

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Brook Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 5HL

Inspection dates	7–8 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and other school leaders, including governors, has ensured that outcomes have improved during a period in which there have been significant staffing changes at St Teresa's.
- Personal development and welfare are outstanding. The strong commitment to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development permeates all aspects of school life.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good. As a result pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are confident, well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance has improved over the past 12 months and is now above the national average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive highly effective support and make good progress. Pupils are also extremely respectful towards each other and regularly support one another in their learning.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years foundation stage. By the time that they start in Year 1 they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to learn.
- The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. As a result, by the end of Year 6 the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally is narrowing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils often fail to show enough pride in their work. As a result the quality of handwriting and presentation is not of a high enough standard.
- There is too much variation in the way teachers apply the school's marking policy, particularly in relation to identifying next steps in pupils' learning.
- Children in the early years do not make enough progress in their knowledge and understanding of numbers.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. This limits the progress that pupils make in mathematics, particularly the most able.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Ensure that all teachers use assessment information to provide pupils with advice about how to improve their work, in line with the school's marking policy.
- Improve the teaching of mathematics by:
 - ensuring that children in the early years develop their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers more effectively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to investigate and solve problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by other school leaders including governors, has secured good improvements to the school since the previous inspection. She has developed a strong and committed staff team who have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. This has resulted in improvements to teaching, learning and assessment and better outcomes across the school.
 - School leaders place a great emphasis on safeguarding and developing pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. As a result, St Teresa's has developed into a safe and caring school community where pupils feel valued and learn well. The nurturing ethos that underpins the school's work has resulted in a clear collective identity, which embraces the diversity in ethnicity.
 - School leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the impact that this is having on pupils' learning. Senior leaders meet each term with class teachers to review each pupil's progress. Pupils who are behind with their work are provided with additional support which is monitored closely by the assistant headteacher, who has responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. These termly reviews also focus closely on the performance of disadvantaged pupils. School leaders check closely on the impact of the additional support that these pupils receive so that successes can be identified and built on.
 - Subject leaders are given regular time out of class to monitor and evaluate the work of teachers and pupils. They have been effective in improving both the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning due to their excellent subject knowledge and their commitment to continuous improvement.
 - There are good systems in place to develop teaching. School leaders ensure that appraisal is used well to identify how teaching can be further improved. Teachers are able to access relevant training and also visit other schools within the local authority to develop their practice. Recently teachers have been involved in a lesson study project, which has involved them working alongside each other and observing each other teach. These opportunities have encouraged teachers to continuously reflect on their practice, try out new ideas and make improvements to their teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning at the school is good and improving.
 - The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn across the whole curriculum. Inspectors saw some high-quality work in subjects such as science, history and geography. Teachers provide good levels of challenge in these subjects and ensure that pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their learning.
 - Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities including residential visits, joint projects with local schools and musical performances. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs are also provided including taekwondo, Gaelic football and basketball.
 - The school makes good use of the physical education and sport premium funding. It is currently being used to fund a sports apprentice, who works alongside teachers to support teaching and learning. It has also been used to provide more opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sports with local schools, including football tournaments and swimming galas. Pupils have a good understanding of how sporting activities contribute to healthy living.
 - Pupils understand what is meant by British values. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to consider the differences between various cultures and religions. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect towards people who hold different views and they understand the general principles of democracy.
 - The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to the school. An adviser has worked with school leaders, including governors, to validate the school's self-evaluation, and consultants have worked with middle leaders to support improvements in mathematics and English. The school also works closely with local schools to share and develop good practice and ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governance is highly effective. Governors are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are committed to the school and share the headteacher's ambition for the school to become outstanding.
 - Governors are actively involved in school life and are well known to parents and pupils. Each governor is linked to a specific aspect of the school's work and plays an active part in checking on progress and

reviewing the impact of any actions taken. Governors make regular visits to school to monitor how the school is performing.

- Governors ensure that appraisal is used effectively to set challenging targets for teachers and school leaders. They understand the link between pay and performance and ensure that any decisions about pay are well founded and reflect the impact of staff on the school's performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with parents to ensure that their children are well supported and are safe from harm. School leaders, including governors, ensure that good systems for safeguarding pupils are in place and that staff training is up to date. Systems and policies are regularly reviewed, and all members of staff are fully aware of their duties relating to keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- School leaders have secured significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. As a result the quality of teaching is now typically good, and this enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. They provide lots of opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and explain their thinking during lessons. Teachers assess pupils' progress well in lessons through effective questioning which establishes what pupils know and then challenges them to think more deeply and move on in their learning. However, the written feedback that teachers provide often fails to follow the school's marking policy, as it does not provide clear guidance for pupils about how they can improve their work. This prevents pupils from making more rapid progress.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught well and the vast majority of children in the early years develop a secure base for their development into successful readers. As they progress through key stage 1, pupils apply their phonics knowledge effectively when reading. The vast majority of pupils develop into confident readers and, by the time they reach key stage 2, most pupils read widely and often and enjoy selecting books from the school's well-resourced library.
- Very good support is provided for those pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that support is well targeted and checks regularly on the impact on pupils' progress. Skilled teaching assistants play a key role in pupils' good progress. They are well trained and work extremely closely with teachers to plan work and to assess pupils' learning.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils are given regular opportunities to write for different purposes and in different subjects. Inspectors saw some excellent writing in books from science, history and geography lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics is currently not as strong as in literacy. Although pupils make good progress across the school, too often they are required to complete repetitive tasks unnecessarily, rather than being asked to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to investigate and solve problems. This prevents pupils, particularly the most able, from making faster progress and developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and how they can be applied to investigate and solve problems.
- The school has adopted a new system for recording pupils' attainment and for tracking the progress that they make in reading, writing and mathematics. This is helping school leaders to keep a check on pupils' progress and keep governors informed about achievement across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- From the moment that children start at the school, staff seek to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This focus helps pupils to quickly become confident, self-assured learners and, during their time at St Teresa's, pupils develop into well-rounded young people.
- Bullying rarely occurs at St Teresa's. Those pupils spoken to during this inspection said that they have confidence in adults to sort any problems out quickly, and support them if they have difficulties of any kind. School leaders keep records of any incidents of poor behaviour and follow them up assiduously and

appropriately. Consequently, pupils feel very safe at school.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of safety and how to keep healthy. They are regularly reminded about how to stay safe when using the internet and were involved in creating their own online rules, which they called 'To play our part in a better online world'. Pupils also learn about 'stranger danger' and road safety.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride and help to keep the school neat and tidy. Displays of their work provide an excellent backdrop in classrooms and corridors. Every day, around half of the Year 6 pupils show their commitment to the school by arriving half an hour early to help teachers and other members of staff prepare for the school day.
- As they progress through the school, many pupils take the opportunity to volunteer through roles such as play leaders, school council representatives and house team captains. Pupils in key stage 2 also have a buddy in key stage 1 or the early years who they meet with regularly to support their learning and personal development.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils enjoy attending school at St Teresa's. They are punctual and attend regularly. School leaders work well with parents to improve attendance where necessary. As a result very few pupils are persistently absent and the overall rates of attendance are now above the national average.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and listen carefully to their teachers. They settle to their work quickly and show great determination to succeed. However, these positive attitudes are often not reflected in the way in which pupils present their work. Too often work is untidy and not enough attention is given to ensuring that handwriting is neat and legible.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well around the school. In the dining hall, and around the school grounds, pupils sit together and happily share a conversation over their meal. Other pupils engage in games, often organised by fellow pupils. Breaks and dinner times are enjoyed by all.
- All members of staff feel well supported by school leaders and believe that behaviour is well managed. Most parents share this view. Inspectors found no evidence to support the concerns about behaviour that were expressed on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, by a very small minority of parents.
- Leaders have ensured that there is effective support in place for pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour. Strong action is also taken on the very few occasions that behaviour is unacceptable. The school's caring ethos, and clear codes of conduct, ensure that learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils are articulate and confident; they have positive attitudes to learning. As a result of the school's broad curriculum they develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects and achieve well. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that all pupils make good progress in developing their early reading skills. The percentage of pupils passing the phonics check at the end of Year 1 in 2015 was well above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading across the school. Those pupils who struggle, and are in danger of falling behind, are provided with effective support from well-trained teaching assistants under the direction of the special educational needs coordinator. Pupils read widely and often and make good progress. In 2015 attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average.
- Pupils generally make good progress in mathematics, and attainment by the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average for the past two years. The work seen in pupils' books during this inspection indicates that achievement remains good. However, pupils spend too much time answering similar types of questions rather than using their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. This limits the progress that pupils make, particularly the most able.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make good progress. The school tracks their progress carefully, and regularly reviews the impact of any additional support that is provided. As a result, the gaps in learning between these pupils and other pupils nationally are closing.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress from their various starting points. These pupils are extremely well integrated into all aspects of school life, both in the classroom and on the playground.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language, make very good progress and attain well by the end of key stage 2. The school has an effective programme of support for those children who are learning English as an additional language and this ensures that the language barrier is removed quickly and effectively.

Early years provision

is good

- Children's abilities, when they start in the Nursery or Reception class, are generally below those typically found, though this varies from year to year. Staff provide excellent care, guidance and support which helps children to develop confidence and settle quickly into school life.
- Parents are fully involved in the initial assessments that the school makes of children's skills, knowledge and abilities. School staff visit children in their Nursery, or in their home, prior to them starting at the school in order to get to know about their interests and any concerns that parents might have. This helps children to settle in quickly once they start school. It also helps to ensure that those children whose starting points are below those of other children, and those who speak English as an additional language, catch up quickly.
- Leadership of the early years foundation stage is good. The deputy headteacher, who took on the role of early years lead at the beginning of this school year, has overseen many improvements to the Nursery and Reception classes. She has taken effective action to ensure that children have a broad experience in all areas of learning. This is having a positive impact on the progress that children make. In 2015 the percentage of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average.
- Regular assessments are made of children's progress and recorded in 'learning journals'. These documents provide an accurate reflection of children's achievements over time and help staff to plan activities which support children's learning effectively.
- An engaging range of activities are provided both inside the classroom and outside. For example, during the inspection children were seen enjoying opportunities to remove toys from a block of ice, using a combination of tools and warm water. The children collaborated extremely well, talking about the properties of ice, temperature and weight, and the melting process that they were witnessing.
- Staff ensure that children make good progress in developing their early reading and writing skills. However, children do not make as much progress in mathematics. Not enough opportunities are provided which challenge children and help them to develop and improve their skills in counting and calculating.
- Children who have special educational needs or disability are supported well in early years. Adults have clear plans in place and cater for these children well to ensure that their needs are met.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. Children are happy and staff are caring and attentive. Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe while in school. Good systems and routines have been established and children have good attitudes to learning.

School details

Unique reference number	117466
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10011833

This inspection 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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Clancy
Headteacher	Teresa McBride
Telephone number	020 8953 3753
Website	www.stteresas.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@stteresas.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom school receives additional government funding through the pupil premium, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average; the proportion whose first language is not English is also well above the national average.
- There have been significant changes to staffing at the school over the past 12 months. Four new members of staff took up positions at the school in September 2015, including two newly qualified teachers.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is around the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed other aspects of the school's work and scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders for mathematics, science and English.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour and life at the school. Another inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke with parents before school and scrutinised the 88 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 19 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector
Susan Sutton

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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