

St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117466
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358143
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Doneo
Headteacher	Mark Holdsworth
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers. They held meetings with members of staff, groups of pupils, a parent and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's plans for improvement, minutes of meetings of the governing body and a range of policies and procedures. The questionnaires returned by 89 parents, 112 pupils and 16 members of staff were scrutinised.

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

- Pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups was analysed to assess whether good achievement is being sustained.
- The consistency of teaching and learning across all key stages was evaluated.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in setting the school's strategic direction and holding it to account was evaluated.

Information about the school

St Teresa's is an average-sized primary school. It is over-subscribed and very few pupils leave or join at times other than usual. Almost all of the pupils are of the Catholic faith, although they come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. About a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but not all are at an early stage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national figure, as is the proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs. Nursery and Reception children work and play alongside one another in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. The governing body manages a breakfast club which admits up to 15 pupils each day.

The school has 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Teresa's is a good school which has a positive, supportive and inclusive ethos that underpins everything that it does. Pupils, parents and staff say that they feel valued and proud to be part of its community. Importantly, the school also gives its pupils a good education. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and build well on this in other year groups. In 2010, the results of national tests for 11-year-olds were significantly above average and the best the school has ever attained. These results confirmed a strong upward trend in pupils' achievement over the past three years. All pupils, including those who find learning more difficult or who speak English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve as well as one another. One parent commented, 'The school takes equal opportunities very seriously. They ensure no child is disadvantaged'.

Pupils' academic success is more than matched by the considerable strengths in their personal development and well-being. It is abundantly clear that pupils enjoy school a great deal; it shows in their enthusiasm in lessons and in the exceptionally high rates of attendance. Their behaviour is also excellent. Pupils play energetically and sociably at break times, but in lessons and in assemblies they show that they understand exactly how they should behave on more serious occasions. At a Remembrance Day assembly during the inspection, every single pupil was silent for two minutes as they thought about those who died for their country. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful, respectful and responsible; they look out for one another and take delight in learning. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds play and work together harmoniously.

Pupils and parents were unanimous in saying that the school keeps everyone exceptionally safe. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are excellent and enable them to manage any difficulties they may have and to thrive as learners.

Teachers put considerable thought into planning lessons that successfully engage and enthuse the class. At its best, teaching is crisp, confident and highly effective because pupils are challenged in many ways, kept on their toes and motivated to do as well as they can. Not all teachers are equally highly skilled practitioners, however and taken overall, teaching has a good impact on pupils' learning. There are some variations in the way teachers assess pupils' learning during the course of the lesson, the way they ensure that all participate in discussions and in the precision with which pupils' work is marked. The headteacher and senior staff know that ironing out inconsistencies in teaching will be vital to make sure that pupils' progress continues to accelerate.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has instilled a common sense of purpose and shared goals. The school's plan for improvement focuses on the key areas that will continue the drive forward. Subject action plans also identify suitable priorities for

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future development. However, ways of judging the success of the plans are only loosely linked to improvements in pupils' learning and progress and as such, lack a sharp edge. The governing body plays a full and active part in school life. Staff greatly appreciate the interest that the governing body takes in their work, and the support and challenge that it provides.

Since its last inspection, the school has moved on in all aspects of its work and has established a secure track record of improvement. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate, and aspirations are high. The school is well placed to continue to improve. The areas for improvement shown below represent steps that need to be taken to fine-tune the school's work and bring greater consistency and rigour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strive to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best in order to accelerate pupils' progress still further by:
 - refining the teachers' techniques for assessing pupils' understanding during lessons
 - making marking more precise and targeted so that, where appropriate, it gives clear guidance to pupils on what to do next to reach their targets
 - sharpening teachers' skills in managing whole-class question and answer sessions to ensure that all pupils make a contribution.
- Bring greater rigour to subject leadership by:
 - including quantifiable, time-limited targets in improvement plans that will enable leaders to evaluate the impact of actions on pupils' learning and progress
 - holding subject leaders to account for the progress pupils make in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils generally make good progress in lessons. This is partly because teaching is good, but equally because of their positive attitudes and disposition towards learning. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding because the teacher pitched her questions and the tasks she set for the pupils at exactly the right level. The pupils also did well because they rose to the challenges and were genuinely interested in the topic. Taken overall, pupils make good progress from their broadly average starting points when they begin school. However, the rate of progress is not even across all year groups, reflecting variations in the quality of teaching. Work in pupils' books and the information the school has about pupils' attainment confirm that attainment remains above average and that achievement is good. The school keeps a close eye on the relative performance of different groups of pupils and this helps to ensure that no group of pupils makes slower progress than others. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well, for example.

Within the school, pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils support younger ones, and some take part in the citizenship programme, for example, coming to school early in order to do jobs for class teachers. Although some pupils have

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been involved in initiatives in the local area, this aspect of their contribution to the community is not as strong. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. A particular strength is their enthusiasm for sporting activities. The bulging trophy cabinet shows how successful they have been in events and competitions. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education and life in the wider world. Excellent attendance and pupils' ability to cooperate and work well together make a strong contribution to this.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

There are considerable strengths in the teaching, especially in Key Stage 2. At its best, teaching is inspiring. Lessons are vibrant, exciting and carefully planned so that pupils' prior learning is built on systematically and at a good pace. Questions probe pupils' understanding well and teachers expect pupils to explain and justify their answers. Although good overall, not all teaching is as confident, skilled and assured as this. Occasionally, weaknesses in teachers' questioning skills and the ways that they check pupils' progress during the course of the lesson slow the pace of learning and mean that misconceptions are not always quickly picked up. Pupils' work is regularly and thoroughly marked. However, there is a lack of precision in specifying for pupils how well they are doing in relation to their targets and indicating exactly what they need to do next. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and supportive. Teachers and teaching assistants use praise very well, which encourages pupils to do more. Teaching assistants

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work well with groups of pupils, supporting and guiding their learning. Pupils at risk of falling behind with learning are quickly identified and given appropriate support, which is why their progress is as good as their classmates'.

The school provides an extensive range of interesting activities that enrich and enhance the curriculum. Good links with other providers and schools enable much of this to happen. During the inspection, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were developing their skills in playing trombones and tenor horns and the gusto with which they set about practising could be heard around the school. Special events such as 'One World Week' are part of the school's tradition and eagerly anticipated by pupils, families and staff. Teachers make appropriate links between subjects where appropriate, but the day-to-day curriculum is not yet as innovative as the provision of enrichment activities.

The strong community spirit at St Teresa's means that every pupil is well known and valued as an individual. The staff work exceptionally well, including in partnership with other agencies where necessary, to help pupils and their families manage difficult times in their lives and to overcome barriers to learning. Parents greatly appreciate this support. Effective links with parents and with other schools mean that times of transition are managed well. The breakfast club both supports parents who are working and gives pupils a good start to the day. The impact of the school's care for its pupils is clearly evident in their good academic outcomes and the considerable strengths in their personal development.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has successfully built a strong staff team. Shared values and purposes underpin the many improvements that have been made in provision and outcomes for the pupils. There are robust systems for monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's work, for setting targets for improvement and for promoting best practice in teaching. Pupils' attainment and progress are meticulously tracked and the findings analysed in order to inform future work. The role of the governing body has also grown and developed very well; its effectiveness is good. Systems for holding leaders to account and for planning for the future are well established and effective. Parents' and pupils' views are regularly sought and acted upon. Relationships with parents are highly positive. During the inspection an impressive number of parents attended assembly and an equally high number came to consult teachers about their child's learning and progress. Arrangements for protecting pupils and keeping them safe are thorough and all statutory duties are met.

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The attention given to ensuring that all groups of pupils do equally well is an illustration of the impact of the school's work to ensure equality of opportunity. Another is the extent to which the ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritages of all pupils and their families are genuinely valued and celebrated. The school is a highly cohesive community. Links with other faith groups, schools and organisations in the UK and further afield are developing well. As yet, however, this work is not part of a planned strategy and its impact has not been evaluated.

These are the grades for 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

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. The positive, supportive atmosphere helps children to settle in quickly, make friends and continue to learn. The indoor and outdoor areas are carefully and imaginatively organised and because activities are enticing and worthwhile, children concentrate and persevere with what they have chosen to do. Adults work effectively with the children, guiding and supporting their learning. They take an interest in what children have chosen and ask questions which help deepen their understanding. They demonstrate skills so that children can copy, such as how to hold a hammer and nail correctly. Children start in either the nursery or reception class of the unit and their skills and understanding are broadly typical for their age. The wide range of activities together with skilled teaching enables them to make good progress and by the time they start Year 1, many have reached or gone beyond the goals for their learning that are expected nationally.

Children's progress and development are carefully tracked. Regular observations of children's knowledge, skills and aptitudes inform this process. Significant moments are recorded in a 'learning journal'. The recently appointed foundation stage leader has sharpened up the assessment and planning process so that the staff's knowledge of what

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children need to do next in their learning is used more effectively in planning the activities each day.

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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the school, as the chart below shows. Their written comments were also very favourable, stating their satisfaction with the teaching, the way the school is led and managed and the values that are promoted. They were very pleased with how much their children enjoy school. 'Both my children are happy at school and love to come and learn. I am happy with their progress and teaching. Can't argue with having happy children!' was a typical comment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Teresa's Roman 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	69	26	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	71	26	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	51	42	47	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	71	26	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	60	35	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	64	31	35	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)	48	54	38	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	52	40	45	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	43	51	57	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	63	33	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	73	24	27	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School, Borehamwood, WD6 5HL

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed meeting some of you, talking to you in lessons and seeing you at work. What you told us in meetings and in your questionnaires was very helpful. We were pleased to be invited to the Remembrance Day assembly, which we found to be a moving occasion.

I cannot give you details of all of our findings in this letter, but I am sure that most of you will be able to read and understand much of the whole report which has been given to your parents and carers. Ask them if you can have a look at it. St Teresa's is a good school. Some things impressed us a great deal. We could see clearly how much you enjoy school and learning. Your behaviour is excellent; from the youngest children in the nursery through to the oldest in Year 6, you get on well with each other and are respectful and polite. We could see that you know when to take things seriously and when to have fun. We were also delighted to see how often you come to school. All of these things, and the fact that the teaching is good, help to make sure that you make good progress and reach at least the standards that you should for your age. Well done!

We think that you, Mr Holdsworth, your teachers and the governing body are ready for another challenge. We want everybody to work together to make sure you make even better progress than you already do. We have asked your teachers to make some adjustments to how they mark your work, how they involve everyone in discussions and how well they keep an eye on your progress in lessons. We have also recommended that the plans that are made to improve things in English or mathematics, for example, include ways of measuring how much your learning improves, as well.

I know that you will continue to do your best and be a credit to your families and your school.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill

Her Majesty's Inspector

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