

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102669
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	286455
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

This inspection of the school 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 on roll	
School	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Carter
Headteacher	Mrs Felicity Austin
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2005
School address	Montacute Road Morden SM4 6RL
Telephone number	020 8648 1846
Fax number	020 8715 1757

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in this larger than average size primary school is more than double the national figure. However, the proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is similar to that of most schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than in most schools. Almost all children who attend the Nursery join the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School is providing an inadequate education for its pupils. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

This is a school which, nevertheless, has some strengths, such as the effective Foundation Stage provision where good teaching and a good knowledge of the children enables them to achieve well. There is also some good teaching elsewhere in the school, for example in part of Years 3 and 6, but it is not sufficiently widespread because teachers do not meet pupils' different needs well enough and the expectations of able pupils are not high enough. While the standards in English, mathematics and science that the pupils reach by Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected for their age, pupils are not achieving well enough in relation to their starting points. This is especially the case for pupils of higher ability, those pupils learning to speak English, pupils with learning difficulties and in pupils' writing skills throughout the school. National test results show that overall standards have declined in Year 2 and the school fell short of its targets in Year 6 in 2007 in English and mathematics. While pupils make good progress in some parts of the school, teaching and learning are inadequate overall because many pupils are not making sufficient progress. The school's own judgement of achievement is accurate.

Despite these difficulties, the pupils are happy and enjoy school because of the good relationships with staff. Their personal development is satisfactory including their behaviour. They show a good awareness of healthy life styles and keeping safe. Pupils take care of one another and enjoy responsibility. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The pastoral oversight and care of pupils are significant strengths. Staff's very good procedures ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Guidance for pupils is satisfactory. The provision for pupils who speak little English is inadequate because the school has not thought through well enough how it is to meet their needs. An exception is in the Foundation Stage where children in the early stages of learning English make rapid progress in their speaking and listening skills through the daily classroom interaction with adults and other children. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum but recognises that there is still more to do in using English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different subjects and engaging pupils in more creative activities by linking subjects together more effectively.

Justifiably there is much parental dissatisfaction. A substantial number of parents are unhappy with different aspects of the school's work. In particular, many criticise the school's leadership. Many do not find the school very approachable and are unhappy with the quality of communication. Parents rightly express dissatisfaction with their children's progress. The relationships between the headteacher and some governors are strained and this is not ensuring that the governing body and leadership team are working together to improve the school. Leadership and management of the school are inadequate. The leadership team has not been effective enough in tackling areas for improvement since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected of three and four-year-olds. A significant number of children start with little or no English. All children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. The vast majority of children reach the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. This success is due to good teaching, the very caring relationships and the well planned activities which meet the children's needs. Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed fishing numbers out of the water trough and with assistance were learning to name them. Sometimes, however, staff do not plan fully how they can measure children's learning from specific activities so that they can build on what the children already know and can do. The staff prepare the children very well for Year 1 with learning that is often very stimulating. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and science and ensure greater consistency in standards in mathematics by matching work more closely to pupils' needs and challenging able pupils more effectively so that they make better progress.
- Improve the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils who are learning English so that they make more sustained progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that a much greater proportion is good.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by establishing better links with governors and parents and setting the right priorities for improvement that will raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievements are inadequate. Pupils reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science but their attainment is inconsistent from year to year. For example, Year 6 national test results rose in mathematics in 2007 but fell in English. In 2006, it was the reverse. Pupils make best progress in reading because of the good emphasis given to it and least progress in writing because this aspect of work is not taught well enough. Handwriting is frequently weak and untidy. Overall, results in Year 2 show that standards have declined in the last three years. The rate of progress pupils have been making from Year 2 to Year 6 has also fallen significantly. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below the national average in English and science, especially at the higher levels where too few more able pupils reach their expected targets. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities do not make sufficient progress because planning for their different needs is not thorough enough. Science results are below average because pupils do not work systematically and their workbooks are poorly set out.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are welcoming and polite and overall behave satisfactorily when in class and while at play. They relate well to adults in the school. They have a good understanding of healthy living. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with a particular strength in the moral aspect. They clearly understand right from wrong. Pupils have a sound awareness of keeping themselves safe, such as road safety awareness and reporting any troubles to a

known adult. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the practical subjects. Some participate in the affairs of the school council but there is scope to develop its work further in suggesting ideas for school improvements. Pupils enjoy any responsibilities that they are given. Some undertake positions as play leaders and 'buddies', the older pupils helping the younger, and they equip themselves well in these roles. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education with strengths in personal attributes and teamwork but some weaknesses in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teachers are not sufficiently consistent in their expectations across the school, such as matching work to pupils' needs, in their marking and in the presentation of pupils' written work. Overall teachers' expectations are not high enough. Handwriting, for example, is frequently badly formed and untidy. Work in science is too reliant on worksheets that do not demand enough of pupils' own efforts and do not extend their thinking. Some teaching is good; most lessons are satisfactory. However, there is too little good teaching to have an impact on reversing a trend of decline in standards and to accelerate the progress that all pupils make.

These differences in teaching quality lead to variable rates of progress across the school. Consequently, able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently well, which slows their progress. Staff do not plan effectively enough for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for those with learning difficulties, so these pupils do not make enough progress towards their learning targets.

There is a satisfactory pace to most lessons and teachers manage pupils well. Good relationships with pupils foster generally good levels of cooperation, but pupils are sometimes noisy when undertaking tasks that do not expect enough of them, which affects the amount of work completed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's current curriculum review to increase the links between subjects and to make it more creative for pupils is well founded, but has yet to have a consistent impact on pupils in all classes. The balance of the curriculum is satisfactory with good provision made for personal, social and health education. Pupils in Year 6 benefit well from their residential visit, which supports their personal and social development. An adequate amount of time is devoted to English and mathematics. The increasing use of visitors and visits and theme days is already beginning to enliven the curriculum. The enrichment week is particularly successful when teachers use their specialist skills effectively to widen pupils' own interests. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, mainly sport, with plans to increase opportunities further. The provision for pupils who speak little English is inadequate because of the inconsistent quality of support and staff's lack of expertise in providing for these pupils, which adversely affects their progress. It is inconsistent in quality from class to class for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils do not yet use ICT sufficiently in all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral arrangements are strong. All staff show good levels of care for the pupils. They monitor matters that relate to pupils' health and safety very well. Robust systems are in place for safeguarding pupils and staff have a good understanding of child protection arrangements. The school provides a secure environment. Staff deal swiftly with any instances of bullying or racist incidents. Good links with local secondary schools prepare pupils effectively for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' learning targets are satisfactory but they are not always challenging enough for able pupils and so they do not fulfil their potential. The school's difficulties in making good relationships with many of its parents affect the home-school partnership adversely. These difficulties do not help to secure pupils' continuing good progress as they move up through the school. The systems for tracking pupils' progress are quite new. It is too early for these new systems to have an impact but there are signs in some classes where there is good teaching that these are making a difference.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The senior leadership team has not pursued the areas for improvement rigorously enough since the last inspection and has not done enough to raise attainment other than in the Foundation Stage. While there has been improvement in mathematics results, English results have fallen. ICT and literacy are still not used effectively enough across the curriculum and the overuse of worksheets hinders writing standards, including handwriting. Standards reached in science are still too low. The impact of the school's leadership and management structure is not effective enough. Senior leaders are not monitoring standards and pupils' performance adequately enough to eliminate underachievement. As a result, there is too much inconsistency in teaching quality resulting in uneven progress through the school.

The senior leadership team does not have a sufficiently robust view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan does not identify key aspects sufficiently urgently, for example, the lack of provision for pupils who speak little English.

The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the school's work, but strained relationships at the highest levels of management are impeding the school's development. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities but the governors' limited pattern of visiting does not allow it to play the role of the critical friend well enough. The headteacher does not have the backing of a significant number of the parents and they express much concern about links with the school, communication and their children's unsatisfactory progress. Overall leadership and management do not provide the school with the capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Morden, SM4 6RL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, sharing your work with us and talking to us about your school. We found you to be polite and you enjoy school.

Your school is going through some difficulties at present. It is not providing you with as good an education as it should and it should receive some 'special measures'. This means that inspectors will visit your school more often to check that it is improving. While you have a satisfactory range of lessons, some of you are not making enough progress. Pupils who understand the work quickly, those learning English as an additional language and pupils who find learning more difficult are not making the best possible progress. The school's results have not been as good as they should be.

You like your teachers and the other adults who work in the school and they look after you very well. The adults work together harmoniously. However, the school's senior leadership team has not been strong enough in improving the school so that it has not made enough progress since the last inspection. We have asked the school to do the following.

- Ensure that you make better progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, for pupils who find learning difficult, and for more able pupils, so that they all make better progress.
- Improve the teaching so that it is more frequently of a good standard.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school so that it is more focused on helping you to make better progress.

We would like to wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector