

St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112348
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337909
Inspection dates	15–16 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Moran
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Douglas
Date of previous school inspection	October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of available inspection time was spent in direct observation of learning. Fourteen lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plans and self-evaluation, along with reports from the School Improvement Partner. Policies and documents scrutinised included those relating to safeguarding, child protection and community cohesion. In addition to questionnaires from staff and pupils, 63 questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement overall, with a focus on achievement in writing, mathematics in Key Stage 1 and on that of boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which pupils feel safe, adopt healthy lifestyles and are prepared for future economic well-being
- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment across the school in accelerating progress in writing, engaging boys and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of care, support and guidance on improving attendance and supporting pupils deemed to be more vulnerable
- the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders in identifying and tackling weaknesses such as writing.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. An above average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number speak English as an additional language and even fewer are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is well above average. A well above average number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual start and finish in Reception and in Year 6. The school has the local authority Inclusion Chartermark, Healthy Schools Award and Activemark Gold.

An acting headteacher was appointed in January 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Bridget's is a good school. It provides a very caring and supportive environment underpinned by strong Christian values. The school ensures that all pupils, whatever their background or circumstances, are supported and enabled to achieve well. Pupils thrive in the positive atmosphere created by staff. They feel safe and secure and behave well. Their enthusiasm for school is reflected in the regular attendance of the vast majority, although poorer attendance of a very few pupils means that attendance is average. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy that is seen in their enthusiasm for healthy school lunches and in the high numbers that take part in additional sporting activities. Pupils contribute well to their own school community, for example through their role as play leaders at lunchtimes. Activities in the local community are extensive and bring pupils into contact with a wide range of local people. However, pupils' understanding of people from backgrounds, cultures and religions different from their own both nationally and internationally is less extensive.

Pupils enjoy learning, and achievement is good because they are well taught. A good curriculum gives pupils plenty of opportunity to practise and improve literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in many different stimulating contexts. Lessons are usually well matched to pupils' different needs but occasionally more-able pupils are not fully challenged. Attainment is average overall and improving rapidly. It is strongest in mathematics and has improved significantly since the previous inspection because of the close attention to improving the teaching and assessment of mathematics. Attainment in writing, although not as strong as that in mathematics, is beginning to improve as a result of the school's focus on engaging pupils, especially boys, in talk, reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are very well supported by staff.

The school's improvement in many aspects of its work since the previous inspection demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. The acting headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaker areas. Staff and governors work well as a team and share the acting headteacher's determination to raise standards. Recent improvements in the systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress are helping to raise standards for individual pupils. Leaders are not yet analysing this information closely enough to be fully informed of the effectiveness of

teaching and learning on all groups of pupils, for example the more able, across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment overall, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons more-able pupils are fully challenged and know what more they are expected to achieve
 - refining systems of monitoring pupils' progress further to inform leaders better of the effectiveness of teaching and learning on all groups of pupils.

- Improve pupils' understanding of people from other cultures, religions and backgrounds nationally and internationally by:
 - implementing the school's vision for community cohesion more extensively and developing further the means of monitoring its impact.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are developing into confident learners. They listen carefully, join in whole-class and paired discussions well and settle quickly to tasks. They rise to the high expectations set by teachers and present their work carefully. Most pupils are capable of working independently of the teacher and they enjoy carrying out their own research. Pupils benefit from having clear targets that they say help them to focus on the things they need to improve.

Pupils from all different backgrounds and circumstances make good progress in relation to their starting points and achieve well. There are variations between the progress of girls and boys from year to year but no overall pattern. Progress in mathematics is good and attainment has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Progress in writing is accelerating and attainment is rising but not as strongly as in mathematics. The school's assessment data and pupils' current work show that the overall rising trend in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is continuing despite a dip in results in 2009. Most of the oldest pupils are on track to meet or exceed challenging targets.

Pupils enjoy school, they like their lessons and making friends with others. Pupils talk with advanced knowledge about the importance of a balanced diet and of exercising regularly and many are highly committed to a healthy lifestyle. Participating in the democratically elected school council prepares pupils to be good citizens of the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have a strong sense of how to behave and treat others and they form very positive relationships with other pupils and staff. Their knowledge of the immediate locality and its culture is good but of wider communities within the diverse nature of modern society is relatively weak. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships help pupils to develop into confident learners. Staff plan interesting and relevant activities that help pupils to learn at a good pace in most lessons. Teachers make good use of ICT to help stimulate and support learning. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of lessons. Accurate ongoing assessment helps teachers to set challenging targets for pupils and to plan tasks to match pupils' different abilities. However, occasionally more-able pupils are not moved on quickly enough, nor are they made fully aware of what more they could achieve in a lesson. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's work. In Year 6 pupils gain a great deal from using success criteria to scrutinise and comment on each other's writing. Marking is regular and gives pupils much useful praise and guidance on what to improve. Occasionally, teaching is satisfactory because the pace of learning is slower.

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. Learning is planned around themes and topics that interest pupils and productive partnerships with many providers ensure that pupils experience many stimulating visits or visitors. Consequently, pupils enjoy improving their basic skills in many different contexts in a well-focused way. Lower-attaining pupils receive additional support to boost their progress. More-able pupils are identified and additional challenge is planned into many, but not all, lessons. A programme of personal, social and emotional learning is meaningful to all pupils and helps them to develop into sensitive and considerate individuals. The very good range of extra-curricular activities is very popular with pupils.

The school pays very close attention to the welfare of each individual pupil to ensure that all pupils are happy, safe and secure in school and making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well-targeted support, planned in effective partnership with local agencies. Guidance for pupils identified as more able is not yet fully systematic across the school. Pupils joining the school at

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

different points are helped to settle in quickly. Strong and effective links with the local high school prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. The school is working well in partnership with the local authority to help improve the poor attendance of a very small number of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher sets high expectations of staff and herself in driving up attainment and improving the quality of provision. She is well supported by senior and middle leaders, staff and governors. Teaching is monitored robustly and areas to improve and develop are identified. Systems to monitor pupils' progress are in place and are continually being improved to suit the needs of the school better.

Assessment information is used effectively to set challenging targets for the school. Senior leaders use the tracking information with class teachers to identify underachievement of individual pupils quickly. Systems are not yet refined enough to inform leaders fully of the impact of teaching on all the different groups of pupils across the school, including the more able. A clear improvement plan sets out the right priorities. Well-focused in-service training and performance management for all staff have led to improvements in mathematics and writing in particular.

Governors know the school well and are very supportive of the school's inclusive approach which ensures that all pupils, whatever their circumstances and background, are happy in school and make good progress. They are well focused on pupils' performance and support the school in its endeavour to ensure that gaps in performance are closing. Governors bring a good range of expertise and a number are closely involved in the school on a regular basis. Their first-hand experience of the school brings a helpful insight to its effectiveness so that they are well informed of its strengths and where the priorities lie. Governors ensure that a suitably high priority is given to pupils' safety and that arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are robust and meet current requirements. All staff receive regular training and updates on the arrangements for child protection and a number of governors have undergone training.

The school's positive commitment to promoting community cohesion is reflected in the policy statement and the curriculum activities that provide pupils with good opportunities to understand the diversity of their local community and to a lesser extent the global community. The school is in the early stages of developing links with schools further afield in the United Kingdom and internationally and has not yet developed a formal means to evaluate the impact of the policy on pupils' knowledge, understanding and sensitivities.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception classroom is a safe, secure and welcoming place where children experience a good start to their school life. Each child is known well and staff provide a lively and exciting environment for children's learning. Whether it is through searching for Teddy in the class cave or making sandcastle cakes outdoors, children have fun. After starting school with levels of development that are generally below those typical for their age, they make good progress and most move to within the expectations for their age by the start of Year 1. Children develop good levels of personal and emotional development, making friends and cooperating with others while also becoming independent. They confidently make choices. During a phonics session, children showed a good understanding of letters and sounds and many showed a secure and at times advanced level of development for their age in reading and writing. They are aware of number and its use in counting, measurement and shape. Most have good physical skills and are increasingly confident to express themselves in music, art and role play.

The provision is effectively managed. It is well resourced and children benefit from a good range of books, equipment and play resources that meet their needs. The needs of individual children are met as a result of the staff's generally good knowledge of each child. The assessment of children when they start school is, however, too cautious and does not always reflect the skills children bring from home. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support. Links with parents and carers are productive and contribute to children's overall educational development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of responses from parents and carers were supportive of the school. Parents and carers are particularly supportive of teaching that they feel meets their children's needs and helps them to make good progress. Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive views. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and found effective systems in place to support individual pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school has good systems in place to seek the views of parents and carers and is working on developing further ways of involving them in supporting their children's learning. A very small number of parents and carers are concerned that their views are not listened to. Inspectors found that the school is keen to hear the views of parents and carers, for example the acting headteacher has formally consulted parents and carers on their views and is currently seeking ways of improving communications even further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bridget's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 175 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	48	30	48	1	2	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	35	56	25	40	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	41	33	52	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	48	32	51	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	44	33	52	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	38	36	57	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	48	33	52	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	37	36	57	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	44	34	54	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	25	33	52	8	13	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	32	36	57	6	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	33	39	62	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	44	32	51	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bridget's Catholic Primary School, Egremont, CA22 2BD

Many thanks to you all for making the inspection team welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to many of you and seeing you all hard at work in lessons. We found St Bridget's to be a good school. You make good progress and achieve well because you are well taught. You achieve especially well in mathematics and you are starting to make better progress and raise your attainment in writing. This is because the well-planned curriculum gives you more interesting things to write about and the targets you have help you to focus on what to improve. You behave well and feel safe and secure in school because your leaders and governors give a high priority to safety. You make a good contribution to your school and the local community. It was good to see the play leaders at work at lunchtimes and to hear about the many community activities you are involved in, such as the choir performing for older people. Your knowledge of how to stay healthy is admirable and the high numbers of you who enjoy extra sporting activities and healthy school lunches is highly commendable.

The leaders and governors who manage your school do a good job in recognising what is going well and what more needs to be done. They have agreed with us that there are important things that need to improve. These are:

- to raise attainment overall, especially in writing, by giving those of you who are capable of doing even better some really challenging activities where you have to think very hard and by keeping a more careful check on how well you are doing
- to improve your understanding of people from other cultures, religions and backgrounds nationally and internationally.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at St Bridget's, working hard to do your best for yourselves and everyone else in the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith
Lead inspector

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