Years 1 to 6 is not always consistent across every class, pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good overall progress. Standards in mathematics, English and science are consistently well above average by the end of Year 6. A high proportion of pupils attain the higher than average Level 5. Pupils from minority ethnic groups attain similar standards to their peers. Pupils throughout the school reach good standards in physical education (PE). This is because of the very good and regular specialist coaching and teaching, and because pupils take part in many after-school activities and competitive sports.

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school is a very harmonious community in which boys and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds respect one another and work very well together. Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently good attendance levels and their attentiveness and participation in lessons. They behave exceptionally well and are considerate towards others. Pupils develop a good appreciation of different cultural traditions and beliefs. They grow in confidence and maturity and play a key role in shaping decisions and helping the school to run smoothly. Pupils are very well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave. As one parent wrote, 'When pupils leave St Bernadette they are happy, well balanced and have good manners to take with them.'

Teaching and learning are good. General teaching strengths include teachers' organisational skills, the planning of interesting activities and good pupil management. This ensures that pupils are engaged and cooperative, and that lessons can proceed at a good pace. Lesson planning meets the needs of different abilities and teachers use information and communication technology well to support teaching and learning. The experienced and well-trained support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Inspectors agree with senior leaders' view that sometimes pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the teaching. The evidence gained from looking at work in pupils' books shows that teachers sometimes accept work that could be better. It also highlighted that marking is inconsistent between classes and generally does not do enough to inform pupils about how they can improve their work.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' basic skills well. It ensures that pupils develop an exceptionally good understanding of healthy lifestyles and staying safe. A current school priority is to strengthen provision in art and design, history, geography, and design technology. The work carried out to date has improved teachers' subject knowledge and skills, and increased pupils' enjoyment and cultural development. There has been some improvement of standards and progress in art and design, which were judged inadequate during an Ofsted subject survey in 2008. These are now satisfactory. As yet, the school does not have enough information to determine how effectively the revised curriculum has impacted on improving standards in the other subjects.

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for vetting staff and safeguarding learners meet government requirements. Several parents particularly praised the way that staff work

with them to ensure that their children are well looked after. They also appreciate the friendly atmosphere and the fact that a breakfast club has been set up to help working parents. Improvements to assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress mean that the school can identify pupils at risk of falling behind and plan interventions for them. Much has also been done to help pupils understand what they are meant to be learning and to encourage them to assess their own learning. This good practice in using assessment to guide pupils toward improvement is not, however, followed through in the marking.

The headteacher, with good support from governors and the senior leadership team, continues to lead the school well. They maintain a strong focus on reaching very challenging targets and high standards in English, mathematics and science. Subject leaders are now playing a stronger role in developing provision and supporting their colleagues. However, subject and middle leaders' roles in monitoring and evaluating pupils' work is not yet fully embedded.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Leaders understand the diverse backgrounds of families and the local community, and work hard both to involve them in the school and to learn from them. The curriculum is also adapted to ensure pupils' develop a better understanding and appreciation of the wider community and of those further afield.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Close contact with families before children start school ensures that parents get involved and children settle quickly into the daily routines. Parents rightly feel that children are making good progress. As one noted, 'Since she joined the Nursery my daughter has progressed very well. She loves school, and the staff are brilliant!'

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress across all areas of learning and reach good standards. Exceptionally good teaching and strong teamwork ensures that they quickly become confident learners. Staff plan a wide range of interesting and challenging activities, indoors and outside, and ensure a very good balance between independent activities and those led by adults. Staff are skilled at questioning and developing children's understanding. Their very good observations and rigorous assessments mean that they know the children really well and keep a good track of their progress.

Nursery children quickly become engrossed in activities when they arrive. They discuss their learning with ease, listen well, sustain concentration and see activities through to the end. Work in the Reception classes builds very well on that started in the Nursery. The strong emphasis on developing children's basic skills is maintained. Direct teaching and small-group activities enable the key skills to be taught effectively. This was evident when children discussed the story of 'Chicken Licken' with their 'talking partners'. Teachers then helped them with their writing, providing them with good strategies for thinking clearly and constructing sentences. Good phonics teaching means that children are confident to build up words by sounding out letters.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are exceptionally well cared for. Staff's very calm approach and the way that they seek out opportunities to engage with children and praise their contributions, ensures that the children feel very happy and secure. Very good attention is paid to ensuring children's health and safety. The emphasis on children's personal and social development has a strong impact on their learning, enjoyment, and ability to form strong friendships.

Excellent leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure consistency and set a clear direction for the staff. Best practice is shared and children's progress and development is tracked very well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching challenges pupils consistently, and that marking is regular and provides clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work.
- Extend the role of middle leaders and subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating pupils' work, standards and progress.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
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 ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette Catholic Primary School, Uxbridge, UB10 0EH

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We found that St Bernadette Catholic Primary is a good school. You make good progress and reach high standards in English, mathematics and science, and are well prepared for secondary school by the time you leave.

You are very good ambassadors for your school. You are exceptionally polite, well behaved and hard-working. We saw you help the school to run smoothly and get on extremely well together. It was good to see you enjoying playtimes and lunchtimes together and eating healthily.

We found that provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is excellent. When we visited classes in Years 1 to 6, we also noticed that the staff teach you well and find lots of interesting things for you to do and learn. The sports provision is really good and it helps all of you to be fit and healthy and reach good standards in PE. The staff look after you well. They listen to your views and act on them. You know that staff will help you if you have any problems.

Your headteacher and other leaders lead the school well. They are always trying to make improvements to your school. We have asked them to help make sure that your teachers always expect the best from you and to check your work and learning more often. We have asked your teachers to mark some of your work more thoroughly and give you more information about how to improve it. You can help by doing your best and continuing to take good care of each other, so that your school continues to be a happy place.

Yours faithfully

Kathryn Taylor

Lead Inspector