

St Bernadettes Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111705
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	325440
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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)	227
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	Monsignor D C Hogan
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Cobbold
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cookgate Nunthorpe Middlesbrough TS7 0PZ
Telephone number	01642 310198

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Inspection number	325440

Fax number

01642 314801

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards throughout school
- the quality of teaching
- the application of basic skills across the curriculum.

Evidence was collected from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of governors, the senior leadership team, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and a group of Year 6 pupils. In addition, parts of lessons were observed, school documents, samples of pupils' work and the parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a below average sized school. It is situated in an affluent area where very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British with a very small proportion of pupils from other heritages. No pupils speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and Reception class. The school provides care for pupils in the breakfast and after-school clubs. The school has several recent awards, including, Activemark and Basic Skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Bernadette's is an outstanding school. It plays a pivotal role in the local community because of the excellent relationships with local groups and the ways in which pupils are involved in events to celebrate religious and other festivals throughout the year. Parents are delighted with the high priority given to their children's care and welfare. Comments such as, 'All children are made to feel important and special, listened to, kept safe and cherished', reflect the views of many. Children's attainment when they start school in the Nursery is typical for their age in all areas of learning. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils have made outstanding progress and achieved significantly above average results in national tests for the past five years. Current standards remain high and this is particularly well reflected in the very good quality of the topics of interest studied, which combine several subjects but always give a high priority to applying basic skills in a relevant context. For example, Year 6 pupils diligently applied their literacy skills in writing a persuasive letter to the Prime Minister, linked to an earth in space project. The application of basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is second to none. All pupils are treated equally as excellently reflected in the total commitment to support in lessons for those needing additional work to help catch up. In addition, a before-school mathematics club is oversubscribed with pupils enthusiastically practising their basic numeracy skills and timing how fast they can complete tasks. When necessary, individual pupils are supported on a one-to-one basis by their teacher before school officially starts. With their excellent grasp of basic skills and their impressive personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stages of education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils' views are paramount in consultations about ways of bringing several subjects together. Through the 'pupils' point of view group', meetings are held with the headteacher to draw up topics of interest such as fashion, earth in space and food glorious food. As a result, topics of mutual interest provide an excellent stimulus for outstanding learning and vibrant displays around the school. This contributes well to the excellent curriculum which is further enriched by many lunchtime and after-school clubs. Promoting an awareness of cultural diversity is tackled exceptionally well through the curriculum but also closer to home, through pupils' understanding of how to work and play with everyone, irrespective of their background. This can partly be attributed to the work done with pupils on a 'red card for racism' initiative. Pupils understand the need to keep fit and to eat healthily because of their studies in science about healthy food and through the considerable number of sports and games events held in and out of school. This provision is very well reflected in the Healthy School award. A Basic Skills award is justly deserved because of the high priority given to applying basic skills in creative and inspiring ways, for example, in the accounts of the work of Jenner and Pasteur by pupils in Year 6. Attendance is above average and reflects the pupils' considerable enjoyment of school.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Lessons are, at times, quite inspirational in the ways in which pupils are able to recall prior learning and demonstrate the next steps. Teaching is well focused. It makes sure that pupils understand what to do, for example, by involving them in explaining key features of different genres of writing, and by probing and well pitched questioning. Teachers give excellent support to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in this. There are highly effective resources to support learners, for example, bold displays showing key vocabulary, sentence

openers, connectives and punctuation; and prompts, such as balloons showing alternative verbs. Homework most effectively extends understanding and builds confidence.

Behaviour is excellent at all times in lessons and around the school. Parents are fulsome in their praise of teachers' 'dedication' and 'going the extra mile' for their children. Care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. Arrangements to safeguard pupils fully meet requirements. There are very effective systems to enable pupils with concerns to discuss their needs. Playtime buddies and 'friendship builders' ensure that children are supported and have someone to turn to if they are troubled. Pupils know how to adopt safe practices, for example, in traffic. Staff are trained to support pupils who may exhibit challenging behaviour. Assessment is outstanding. Pupils are familiar with their targets for improvement because they are beginning to be used to check their work. There is excellent involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work, and that of their peers, against clear criteria. Parents also are fully aware of their children's progress.

Leadership and management by the headteacher are inspirational. The distinctive vision for the direction of the school and the attention to continual improvement has yielded consistently excellent outcomes for pupils over several years, especially since the last inspection. Senior staff provide excellent support and encouragement and take charge of their areas of responsibility firmly, constantly striving for improvement. Teamwork is strong and expectations are high. Self-evaluation accurately, if somewhat modestly, evaluates the school's work and ensures that everyone is involved. Governors are well informed and provide very good practical support in school as well as providing a useful link to the local community. Community cohesion is excellent. Careful planning and evaluation of provision ensures there are extremely effective partnerships with other schools in the locality, for example, with a photography course. Further afield, there are links with Jerusalem and actions to support children who suffered as a result of the Tsunami. The school demonstrates through its accurate self-evaluation that it has made an important and beneficial contribution to cohesion through its outstanding provision which has had a major impact on pupils' understanding of the needs of others and in their ability to value diversity. The school's ethos and promotion of equality is outstanding as is its capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are typical for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Children quickly acquire social skills and confidently approach adults who they know will help them. Children enjoy the well planned activities, such as counting on and matching dominoes. Nursery children enjoyed singing while those in Reception enthusiastically practised sounds in an adult-led session. Children behave very well, follow instructions and know the daily routines. They are eager to help to tidy up when it is time to put equipment away. Children make good progress because teaching is good. Consequently, by the end of Reception most achieve above national expectations in all areas of learning. Learning and development are good. The well resourced outdoor area has the potential for exploration and investigation but sometimes there are missed opportunities to extend the older children's independent learning. Children are well managed and supervised because staff implement established routines consistently. Assessment procedures are developing well and comprise a detailed record of their learning, known as a 'learning journey', using photographs, examples of their writing, and drawings and comments by parents and staff. Parents welcome the opportunity to be involved in these records of progress. The welfare of

the children is promoted exceptionally well. Checking facilities is given a very high priority and ensures that children are safe at all times. Risk assessments are visible for all to see. Children settle quickly into the Nursery because they have met their teachers before starting school. Leadership is good. There is a strong sense of teamwork and there is effective liaison with Year 1 to ensure children have a smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn independently in the outdoors area.

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?	1
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?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1

The quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

2 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS7 0PZ

Thank you all for the splendid welcome you gave when inspectors visited your school recently. It was quite awe-inspiring to see all the magnificent work you have been doing displayed throughout school. Many of you must be very talented artists and writers. I have judged your school to be outstanding in almost every respect. I would be grateful if you could thank your parents for their comments.

This is what is outstanding:

- you work very hard and achieve exceptionally well in the tests you take, but the work you do day-by-day is equally excellent
- behaviour is excellent and those of you with responsibilities around the school carry them out brilliantly
- the curriculum helps you to apply your basic skills and learn about many events in the world
- everyone is fully included and you have a very good understanding of life in other cultures and the traditions and celebrations that take place
- some of you really enjoy coming to school early for the maths club and breakfast club
- all the staff in school work very hard to ensure you are happy and very well motivated.

There is very little that your school needs to do to improve. I have asked your teachers to give the Reception children more opportunities to be outside, learning to choose activities for themselves.

Good luck to you all and continue to enjoy your time at St Bernadette's.

Yours faithfully

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector