

# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Colchester

Clairmont Road, Lexden, Colchester, CO3 9BE

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils have an outstanding education at St. Teresa's. They are exceptionally well prepared for their futures both academically and in their personal development.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are relentless in their drive to ensure pupils' outstanding achievement and the highest quality of teaching. They set very high expectations of all members of the school community and will settle for nothing less than the best.
- Pupils in all year groups make outstanding progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils are at least one year ahead of those of a similar age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Around a quarter are two years ahead.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers.
- More-able pupils make exceptional progress. Teachers expect them to do this and set them highly challenging tasks to make sure they do.
- All staff set very high expectations for pupils' achievement; tasks are challenging. Basic skills are taught exceptionally well.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They say they 'love learning because teachers make it fun', but they do not always respond rapidly to teachers' guidance in marked work.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Older pupils provide excellent role models for the younger ones.
- Imaginative learning opportunities provide pupils with many ways to apply their literacy, numeracy and research skills in many subjects, such as in science and history.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school. They are valued highly as co-educators of their children and have many opportunities to find out how their children are taught.
- The school has not yet persuaded all parents that absence for holidays during term time is harmful to their children's educational aspirations.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, five of which were seen together either with the headteacher or senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and staff. Inspectors also spoke with five groups of pupils, including school councillors and Fair Trade group.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and the support given to pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Inspectors also looked at evidence about leaders' monitoring of teaching and records relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- The inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups, heard some pupils from Reception and Years 1 and 2 read, and discussed reading preferences with Year 6 pupils. Inspectors looked at a range of homework books and projects.
- A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors took account of 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 responses to the questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also spoke with 11 parents at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diana Songer-Hudgell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be 'good'.
- This is a slightly smaller-than-average sized primary school. For the past three years there have been more girls than boys on roll and the school has been full.
- There are six single-age classes and a class for the Reception children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. In this school, this extra funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising and is broadly average. A few speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of half of the teaching staff; some newly qualified teachers and others who are at the early stages of their teaching careers have been appointed.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school part way through their education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a daily breakfast club during term time. This is managed by the governing body.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and is providing support to three primary schools.

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

- Improve attendance further by:
  - taking even more opportunities to persuade every parent of the value of attendance to their children's education so that holidays are not taken during term time.
- Give teachers' excellent marking more impact on pupils' progress by:
  - making sure that, where it is needed, pupils take responsibility for responding promptly to their teacher's comments about how work could be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Throughout the school, achievement is outstanding for all pupils. This high level of achievement is not just in reading, writing and mathematics but across the curriculum, as seen in science, music, art and design and information and communication technology. Pupils are also very successful in competitive sports and chess.
- From their starting points, the achievement of the small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is outstanding. Typically, at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Although their attainment is sometimes behind that of their classmates, largely as a result of having lower starting points on entry to school, the very few pupils involved each year make any judgement of how far behind they are unreliable.
- The achievement of the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. The special work planned for each pupil is at just the right level to ensure at least good progress and high self-esteem from successful learning.
- More-able pupils make outstanding progress and attain high standards. Teachers set very high expectations for these pupils and provide them with challenging tasks, especially in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, when quite different work is provided for them.
- The achievement of pupils who join the school part way through their education is, at least, good. Teachers quickly assess these pupils' stage of learning and make sure they are provided with the right level of work to help them succeed.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve extremely well. In response to the increasing number of pupils who have little English on entry, staff have undertaken training in the best ways to support their learning. Pupils' stages of acquiring and using English are carefully noted and the next steps for their development planned. This planning has led to accelerated learning and progress for these pupils.
- When children start in the Reception class, their levels of skills and personal development are broadly typical for their age. They make rapid progress for two main reasons. First, all staff ensure children develop good learning habits, such as listening attentively, behaving well and trying hard. Second, teaching is outstanding. Excellent organisation and the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in memorable ways ensure children make outstanding progress.
- By the time they leave Reception, the proportions of children showing a good or better level of development for their age is higher than that found nationally. They are very well prepared for their start in Year 1 and very keen to succeed.
- Outstanding progress continues through Years 1 and 2. The school's curriculum is extremely well thought out. It provides excellent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated to learn and succeed. For example, pupils make accurate recordings of their hypotheses and outcomes of science experiments, taking care to make sure they are legible and ordered correctly.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is high and similar to that found in the top 20% of schools in the country. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics are much higher than average.

- In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue their excellent progress. They apply themselves confidently to researching for their topics. They use their excellent reading skills to sift out the information they need and use their word processing skills to present their work for others to share. Their art work is of a very high standard and has been recognised as such when they exhibit in the local library and hospital.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is high. Pupils are around one year ahead of pupils of a similar age in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, a quarter of Year 6 pupils attained the much higher-than-average Level 6 in mathematics and 16% attained Level 6 in writing, the level expected of pupils two or three years older.
- Observation in lessons and scrutiny of a good deal of pupils' recent and on-going work indicate that standards of attainment are high and pupils' make outstanding progress over their time at St Teresa's.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- In all classrooms, there are excellent relationships between all adults and pupils. Teaching assistants are very well trained and are a highly valued part of the teaching team because of the positive impact they have on pupils' learning. Teachers set very high expectations for pupils to work hard and behave well. As a result, no time is wasted. Pupils settle very quickly to their tasks and persevere with challenging work.
- Teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. The work for individual pupils is planned exceptionally well because it is based on secure assessments of what each pupil knows and needs to learn next. Each pupil and their parents are clear about the targets for learning.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning because teachers frequently plan lessons that draw together skills pupils learn in different subjects, or they show pupils the practical reasons for learning certain concepts. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils quickly grasped the need to learn how to calculate area accurately when they were asked to calculate the cost of turf to make a lawn to cover part of a garden.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is of a very high standard because it gives clear, unequivocal guidance on how each pupil can improve the work presented. Pupils are in no doubt what their long-term targets are for learning and what they need to do to improve their work. On occasions though, a few pupils do not respond promptly to their teacher's comments and this slows the rate of their improvement. There is no system applied to ensure pupils have to show that they have done this.
- The experienced teachers have excellent subject knowledge and all staff have very good opportunities to update and extend their knowledge and skills. The impact of professional development opportunities is particularly evident in teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching science.
- Teaching of science is particularly impressive. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, when pupils put on their white laboratory coats, they became enthusiastic scientists, very keen to devise a test for finding out whether a large or small magnet had the greater force. Their teacher's skilled questioning helped them to formulate their hypotheses. Pupils said, 'There's a special way to do things in science; you have to think about it and write it down carefully.' Their knowledge of how

to devise, carry out and record a 'fair test' is well ahead of that of many in secondary schools.

- Teachers new to the profession are developing their skills very well. They have a good deal of support and encouragement from senior leaders to help them develop their practice.
- The school provides specialist art teaching for the older pupils and music teaching for all classes. This excellent teaching has had a significant impact on pupils' skills, knowledge and enjoyment. Standards of music and art work are high. Pupils' sketch books demonstrate excellent progress in their observational drawings. Their high quality of work is displayed around the school to very good effect on the learning environment.
- Excellent teaching of literacy and numeracy skills starts in Reception and is developed systematically as pupils move to their next year group. Several children in Reception are already making a good start on reading and writing, using letter sounds they know to help work out unfamiliar words and to help them spell what they want to write.
- In the older classes, skills of how to use a dictionary and thesaurus are taught very well and teachers set high expectations that these will be used, and they are. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils made excellent use of a thesaurus to discuss nuances of meaning to describe emotions and which words were the best to enliven their work.
- Pupils are avid and able readers. Teachers are very knowledgeable about children's authors and make good suggestions and guidance for reading material. Pupils are responding very well to the headteacher's challenge of reading 50 books in the year. Year 6 have a notable understanding of written styles, the genres they prefer and why. They like the 'classics' and love longer books because they 'can think about how the plot will develop and the story end'.
- Teaching for more-able pupils is excellent and ensures these pupils reach very high standards. Challenging tasks are set for them, especially in mathematics. Pupils tackle these tasks with confidence because excellent teaching over time has ensured they have a very secure understanding of how to add, subtract, multiply and divide and apply these skills to solve problems and check their answers.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It is equally impressive around the school and in lessons and is typical over time. Pupils enjoy coming to school because it is a welcoming place where teachers care about them as individuals and their progress as learners.
- Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and exceptionally keen to learn. As a result, they engage fully in lessons and make excellent progress. Participation rates in the exceptional range of additional activities run by the school are very high.
- Pupils take pride in belonging to their school community. They are polite to each other and to visitors. Many pupils have leadership roles in the school such as head boy and head girl or as members of the school council. They take their responsibilities seriously.
- Children in Reception make excellent progress in developing very positive attitudes to learning, respecting others and knowing that they must take responsibility for how they behave. This excellent development of their personal qualities prepares them very well for their futures.

- In the older year groups, pupils sustain their enthusiasm for learning and demonstrate high levels of perseverance. Teachers trust the pupils so that they are able to make choices for themselves in their learning. Pupils work very well together and show high levels of respect for each other's opinions and efforts.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including when using the internet or mobile phones. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying in the school, although they acknowledge that sometimes there are disagreements. They are totally confident that should they have concerns, staff would deal with them immediately and to their satisfaction.
- Attendance was only a little above average in 2013 and a school priority for improvement. The main reason that attendance is not higher is because some pupils take family holidays in term time. In response to the persuasion of leaders and the very firm line taken, attendance improved to an above-average rate in the autumn term 2013. However, not every parent has yet been persuaded of the importance of their children not missing out on any school time.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The inspirational headteacher leads by example. She has an astute understanding of what is going on in all classes. Staff and pupils say, 'She misses nothing.' The headteacher is supported by very well-informed governors, who also require nothing but the best in pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- All leaders are highly effective and work together as a very strong team. Subject leaders continually review the way things are taught and how different groups are making progress. They do everything they can at every level to provide the very best education for every pupil. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in all they do.
- Responsibility for overseeing the progress and well-being of pupils' eligible for the pupil premium funding is very well managed. Identifying this responsibility and making a successful appointment has been a very successful move. Any slowing of progress in learning or emotional difficulties are quickly noted and appropriate strategies put in place.
- The school's well-focused improvement plan, based on accurate evaluation of its performance, identifies the right priorities for improvement. For example, the school has already put in place measures to improve attendance which are beginning to have an impact; attendance in the autumn term 2013 was above average and higher than the attendance rate at that point in the previous year.
- The school is discerning in its use of setting targets for teachers to improve or develop their skills further. Training needs are identified which are related to the school improvement plan. For example, teachers are attending courses for the implementation of the new National Curriculum.
- Leaders provide excellent role models in their own teaching and give expert support to teachers in the early stages of their careers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through the stimulating and rich curriculum. The curriculum includes numerous opportunities for pupils to



work together, go on trips and have visitors to the school. Pupils run the Fair Trade shop at break times. They have a considerable understanding of the principles of Fair Trade and say, 'Little things can make a big difference – water, education.' They say they are happy to give up their break times to help to 'make a difference'.

- The school works extremely well with parents. They have very positive views of the school and almost all would recommend the school to another parent. Many parents are involved in the work of the school by helping with or running the extensive range of school clubs.
- The school uses the additional sports funding appropriately. Pupils and parents were consulted in how best to use this funding. The majority of the funding is used for pupils in all year groups to swim once per week. Achievement in swimming has already risen as a result and is contributing to pupils' confidence and well-being.
- The local authority's policy is that all children, even those in academies, are Essex children. The local authority representative visits the school and has professional discussions with school leaders. The local authority has recognised the improvement the headteacher has brought about in the school since her appointment and has enlisted her help for local schools in need of support to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is highly effective and governors are passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement is sustained at an outstanding level. They provide the right amount of support and challenge for all leaders and have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and the link between performance and pay. They know how well pupils are doing compared with schools nationally and locally. Governors visit the school regularly and have good links within its community, for example with the local garrison. Governors have been fully involved in the school's change to academy status. They are closely involved in all spending decisions, especially those about pupil premium and sports funding. They check on how effectively this specific funding is used. For example, they inform themselves by visiting and observing or through their confident analysis of data about pupils' progress. Governors regularly review their skills and undertake training when they need to. They make sure that the school meets the current national requirements for safeguarding and child protection.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138311
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	425392

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe Geddis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Frances Booker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 508445
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