



St Teresa's Catholic (VA) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124320
LEA Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 281690
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stone Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Stoke-on-Trent
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Staffordshire ST4 6SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 235005
Number on roll	338	Fax number	01782 236560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Kevin Galacher
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Peter Thorpe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Stoke-on-Trent. As a Catholic school, it receives pupils from a wide area around Trent Vale. The school is larger than average and has grown significantly in the past few years. A high proportion of pupils in the school are of White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is low. It is the lead school in a Beacon Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Teresa's Catholic Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is particularly strong and their cultural awareness is generally good. Pupils behave extremely well. The school's partnership with parents is outstanding, and both the pupils and their parents are very satisfied with what the school provides.

Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. Children come into the Nursery with broadly average standards. They make good progress and most exceed the expected learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. Standards in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been consistently very high for the past five years.

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to provide good levels of challenge for all pupils. As a result, the pupils really enjoy being at school. The curriculum is good and pupils are provided with many opportunities to use and develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. The school provides a very caring and safe environment in which the pupils learn very effectively. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to evaluate their own learning so that they can set themselves targets for improvement.

The school is led and managed well. It is continually striving to improve and self-evaluation is central to its thinking. Its analysis of information about pupils' starting point in the school and at the end of the Reception year is not sufficiently sharp. Links with other schools are outstanding. The school is well placed to improve further and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more effective opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and set personal targets for improving their work and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school and standards by Year 6 are exceptionally high. The school has maintained very high standards since the time of the last inspection. Children come into the school with broadly average standards. Their social skills are particularly well developed and they settle quickly into school routines. They achieve well and by the time they reach the end of the Reception year most children exceed the expected goals in all areas of learning.

In the Year 2 national tests in 2005, pupils attained very high standards. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was exceptionally high in reading and mathematics and much higher than the national figure in writing. In 2005, a small

number of pupils did not make the expected progress to reach the higher Level 5, particularly in English and mathematics. Evidence from lessons and samples of work show that pupils are achieving well to reach these higher levels. In Year 5, many pupils are already achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics and writing.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the very good support they receive from teaching assistants and through targeted intervention programmes. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils and these are being met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school at play and lunch times is outstanding. Pupils play together happily and safely in the playground and are very considerate towards each other. Older pupils play throwing and catching games with the younger pupils using balls and beanbags. Their very good attitudes to learning are evident in their enthusiasm to answer questions or quickly get on with work without fuss. Pupils work hard and maintain concentration on tasks, often helping each other to check their understanding. Their attendance is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is particularly strong. Their understanding of their own culture is good and their awareness of different cultures is satisfactory. In discussion, pupils talk confidently about their likes and dislikes. They give their opinions freely and say they really enjoy school.

Although pupils have a good knowledge of how to eat healthily, a number do not follow these guidelines during playtimes, when crisps and similar snacks are in evidence. Pupils have an effective voice in the school community. They support a good range of charities and fund raising activities well. Their very good levels of skills provide a secure foundation for the next stages of their learning and future prosperity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school has built a strong team of committed teachers. They know the pupils well and plan very effectively to create good learning opportunities for all groups of pupils. Lessons are stimulating and meet the needs of those gifted and talented pupils particularly well because of the high level of challenge. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson, outstanding teaching based on video clips of a Harry Potter film produced highly creative descriptive language.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and treat pupils with a great deal of respect. They are very good role models and have very good class management skills, easily gaining the pupils' attention and co-operation. Staff supporting pupils with learning

difficulties work very effectively to develop the pupils' understanding and determination to succeed. In a few lessons, teachers direct pupil activities too tightly, thereby inhibiting their creativity and capacity to explore different solutions to problems. Teachers give pupils clear feedback so that the pupils know how well they are doing in lessons but are not yet involving them sufficiently well in the assessment of their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum to meet the interests and needs of pupils from nursery upwards. A wide range of social and personal education activities enables pupils to grow in maturity and gain a strong awareness of safety. The school provides very well for pupils with learning difficulties through well targeted individual support and intervention programmes.

The school's curriculum is planned so that pupils practise the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology in the context of other subjects. In science, for example, pupils used their literacy skills to explain in a letter to a sceptical friend that air is real. Pupils enjoy this approach because they see the value of it. In a few lessons, the curriculum relies too heavily on published schemes which provide limited opportunities to apply knowledge and understanding or find different solutions to problems.

The pupils enjoy the large number of enrichment opportunities and out of school events, including a very well attended before and after school club. There are many opportunities for the pupils to perform through music or drama.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support from staff. The welfare of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and firmly based on Christian principles. The school has good arrangements for the supervision of pupils at lunchtimes and develops good social skills through its family meal arrangements. The very good relationships promoted by staff enable the pupils to be confident that they will be listened to and any problems resolved. Staff know and implement the school's procedures for child protection well.

The regular feedback to the pupils on a day-to-day basis is often good and pupils are confident that they are making good progress. The school has recently introduced systems which help the pupils assess for themselves how well they are doing and set personal targets, but this area remains underdeveloped.

The school is particularly effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and those who do not settle easily, enabling them to grow in skills and confidence. Teachers work very closely with parents and other agencies to support pupils' development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work very effectively together to promote high levels of achievement across the school. The headteacher has ensured that issues raised during the last inspection have been dealt with and the evidence shows that the school has a proven capacity to implement change very effectively.

The staff, senior managers and the governing body know the school well because they monitor effectively and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses rigorously. Co-ordinators provide good levels of expertise to analyse strengths in individual subjects and identify areas for improvement. The school is continually striving to do better. The judgements the school has made about its effectiveness in all areas tie in very closely with those from the inspection evidence.

The school has a large quantity of information which shows how well the pupils are doing. Some of this is used well, such as the very detailed procedures for tracking the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and involving them in the processes. However, the analysis of some of the information about pupils' starting point in the school and at the end of the Reception year is not as secure.

The school has a clear set of aims and values which are being promoted well. Excellent links exist with other local schools and these are used very well to support pupils who are particularly able. Links with parents are outstanding and these have a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes and achievement.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your very warm welcome to your school. We all enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with your openness and how you answered our questions. You gave us a lot of information about what you like and dislike and this was a great help to us.

What we most liked about your school:

- the very high standard of your work
- your outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to your work
- how well the teachers plan lessons and work with each other
- the very good relationships there are throughout the school
- how well the teachers and governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be improved
- the support provided by your parents.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- helping you judge for yourselves how well you are doing so that you can set personal targets for improving your work

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector