



St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Parkfield

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104380
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286925
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Malins Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Parkfields
Age range of pupils	4–11		Wolverhampton WV4 6AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558862
Number on roll (school)	150	Fax number	01902 558863
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	P J Shepherd
		Headteacher	Oonagh Kolek
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school admits children twice a year. The area it serves has a number of social and economic disadvantages. On entry, children's attainment is well below that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils that come from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. Many are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Movement in and out of the school is high. Reception and Year 1 classes work together as a unit. All other pupils are taught in single-age classes. There have been several changes of staff in the past year because of retirements and absence due to illness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. A particularly strong feature of the school is the excellent manner in which it integrates pupils from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and the good pastoral care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. This results in good personal development and well-being, some aspects of which are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school when they attend. However, attendance is inadequate overall, largely because of the erratic attendance of a small group of pupils. This adversely affects their progress. The school does not actively do enough to encourage pupils' good attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the community.

Achievement is satisfactory, although progress is good up to Year 2. Standards are broadly average in Year 2. In Year 6, results in national tests are below average because more-able pupils, and pupils who do not attend school regularly, do not always achieve quite as much as they could do. In the Foundation Stage, progress and the quality of provision are good but because of their low starting points, few children reach the nationally expected goals at the end of Reception. The joint work between the Reception and Year 1 classes benefits the learning of both groups of pupils.

The school is using recently introduced procedures to improve how well it tracks pupils' progress and for setting targets. However, teachers do not use the information well enough in their planning, particularly in Years 3 to 6, with the result that some pupils do not have sufficiently demanding work to help them make the progress that they are capable of. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their targets and Year 6 pupils even set additional mini-targets for themselves. However, teachers rarely mark pupils' work in relation to their targets, thereby missing opportunities to show pupils at every stage of their learning how to improve their work. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, as is the curriculum offered to the pupils. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT), an issue at the previous inspection, is now good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are checked regularly and points for improvement are accurately identified. However, the checks do not have a clear focus related to aspects which the school is trying to improve. Overall, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness is somewhat over-generous. Governors fulfil their statutory duties but are not sufficiently involved in checking the school's work. Nevertheless, the school has improved since the previous inspection and has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information when planning pupils' work to ensure pupils have sufficiently demanding work to do at all times.
- Sharpen the checks made on the school's work by all leaders and managers, including governors, particularly in relation to achievement in Years 3 to 6.
- Engage more with pupils, parents and outside agencies to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get off to a good start in Foundation Stage. By Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics, and progress is good. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is satisfactory and in Year 6, standards are broadly average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always achieve as much as they could because some of their work is not demanding enough, or they have not attended school regularly enough. This is why results in national tests for Year 6 are not always as good as they could be. Pupils at the early stages of learning how to speak English make good progress. Their overall progress is satisfactory. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to that of others.

The school narrowly missed its overall targets in 2006. Based on the pupils' improved progress in the past year, it raised its targets for 2007. They are challenging but achievable, provided the population remains stable. The school has successfully improved reading, which was weaker than writing last year, by fostering pupils' enjoyment of it. Girls and boys participate equally well in reading sessions. Most show a good understanding of the texts they read and of the meaning behind the written word. The weakest subject is science. Here, pupils' learning, and especially that of more-able pupils, is hindered because teachers usually teach only what is expected for the year group, rarely introducing pupils to more demanding scientific vocabulary and concepts.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage, and pupils entering the school at any other time, settle quickly because they are well supported by staff and other pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They do their best, joining enthusiastically in all activities and readily accepting responsibility, for example, as school councillors, 'Believe to Achieve (B2A)' Members of Parliament and class assistants. Older pupils show a maturity beyond their years when they engage adults in lively conversation and show pride in their achievements.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds mix together very well, producing a distinctive school ethos where every child is included and matters. Pupils emphasise the importance of recognising that they are 'different but the same'. Behaviour is good. Pupils are confident, well mannered, polite and respectful. They say they 'respect the teachers 'cos they respect us', spontaneously agreeing that teachers are one of the best things about the school. Another is the rewards they receive for their good contribution to school and the community. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school.

Despite this positive picture, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, because rates of attendance are inadequate. This is due to the

erratic attendance of a small group of pupils whose progress suffers as a result. Overall, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good teaching contributes in great measure to the good progress seen in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Here, planned activities are well matched to pupils' different ages and stages of learning because teachers build securely on their accurate assessments of pupils' progress.

While teaching is never less than satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not capitalise fully on the valuable work they have done to track pupils' progress. The information is not used properly in planning and therefore activities are not always closely enough matched to pupils' individual learning needs. This, and inconsistencies in teachers' marking, limits the usefulness of the tracking procedures and of the targets which are now set for all pupils.

Teachers and teaching assistants work with different groups of pupils in class to improve their learning. However, the approach does not consistently ensure that there is sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able pupils. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the sound progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils at the early stages of learning English also benefit from extra support and make steady progress.

Staff form constructive relationships with their pupils, and pupils respond with enthusiasm to everything they are asked to do. They are ready for a greater challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage meets the children's needs well, contributing to their good progress. In the rest of the school, the curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes ICT skills well and literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily. However, links have not yet been established between other subjects and opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in different subject are limited. Personal, social and health education is particularly well promoted, contributing greatly to pupils' personal development and well-being, their enjoyment of learning and their health and safety. A good range of activities, visits and visitors in and outside the normal school day enriches and enhances learning for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. As a result, pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for, confident that staff will help them should they have any difficulties.

The school monitors pupils' behaviour and personal development well. Pupils' academic development is monitored satisfactorily. Pupils are very aware of their targets and feel that they do improve their learning. However, the school does not use assessment information sufficiently to guide what pupils should learn to ensure their best possible progress. It uses staff, governors and external agencies well to support pupils with language or learning difficulties. Its partnership with parents has improved considerably since the previous inspection and almost all parents are highly satisfied with the school. However, the school does not encourage good attendance actively enough. This adversely affects the progress of the small minority of pupils who do not attend regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school successfully meets its aim to 'prepare pupils to take their place in a multicultural society, developing in them a sense of peace, justice and respect'. Leadership and management are good in this respect. They have had a positive effect on pupils' personal development and on the school's distinctive ethos. In other respects they are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are checked regularly but, while the checks identify areas for development, they do not have a clear enough focus on raising achievement. This limits their effectiveness. The role of middle managers is underdeveloped. However, they have carried out some checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work, accurately identifying weaknesses in matching pupils' learning to individual needs. Governors support the school but are not sufficiently involved in checking its work. Their improvement plan does not focus sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. The school recognises this and is successfully working towards a potentially more robust approach to achieving improvements than in the past.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You clearly enjoy school very much and you and your parents appreciate what it does for you. You told us that your teachers care deeply for you, and you are right. Overall, your school is satisfactory. That means it does some things well but there are also some things that need a bit more work. Here is a summary of the good points:

- The good care, guidance and support the school gives you ensures that you know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy.
- The way the school helps you to understand your place in the world, and to live and work in harmony with each other, is excellent.
- You behave well and have high regard for each other and for adults. You told us that this was because the staff respect you, and you are right.
- How you are taught, and what you are taught, is satisfactory and you readily throw yourself into all of the activities teachers prepare for you, finding them fun to do.
- Your school is satisfactorily led and managed. The headteacher is particularly good at ensuring you have a calm, friendly environment in which you can learn and play happily together.

We have asked your school to help you make even better progress by:

- Making better use of all the information they have about how well you are doing to make sure that you all make as much progress as you possibly can.
- Ensuring that leaders and managers, including governors, check carefully that what you are taught really is challenging you to learn faster.
- Working with you, your parents and other people who can help to improve your attendance because absence from school means that your learning falls behind.

We hope that, as a result of these improvements, you will make even faster progress in the future and that you will continue to enjoy learning now and throughout your lives.