



Inspection report

# St Teresa's RC Primary School

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 102669  
LEA Merton

Inspection number 275624  
Inspection dates 29 and 30 June 2005  
Reporting inspector Ms C Herring HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Montacute Road
School category	Voluntary Aided <i>Diocese of Southwark</i>		Morden Surrey SM4 6LR
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8 648 1846
Number on roll	442	Fax number	020 8 715 1757
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Carter
Date of previous inspection	September 2003	Headteacher	Mrs F Austin

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Age group 3 to 11 years	Published 7 September 2005	Reference no. 275624
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## Introduction

When St Teresa's RC Primary School was inspected in September 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on four occasions to monitor its progress, and re-inspected the school in June 2005.

### Description of the school

St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School is larger than most primary schools, with 442 pupils on roll, including 63 children who attend the nursery part-time. The school's catchment area is wide and socially mixed, with significant pockets of deprivation. The proportion of the pupils registered for free school meals is just below average. Approximately two thirds of the pupils are of white British origin and about a third are drawn from an increasingly diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average number, approximately nine per cent, speaks English as an additional language and a significant proportion of this group are at an early stage of learning English. At 11 per cent, the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average and only three of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

St Teresa's RC Primary School has made significant improvements. At the time of the previous inspection the headteacher and deputy headteacher were new to their posts, and under their continued leadership the quality of education has improved and is satisfactory overall. Expectations have been raised and sound systems and structures underpin recent developments.

The pupils enter the nursery with standards which are below those expected of children of the same age. Standards continue to be below average at the end of the Foundation Stage but by the end of Key Stage 1, where the pupils make good progress, standards are average in all subjects. By the end-of-Key Stage 2 standards are average in literacy but below average in mathematics and science. Achievement over time is uneven. Nevertheless the pupils' achievement has risen rapidly during the last year and the pupils made satisfactory progress in all lessons, except one, and good progress in over half of lessons. They almost always reached standards which were in line with expectations.

The curriculum meets national requirements and the pupils benefit from an increasing range of additional activities, including clubs and special curriculum events. The pupils' personal development is good, and attitudes and behaviour are always satisfactory and mostly good, but the rate of attendance is slightly below that of most primary schools. The school has benefited from the high quality support provided by the local education authority (LEA) and the assistance of the diocese.

### Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of September 2003 required the school to address several key issues. These included low standards in Key Stage 2, unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 and weaknesses in assessment, leadership and management, and monitoring and evaluation. The school was also required to develop the use of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and to improve the internal fabric of the building. There has been limited progress in relation to raising standards, good progress in improving the building, and reasonable progress in relation to all the other key issues.

## Capacity to improve

The school has the capacity to improve further. The leadership team is well focused on teaching and learning, and the leadership is strengthened by a good programme of monitoring followed by some high quality evaluation. In particular, when weaknesses in teaching are identified the response is robust. The senior staff recognise that standards in mathematics and science are too low, and they have good plans to replicate in science and mathematics the highly effective strategies used to improve literacy. The stable group of staff responds positively to challenge and training. An appropriate action plan identifies and addresses most of the actions necessary to secure better standards and achievement, including embedding new assessment practices. However, future developments are threatened by the school's weak financial position which is compounded by low admission numbers to the 2005 reception classes. The LEA wisely intends to continue to support the school's improvement.

## What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics and science;
- improve the quality of teaching to the standard of the best;
- embed new assessment practices so that they impact on achievement;
- systematically use and develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

At the end of the Foundation Stage standards are below average in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. The rate of progress is sound in the nursery but barely adequate in the reception classes, and the pupils do not overcome low standards on entry to nursery until the end of Key Stage 1, where standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with expectation. The 2005 provisional national test results show a marked improvement since the previous year, and a greater number of boys than expected reached the higher Level 3 in all subjects. Progress in lessons in Key Stage 1 was good.

In Key Stage 2 standards were almost always in line with expectation and the pupils' books demonstrate that standards have risen and are average overall. However in

Years 3, 4 and 5 the pupils' end-of-year tests results are disappointing; despite some good individual progress, the overall rate of achievement is uneven and less than it should be.

In the 2004 end-of-Key Stage 2 tests the Year 6 pupils reached average standards in English, mathematics and science, and their achievement over time was average for similar schools. The provisional results for the 2005 Key Stage 2 tests indicate that standards in English have improved significantly, particularly at the higher levels, and the pupils reached their challenging targets in English and mathematics. However standards in mathematics and science are lower than the previous year. They are below national expectations and below what the pupils' prior attainment indicates they should be. Although the pupils made good progress in the recent past, gaps in their previous learning still hinder their achievement.

The school has taken sensible action to improve standards. The pupils' progress is monitored carefully and achievement is tracked to identify underperformance. Although this information is not consistently well used in lessons, appropriately targeted support has helped the pupils to achieve their targets.

## Personal development

The pupils' good attitudes towards their learning and good behaviour are strengths of the school. Relationships are positive and the pupils are polite and sociable with visitors. In lessons, they listened attentively, settled to work quickly and responded positively to the set tasks and established routines. When they were entrusted to take responsibility for their learning, they happily worked independently or collaboratively, using discussion well to develop their learning. When the teaching was good, they were very motivated and wanted to do their best. The school has worked hard to develop oracy skills and in turn, the pupils are keen to voice their thoughtful opinions.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide a focal point for them to examine their spiritual values. During the inspection, the pupils confidently led an assembly and conveyed their messages well through a mix of drama, songs and prayers. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a wide range of extracurricular activities which makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. In all the Key Stage 2 year groups, the pupils have the opportunity to participate in the school council as form representatives. Council members are exceptionally positive about the opportunities available to the pupils; they appreciate that the staff have high expectations that they will take responsibility for others, and this is a notable feature. There is good emphasis on inclusion but the curriculum has not been broadened sufficiently to reflect other cultures.

Punctuality is good but, at 93.7 per cent for the current academic year, attendance is slightly below the national figure for primary schools and lower than the previous year. Good attendance is promoted through the regular school newsletter and working closely with the LEA.

## Quality of provision

The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, and was good in just over half the lessons. There were weaknesses in teaching in the reception classes and provision for the pupils to learn outside was unsatisfactory.

The good teaching included several of the following effective features. The teachers shared learning objectives and the criteria for successful learning with their pupils. Key teaching points were routinely reinforced. A range of strategies, including the use of resources, encouraged participation in whole-class teaching sessions. The pupils were given helpful guidance, structure and support to complete independent work. The teachers used time well and the pace was appropriate. There was a good balance of activity between explanations and activities, and the pupils enthusiastically completed acceptable amounts of work. Satisfactory lessons were defined by a mixture of strengths and weaknesses; the latter included weak planning and low expectations. There was a mismatch between the pupils' tasks and their abilities because insufficient attention was given to their prior attainment.

Teaching assistants are well deployed throughout lessons. Display is satisfactory and often good, frequently providing support for independent tasks and celebrating work of a high quality. Literacy skills are used and taught across a range of lessons. However, there is still not a systematic plan for the teaching of literacy or numeracy across the curriculum.

The school has established a good system for setting targets at a whole school, year group and individual level, but assessment information is not used sufficiently well. In lessons, for example, the pupils' levels of attainment or the targets to address special educational needs did not consistently inform planning. The marking of work in literacy is effective because of its clear focus on the pupils' success in relation to the learning objective and the teacher's challenging comments. Marking was most useful when the pupils were given the opportunity to respond to the teacher's comments.

The balance of curriculum activities within a school day has improved but the timetables of a minority of parallel classes are inequitable. An increase in the amount of resources for ICT has helped to ensure a more interactive approach to teaching and learning within the subject. However, during the inspection there were few examples of ICT being used effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

## Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. There has been good progress in establishing high expectations, a positive climate and effective systems and structures, but the school's leaders have more to do to ensure that initiatives impact on standards and achievement.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors work hard to be well informed and fulfil their obligations. However, there is room for improvement in the quality and flow of information to enable them to act as the school's critical friend and to hold it to account.

The headteacher is persistent, determined and effective. She is well supported by an able and experienced deputy. A strong senior leadership team accepts responsibility for standards and achievement in a range of subjects and aspects of the curriculum, and members lead their individual teams effectively. The senior staff know the school well. Their comprehensive monitoring schedule and well focused feedback to staff are strengths. The outcomes of evaluation are scrutinised and all staff are properly held to account. A recent, but as yet inconsistent, focus on outcomes for the pupils is a good feature of evaluation. The development of individual staff is strong. Communication with parents has improved and is good. The school is making more use of local facilities and joining with other schools to improve aspects of its work.

## Appendix – Information about the inspection

St Teresa's RC Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in September 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in February, July and December 2004 and in February 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of September 2003.

In June 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty lessons/part lessons and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors and representatives from the LEA, and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and the areas for improvement in the inspection report of September 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.



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