

# St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111355
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	378286
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Cox

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernadette Letissier
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Moor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Sherbourne Road Ellesmere Port CH65 5EW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils from each year group, school councillors, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. There was a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, progress data and the school development plan. An analysis of 107 parent and carer questionnaire responses was made together with staff and pupil questionnaire responses. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teachers' expectations of what pupils can do in lessons are sufficiently high given the range of pupils' abilities.
- What evidence there is to show that pupils are making sufficient progress in their learning, given their starting points.
- How well the school analyses data including that used to set targets for pupils' performance to raise achievement.

## Information about the school

St Bernard's is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school where the very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that seen nationally and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is almost double that seen nationally although those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with that seen elsewhere. The number of boys and girls is the same overall although there are marked variances in these proportions across year groups. The current headteacher was not at the school at the time of the last inspection. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School status.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school that provides exceptionally well for its pupils. Teachers and other adults demonstrate an impressive, caring attitude and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure that all pupils get the most out of their time at school. Pupils arrive with skills and attributes that are generally well below those expected for their age. Strong gains are made in their learning and they achieve outstandingly well, leaving Year 6 with above average attainment overall. This is made possible by high quality teaching, particularly in the later years of Key Stage 2. Here, teaching is outstanding. Supported by a good curriculum, pupils encounter engaging and challenging opportunities for learning that successfully match the levels of abilities of all pupils. Pupils are happy and speak glowingly of the school and the teaching they receive. Every available space in this bright well-ordered school is used for learning. Pupils receive outstanding additional learning support from adults in classrooms and in other areas allocated for small groups and one-to-one teaching. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Leaders and managers at all levels pursue excellence in everything they do. Morale and ambition for the school are high and help secure improvements. The quality of teaching is closely monitored by senior leaders and teachers. They are relentless in the pursuit of further improvement and use new technologies to accelerate learning, such as video feedback in classes to support pupils in their next steps in learning. Teachers provide accurate feedback to pupils based on reliable assessments; consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work. However, there is some inconsistency in how effectively assessment is used in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2, which results in some unevenness of progress. As a consequence, it does not support progress in learning as well as it could. Leaders and managers are aware of this because of accurate self-evaluation procedures and are beginning to bring about improvements using, as an example, the stronger practice seen elsewhere. The school has improved markedly since its last inspection and demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the assessment procedures are consistently applied throughout the school by:
  - adopting the best practice seen in Years 5 and 6 that provides regular and informative marking detailing pupils' next steps for improvement

- revisiting work that requires correcting so that pupils can learn from their mistakes.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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Pupils experience good, and very often excellent, teaching in lessons and consequently, learn very well. They are attentive, polite and behave exceptionally well because expectations and routines are well known to all. This allows learning to proceed unencumbered and at a rapid pace. Lessons are vibrant and meaningful and well targeted to meet the range of pupils' abilities. Time is not wasted. Pupils are involved in improving their learning, for example by requesting activities that challenge them each morning as they arrive in class to register. Progress in lessons is consistently good and very often outstanding. This leads to outstanding achievement overall by the time pupils leave in Year 6, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, achievement is good overall and provides well for further acceleration in Key Stage 2.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They say there is never any bullying. On the rare occasions when some feel hard done to by others, pupils know who to turn to for support and comfort. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect towards each other, adults and visitors. They understand the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle and generally make wise choices from the food on offer. The school provides appropriate guidance for those who bring a packed lunch. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility such as by becoming play leaders, school councillors and representatives on action groups for important school elements including the environment, well-being, behaviour and teaching and learning. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is improving but comparatively less well developed. Attendance has improved year-on-year and is now average when compared with national figures. The school does all it can to reinforce to parents and carers the importance of the regular attendance of their children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and evidenced by the caring approach of pupils in line with the school's Christian character.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is dynamic and engaging and is the driver of outstanding achievement. Teachers make excellent and imaginative use of new technologies. For example, when a higher attaining group of pupils were taken out of class to be supported by another adult, the classroom teacher had prepared a video clip that praised them for the work they had done in a previous lesson and reinforced the objectives for that lesson. The pace of learning is brisk and secures the engagement of all pupils. Pupils know their individual, challenging targets and constantly strive to achieve them. Marking and feedback to pupils are good overall. Although they provide information to pupils on their next steps for learning, the quality is inconsistent across classes. The deployment of other teachers, assistants and learning mentors is well targeted and helps ensure all pupils achieve outstandingly well. The curriculum is well structured and meets the needs of pupils. There are common themes and approaches across year groups that build upon pupils' key skills and which are monitored regularly. Clubs and activities after school are varied and well attended. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Excellent links with a range of external agencies ensure that pupils, particularly those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, receive timely specialist support when needed. Highly effective transition arrangements help pupils move smoothly from one stage of their education to the next.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders, managers and governors share ambitious plans and aspirations as a result of the committed determination of the headteacher. The school does not rest in its pursuit of further improvements. The management of teaching and learning is outstanding and has helped develop a collegiate approach where all staff strive to secure the highest-quality opportunities for the pupils. Individual teachers are observed by colleagues, development points are discussed and recorded, and best practice replicated at every opportunity. The governing body holds the school to account to good effect and fully meets its responsibilities. It works well with the school to ensure each pupil and adult is highly valued and that all feel they have an equal opportunity to contribute and succeed. Safeguarding is good with particular strength in the procedures for working with external partners to ensure pupils' safety, well-being, care and overall achievement. Parent and carer views are

gathered periodically and responses analysed and acted upon, particularly when suggestions lead to improvements in the provision for pupils. The promotion of community cohesion is good with particular strengths within the school where positive images of a range of cultures and recognition of various religious festivals around the world are evident.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Given the children's generally low starting points, the vast majority of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress across most areas of learning. The development of boys' writing is a priority and highlighted in the setting's action plans. Children settle in well to their daily routines and staff are always there to ensure they feel happy, safe and ready to learn. Relationships are good and have a positive impact upon children's learning, development and attitude. Children work and play well together and are offered a wide range of practical activities both inside and outside, although the transition between these activities is not always seamless. Improvements to the quality of the outdoor provision are being sought by the school. Staff are deployed effectively to support children's learning and development. Observations and assessments are used to good effect when planning the next steps of learning, based on recently introduced procedures. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities taking into consideration the development of the children and their ability. Leadership and management of the setting are good. The recently appointed leader shares a common sense of purpose with other adults to ensure all children have opportunities to learn and develop well. Links with external agencies are firmly established and called upon when appropriate.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned a questionnaire. All of those who responded considered that the school keeps their children safe and that the teaching is good. Inspectors agree, although they consider the quality of teaching to be outstanding overall. A very few comments were made regarding the provision of a shelter for parents and carers when waiting to collect their children. These comments were shared with senior leaders and managers.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bernard'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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	63	39	36	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	75	70	32	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	62	38	36	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	49	50	47	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	68	64	39	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	52	47	44	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	46	55	51	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)	47	44	55	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	45	54	50	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	49	51	48	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	47	51	48	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	58	42	39	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	65	35	33	2	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH65 5EW**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you and thank those of you who spoke to us in meetings, at playtime and lunchtime. Your school is outstanding. Your teachers provide you with excellent opportunities to learn and you make every effort to succeed in all of your lessons. We were impressed by the way you use new technologies and often record your lessons and other activities you get involved in. Your behaviour is excellent. You show great respect and friendship towards one another, your teachers and visitors. The school prepares you very well for the next stage of your education.

We noticed that some teachers are better than others when marking your work and suggesting to you how to improve. To make your learning and progress even more successful we are asking your school to use these better examples in all classes so that you can all achieve even more during your time at school.

Congratulations for helping your school to become outstanding. We are confident that you will all continue to work hard in your lessons and make the most of every opportunity the teachers provide for you, including the already impressive use of computer technologies that support your learning.

Well done and all the best for the future!

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox  
Lead inspector

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