



St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115143
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279522
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. John Francis LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clairmont Road
School category	Maintained		CO3 9BE
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206508445
Number on roll	255	Fax number	01206500929
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Michael Congdon
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue McDonnell

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school has 255 pupils. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, but none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school serves the Catholic parishes over a wide area, including pupils from the nearby Colchester Garrison. The number of pupils moving in and out of the school is higher than normally found. A much lower than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and attainment on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection findings and the headteacher's evaluation both agree that the school provides a satisfactory standard of education. There has been a decline in standards, but this trend has now been reversed. Pupils are beginning to achieve more highly in English and mathematics and especially in science. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress but those who are higher achievers or who are gifted and talented are not yet fulfilling their potential. Many of them find the work too easy. Pupils enjoy school, behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes. These are all fostered well from the very good start they get in the reception class. Here, children experience a rich and vital curriculum and good teaching which result in good achievement. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are all good and the school reflects its strong Catholic ethos. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The last inspection in November 2000 identified a number of areas for improvement. While those relating to improving writing and raising standards in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have been addressed, two key areas show little progress. Those staff with subject responsibilities still do not have a clear understanding of their role or the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Additionally, the systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress through the school have only recently been put into place and as yet have had little impact on raising achievement. However, the new headteacher has undertaken a rigorous and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. With this analysis the school has a clear agenda to move forward and good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

-make leadership and management more robust so that those with subject responsibilities and leadership roles are accountable for improving the quality of learning; -improve the achievement of all pupils, and particularly those who have the potential to be higher attainers; -fully develop the use of assessment and marking to provide better quality information on which to set clear targets and raise expectations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children come into school with standards that are above those normally expected for their age. With the good provision in the reception class they settle quickly and make good progress. In the 2004 national tests at Year 2, standards were above average overall and well above average in reading. However, this was not mirrored at Year 6 where test results in 2004 were above average in English but average in mathematics and science. Too few pupils attained at the higher levels in English and science. This represents an overall fall in standards from 2003. However, a higher than average number of pupils at Year 6 (around 40%) had joined the school since Year 1. Test results for 2005 results show a marked improvement over the previous year. While there are no national figures available yet, when compared with the previous year's

national averages, standards are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The good improvements in science, particularly the increase in the proportion attaining Level 5, stem from a revision of teaching and learning, particularly in Year 6. Given pupils' attainment on entry, however, this still only represents satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils who have learning difficulties make satisfactory progress however, not enough of the higher attaining pupils go on to reach the levels they are capable of, particularly in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are positive about school, try their best in lessons and enjoy their work. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are very polite and courteous. Pupils take an active role in the life of the school, particularly through the School Council, and even the youngest pupils have an understanding of their responsibilities. Through developing these responsibilities, together with ensuring that pupils work well together and learn basic skills, the school effectively prepares pupils for their lives as productive members of the community. Pupils feel safe and secure and know where to seek advice when they need help. There is a good focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, including the provision of good quality, healthy school lunches. Pupils regularly take part in vigorous physical exercise and the good variety of after-school and lunchtime clubs contributes well to this. Spiritual, moral and social development is good and reflects the strong Catholic ethos of the school. Many pupils regularly participate in church life and the whole school has been actively involved in raising money for a wide range of charities. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of the local culture within the community. This now needs to be developed further to give pupils a greater awareness of living in a diverse society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching and learning, particularly an outstanding lesson in the reception class on making pizza. Introductions to lessons are used well and teachers question pupils effectively to check their understanding and extend their thinking. The best lessons have a brisk pace but little guidance is given to pupils about how much time they have to complete their tasks. There is some unsatisfactory learning where inadequate provision is made for the higher attaining pupils, who, as a result, do not make enough progress. Planning is satisfactory overall. Planning in English and mathematics provides well for most pupils, including those who have special educational needs. However, it rarely makes sufficient provision for extending those pupils identified as highest attaining or gifted and talented. This weakness is also seen in planning for the full ranges of attainment found in some of the mixed age classes. Additionally, there is

little reference in the planning to the use of ICT to support learning in the classroom. The assessment procedures in place are beginning to provide feedback on pupils' progress. However, these are not yet sufficiently well established to enable teachers to track the progress of individuals closely enough to enable more accurate target-setting. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some make supportive comments. However, the marking contains few evaluative comments that give the pupils a clear indication of what they needed to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, and the reception class curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very effectively linked to the recommended areas of learning for children of this age and makes excellent links between all of these areas in the planning. However, in the rest of the school, current subject policies are out of date and do not reflect recent initiatives. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory; all have clear education plans and are helpfully supported by teaching assistants. The curriculum is made interesting through a good range of after-school and lunchtime activities. These encourage pupils to be active and healthy and develop an interest in music and the arts. Visits to local museums and environmental centres enrich pupils' learning. The school provides well-organised and well-maintained accommodation for pupils. Staff and pupils take pride in and care for their school. The attractive school grounds provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for safeguarding the pupils' welfare are secure. The school actively promotes the personal development and well-being of its pupils in the pastoral sense but does not yet have effective strategies to improve academic achievement through closer monitoring, evaluation and analysis of progress. Neither are pupils regularly engaged in evaluating the quality of their own work and in setting their targets. As a result, work planned for pupils is sometimes not as challenging as it could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has quickly and accurately identified the main strengths of the school and the challenges it faces in improving subject leadership. A significant minority of parents report little effective involvement in the work of the school and identify many of the areas for development recognised by the headteacher. She has already put into place a number of strategies aimed at addressing these. For example, she has recognised the need to focus on the provision for the higher attaining pupils and introduce systems to improve pupils' progress generally. Subject leaders do not have a clear understanding

of their roles and responsibilities or the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' learning in their subjects. The monitoring systems currently in place do not enable the senior staff to gain a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, many pupils are not being sufficiently stretched. This is a key area for development acknowledged by the headteacher. Governors comply with statutory requirements. Under the leadership of the knowledgeable and enthusiastic chairperson, they are working closely with the new headteacher to raise achievement and to realise the potential of the school more fully through a good balance of challenge and support.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us welcome in your school, we enjoyed meeting you and speaking with you about your work. We were pleased that you shared your ideas about your school with us. What we liked about your school: - You are well mannered and friendly and made our visit a happy one. It was a delight to talk with so many of you. -Your behaviour is good. You are very attentive to your teachers during lessons and are very willing to do all that is asked of you. - Your willingness to help others and what you do for the school through the school council. - The adults in the school look after you well and everyone is cared for. What we have asked the school to do now: - Provide harder and more interesting work for those of you who are good at certain subjects. - Make sure your teachers know what you have already done in other classes to help you learn more quickly as you move through school. - When marking your work, tell you clearly what you do well and what you need to do to be even better. - Make sure your teachers know how well you are doing in the subjects they look after. Keep up your good attitudes to school and continue to enjoy what you do. We know you want to do your best and hope that our visit will help you do even better.