

St Teresa's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114241
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	357502
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Parkes
Headteacher	Miss Christine Boyce
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the work of 11 teachers during short visits to parts of lessons and extended visits to 17 lessons and joined two pastoral groups and an assembly of the whole school. They examined a variety of pupils' written and mathematics work. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the school's documentation including information about child protection and safeguarding, the curriculum, development plans and records of pupils' progress. They analysed 146 questionnaires from parents and carers, 99 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 18 from members of staff.

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

- The outcomes, quality of provision and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage following recent staff changes.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1.
- The progress that middle- and higher-attaining pupils make in Key Stage 2.
- The school's arrangements to support staff new to the school, particularly in relation to the range of activities in lessons and the way pupils are informed about the extent of their knowledge and understanding.

Information about the school

St Teresa's is larger than the average-sized primary school. An above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average: a majority are the children of Traveller families with a Gypsy/Roma heritage. The others are mainly from Poland and many of them are learning English as an additional language. The school has gained Healthy School status, the Eco-School Bronze Award and International School (Intermediate Level) award. Several temporary teachers are employed to cover staff leave of absence.

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

The school is improving and provides pupils with a good education. All adults very successfully promote an atmosphere of calm and harmony which truly reflects the school's mission to foster Christian values and caring relationships. The school's productive partnerships with the local authority, the church, sports organisations and heritage centres widen pupils' horizons and augment their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governors have ensured that there are satisfactory arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils and, in turn, they do feel very safe. Good behaviour prevails throughout. Pupils are well versed in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Pupils willingly contribute in many ways to their school and the wider community. The school gives pupils a satisfactory preparation for their economic well-being although, despite strenuous efforts by the school, attendance remains low.

Of particular note is that pupils from Traveller families, those learning to speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress overall. By the end of Year 6 they attain levels above that of their counterparts nationally. Since the last inspection improvement in their progress has led to a pattern of above-average levels of attainment in the statutory tests at the end of Year 6. This pattern was sustained in 2010 when pupils did a little better in English, especially in writing, than in mathematics. At present, many pupils in Year 6 have already reached the levels expected for pupils at the end of Year 6, reflecting good-quality teaching which means older pupils in particular make good progress. Pupils participate wholeheartedly in lessons, thoroughly enjoy learning and achieve well. Some teaching is satisfactory as teachers new to the school are still settling in to their roles. When marking pupils' work, teachers do not consistently give pupils clear-enough pointers to the levels they should reach and how to improve, especially in mathematics.

The headteacher and senior team have successfully addressed issues raised at the last inspection. They have improved attainment in writing and widened the range of activities to extend pupils' learning. They undertake an effective programme of monitoring and reviewing pupils' performance which gives them an accurate knowledge of the school's work. Taking into account the strengths in school leadership and the school's good track record of improvement, its capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further throughout the school, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - building upon the skilful and effective approaches some teachers use, to ensure there is good quality teaching throughout the school

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- improving the quality of feedback to pupils to ensure they know the levels to which they can aspire in writing and mathematics and what they are expected to do to reach them
- widening opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Strengthen existing arrangements and enhance partnerships with parents and carers in order to reduce persistent absenteeism and improve attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning. In lessons they are enthusiastic and quickly become involved in activities where they work responsibly and industriously on their own or in small groups and become engrossed in learning. They speak confidently when taking part in discussions or explaining their work to classmates. They all, including those learning English as an additional language, take care to present their written and mathematical work neatly and legibly.

Children begin in the Nursery with a range of skills and abilities that overall are broadly as expected for their age, but are lower in communication and language development and aspects of mathematical understanding. Pupils' language and mathematical development remains lower than average when they leave the Reception class though they make good progress in Key Stage 1, so by Year 2 their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. They sustain their good progress through Key Stage 2 and reach above-average attainments in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. From broadly average standards at the time of the last inspection, the school made concentrated efforts to improve writing and, in turn, attainment has risen. Taking pupils' starting points into consideration, progress is good overall and better in English than in mathematics. Almost all higher-attaining pupils reach their potential. Boys and girls and pupils of average ability make equally good progress.

Pupils behave sensibly and in lessons and considerately around the school. They value the care adults provide and know why procedures for safe conduct, including safe use of the Internet, should be followed. Appreciative of arrangements for them to register any concerns, they say they feel perfectly safe and that any bullying or misbehaviour is dealt with quickly. Their awareness of diet, good hygiene and involvement in popular after-school activities all reflect pupils' good understanding of how to keep themselves well. Pupils make an admirable contribution to the school community; for example as play-time buddies, as school councillors, and in the way they look after the school grounds. Pupils make a good contribution to their locality and help to improve the lives of others. Although they have well-developed social skills, pupils have fewer opportunities for extending their awareness of the world of work or to apply their mathematical skills widely across the curriculum.

Attendance is much lower than average, partly because it is affected by cultural traditions within the school's intake. The school works hard to understand and celebrate these traditions and this is helping to ensure that the learning and progress of pupils concerned is good. In addition, amongst a small number of families, persistent absenteeism is higher than average. The school is working closely and increasingly effectively with the parents concerned and external agencies in order to reduce this.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching is good overall and has led to pupils' good progress and above-average attainment. At present, because of recent staff changes it is not of a uniformly good quality throughout the school. The most skilful teachers share clear learning intentions with their pupils, appropriately match lesson activities to pupils' level of ability and foster very effective discussion in pairs or amongst the class. In turn, pupils make good progress by maintaining their interest, working industriously and by contributing successfully to review their learning. Adept support from teaching assistants helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language to make good progress. Currently, where teaching is satisfactory the pace of learning is slower because some activities are not sufficiently well structured or not enough time is given towards the end of the lesson to strengthen pupils' understanding. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should attain are less clear in mathematics than in writing and are not always clearly related to the next level they should reach. Although teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments when marking their work, the advice given to help them to improve does not make it consistently clear what they need to do to reach the next level.

Many activities within the curriculum enhance pupils' experience and are relevant to pupils' interests. A strength is in the way activities reflect the particular circumstances of the

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school. For example, an exemplary initiative in partnership with Traveller families produced a superb mural of pupils' work which greatly increased all pupils' awareness of Gypsy/Roma culture and fostered a strong spirit of community. Well-managed and targeted activities support pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Visits, including residential visits to outdoor centres, visitors and after-school clubs make a strong contribution to extending pupils' social and physical skills and cultural development. Although pupils benefit from many opportunities to apply their writing skills widely in other subjects they have less scope to extend their mathematical skills in the same way.

In this caring school, considerate relationships prevail and all staff assure the welfare of all pupils. Diligently-followed procedures are the basis of a close eye which is kept on pupils' development and the timely and effective support given to pupils at risk of underachievement. Through beneficial partnerships such as with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service the school successfully helps Traveller children, pupils learning English as an additional language and vulnerable pupils to make good progress in their work. Arrangements successfully prepare pupils for moving on to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Senior leaders are committed to improving pupils' progress and attainment by promoting more effective teaching. Initiatives to raise attainment in writing have borne fruit. Several new teachers have recently joined the staff and there are clear signs they willingly work as a coherent team. The school recognises the value of using the skills of its more accomplished teachers to raise the overall quality of teaching. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is extending its role and knows its next steps are to become more proactive in seeing the work of the school at first hand, and in developing skills in evaluation and strategic planning. Senior leaders have improved systems for monitoring and analysing of pupils' performance, resulting in accurate self-evaluation and appropriate priorities. However, the criteria for success in school development planning are not yet precise enough to enable their impact to be measured fully.

Effective partnerships with local agencies and organisations widen pupils' horizons and enhance the quality of education in the school. By reaching out to parents and carers through newsletters and meetings the school is building a partnership with parents, although relationships are not as strong as they might be to secure improvements in attendance. Discrimination is avoided and equality of opportunity is good. Vulnerable

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pupils, including those from other countries, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from traveller families, all participate fully in all aspects of school life. Boys and girls make equally good progress and more-able pupils reach their potential. Rigorous procedures are in place to vet all adults who work with pupils and measures for safeguarding the welfare of pupils meet current guidelines. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion by involving pupils in local activities and by extending their awareness of life overseas.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	3
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 Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but improving strongly and rapidly. Children starting in the Nursery class have a wide range of skills and abilities which, overall, are broadly as expected for their age. They are below those expected in aspects of their social development, language skills and understanding of numbers. Children settle quickly, behave well, play happily together and enjoy learning. They make good progress in their personal and social and mathematical development and satisfactory progress in all the other areas of learning. At the end of Reception in 2010, although children were still below the levels expected in their communication, language and literacy skills, they had the basic 'building blocks' necessary to get off to a sound start in Key Stage 1 in other areas of learning. Overall progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but assessments point clearly to an improving picture of progress by children presently in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Children benefit from a good balance of play and organised activities, and between those led or supported by adults and those they initiate for themselves. Teaching is sharply focused on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills where, for example, practical and singing activities make learning appealing. Staff plan activities bearing in mind the

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individual needs of children and assessment information is used to record their progress in journals showing each child's learning.

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory and strongly improving. The recently-appointed leader has established continuity of provision throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and this has improved the rate of children's learning and progress over recent months. Good morale and teamwork amongst newly-appointed staff is leading to a systematic and consistent approach to teaching, providing suitable activities for children and assessing their progress. Effective working relationships prevail throughout and assure the care and welfare of children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Almost all feel that the school keeps their child safe. Most have a very positive view of the school, in particular by indicating that their children enjoy school; they make enough progress and they are well informed of it; their children are helped to have a healthy lifestyle; they are well taught and supported and, in turn, are happy with their experience. The inspectors uphold these views. A few parents and carers voiced concerns about bullying and misbehaviour or that they were not well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors followed up these matters. They found that pupils are well informed about the different aspects of bullying. They told inspectors they feel very safe in school, that bullying is rare and they know how to report any incidents which they say are dealt with quickly. Inspectors found behaviour to be good in and out of lessons and that it contributed to the good learning and progress seen. The school holds meetings for parents and children to discuss progress twice yearly and inspectors viewed examples of detailed reports sent home annually which parents countersign and return.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Teresa's RC 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	42	73	50	10	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	48	73	50	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	38	79	54	8	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	34	84	58	10	7	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	48	33	94	64	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	34	87	60	8	5	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	33	90	62	6	4	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)	43	29	84	58	6	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	32	84	58	12	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	25	82	56	19	13	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	24	86	59	15	10	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	25	90	62	13	9	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	38	68	47	10	7	2	1

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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">■ 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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Teresa's RC Primary School, Darlington, DL1 4NL

Thank you for your welcome when my colleagues and I visited to inspect your school. We did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We were impressed by how polite you are. When we visited lessons and an assembly we were delighted to see how much you like to take part and that many of you were well behaved. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life and to your local area, for example, as school councillors and playground buddies, and in all the ways that you help others.

I am pleased to report that your school gives you a good education. All the adults in the school look after you well and keep you safe. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress. Your progress is good during Key Stage 1 and you maintain good progress throughout Key Stage 2. Results in English and mathematics have improved in recent years and are above the national averages. However, your attainment in mathematics is not quite as high as in English. Therefore, we have asked the school to help more of you to do better in mathematics. Those of you from traveller families, those learning English as additional language and those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities all make good progress as a result of the good support you receive.

When they mark all of your written work, we liked the way your teachers let you know how well you are doing. We have asked them always to let you know the level of work they expect you to reach, and let you know the next steps you should take to reach it. We have also asked your headteacher and the governing body to be very precise when they plan to help you improve so that they can check carefully how well you are doing. Lastly, we have asked that the school works with your parents to make sure that you all attend regularly. We think that some of you should make a special effort to come to school much more often. You have many opportunities at St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School to learn about life and these experiences help you to prepare for your future lives. We hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector

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