

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110032
Local Authority	Wokingham District Council
Inspection number	288568
Inspection date	24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julia Braithwaite
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Adams
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2001
School address	Easthampstead Road Wokingham RG40 2EB
Telephone number	0118 978 4310
Fax number	0118 977 0032

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an advantaged area. The ethnic background of the pupils is predominantly White British. Ten pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. As they start school, children have above average levels of attainment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils thrive academically and personally. It has the overwhelming support of parents. Children build extremely well on the good start made in the Foundation Stage. Their achievement through the school is outstanding, so that, by Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. Consistently effective teaching, together with excellent relationships and high levels of care, means that pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their behaviour is excellent. The Catholic ethos of the school is reflected in the mutual respect pupils have for one another. Older pupils demonstrate this in many ways, acting as playground pals, monitors and prayer partners. The school has started to further enhance pupils' personal development by increasing their ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions; often described as 'emotional literacy'.

The curriculum is taught in imaginative ways and is enriched through a wide variety of extra activities which stimulate learning and promote pupils' personal development. Pupils develop a strong awareness of how to stay safe. Their keen participation in physical activities demonstrates a very secure understanding of the importance of keeping fit. They are very clear about the effect of exercise on the heart and circulation. They also have an excellent grasp of healthy eating, explaining articulately the benefits and dangers of certain foods. Because pupils have very good levels of independence and enjoy challenge, the school is devising ways in which tasks can be more open-ended and provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and research skills.

The head teacher provides excellent leadership and plays a pivotal role in sustaining high academic standards within a warm, purposeful and stimulating environment. The highly effective leadership team rigorously monitors all aspects of the school's work and keeps a close eye on pupils' progress. Governors provide first class support. The school has an excellent capacity to build on its current success.

Pupils' delightful attitudes, together with their extremely good academic and social skills, means that they are very well prepared for subsequent education.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its high level of effectiveness, the school has started to:

- make learning more enquiry-based to further enhance pupils' enjoyment and achievement across the curriculum
- enhance pupils' ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions by raising their self awareness and to reflect on the impact of what they say and do.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Pupils make extremely good progress and reach exceptionally high standards. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach above average standards by the end of Reception. They build extremely well on this secure base during Years 1 and 2. They reach high standards in reading and well above average standards in writing and mathematics. This rate of progress is sustained during Years 3 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils rise to the challenge of building on their prior learning. With very few exceptions, all those whose attainment is above average in Year 2 reach the higher levels expected of them by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make very good progress towards their individual targets because of the first-class support they receive. Similarly, pupils who are at an early stage of learning English progress rapidly due to high quality support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely well and thoroughly enjoy school. They are friendly, polite, well-mannered and confident when talking with each other and adults. Pupils also play a large part in helping the school run smoothly and in suggesting improvements. For example, their suggestions led to a review of rewards and sanctions and the introduction of 'Golden Time' as a reward for good behaviour. Older pupils are consulted when teachers are being recruited and take such responsibilities seriously.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They adhere to the strong moral code within the school. Older pupils are paired with younger children as prayer partners. When discussing this role, one pupil said, 'We integrate with the infants and there is mutual respect'. Pupils show due reverence during the daily opportunities for prayer and reflection. They have a commendable understanding of religions other than their own and speak positively about them. They develop a good understanding of cultural diversity through activities such as citizenship week. Pupils are very well prepared to become good citizens. Following a literacy lesson centred on persuasive language and democracy, one pupil remarked, 'Our teacher did the impossible this morning; she made politics interesting!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The school's monitoring records show that much of the teaching is very good and sometimes outstanding. This was confirmed by the inspection. Several teachers are recently qualified and the school is working successfully towards embedding the existing effective practice in its pursuit of consistently outstanding teaching. The reception staff provide a wide range of practical activities to support children's learning, striking a good balance between teacher-led work and activities chosen by the children. In the older classes, knowing that most pupils are capable of learning quickly, teachers set demanding tasks to ensure they are suitably challenged. Teachers share their high expectations, and pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. Frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on the type of thinking involved in different tasks, and to evaluate one another's work, mean they develop mature attitudes to learning. Teachers vary the structure and content of lessons to capture pupils' interest. They explain tasks clearly and are skilled at changing tack in order to clarify concepts when pupils find them difficult. The well qualified and experienced support staff play a significant role in tailoring provision to suit pupils of different abilities. Hence pupils make rapid progress whatever their starting points. These positive aspects of teaching and learning are evident across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that motivates pupils and promotes their enjoyment of learning. As a result, they grow into confident and competent learners. Basic skills are taught highly effectively and pupils have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy, numeracy and computer skills across the curriculum. The curriculum reflects the Catholic nature of the community and is based on a thorough understanding of the pupils and their varying needs. The school is devising creative ways to make learning more enquiry-based with a view to further enhancing pupils' enjoyment and achievement across the curriculum. It acknowledges that such approaches are not yet fully embedded.

All pupils have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities and school clubs. A residential visit for the older pupils, visitors from the community, outings to places of interest, and workshops for higher attainers all add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Such experiences, together with learning in personal, social and health education, teach skills that contribute to pupils' future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The views of one parent, that the school has 'a wonderful caring ethos and a superb learning and development ethic', are shared by the vast majority. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils are well supervised, at the same time developing their independence and self-reliance. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are secure and taken seriously. This results in pupils feeling comfortable and confident in approaching any adults if they have a problem. Parents have ample opportunities to make informal contact as staff are in the playground before school starts. The excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities was summed up by one parent who said, 'We really do feel that our children could not be in a more caring school'. Academic guidance is first rate. Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously and assessment information is used to determine what pupils need to do to improve. This is then shared with pupils in child-friendly language as class, group or individual targets. Such targets are challenging so pupils do not mark time by going over old ground but tackle more demanding work. This is a major factor in the high levels of achievement across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The headteacher inspires those around her to flourish. She successfully promotes the school's aim, expressed in its mission statement, 'to develop an understanding of Gospel values, demonstrating responsibility and respect for ourselves and every member of the community'. One pupil recently summed up her approach in a poem:

Her calm presence reminds us to do the right thing,
Words of encouragement and pride ripple through the hall,
She lights the candle, it flickers,

I feel closer to God.

The leadership team works harmoniously and to good effect. It is focused thoughtfully and rigorously on school improvement at all levels. Excellent self-evaluation strategies lead to an accurate recognition of the many strengths and potential of the school. All staff share the headteacher's determination to sustain high standards of academic achievement and personal development. There is no complacency and areas for improvement are tackled with vigour in order to maintain and further advance the high quality of education. The current emphasis on emotional literacy is an example of how the school is set on building on its success in promoting pupils' personal development. The governing body is strongly committed to the well-being and achievement of pupils and ensures that the leadership team is held to account.

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

7 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Wokingham, RG40 2EB

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit. I think your school is outstanding. Here are some of the things that I found it does really well:

- you make excellent progress and reach exceptionally high standards because the teaching is good, and you work hard and enjoy learning
- you behave extremely well and take care of one another, and told me that everyone feels happy and safe in school
- you like coming to a Catholic school but at the same time you respect other people's faiths
- the school keeps a careful eye on how you are doing and makes sure that you know what you need to do to improve
- a wide range of exciting things keeps you interested; for example, I saw how much you enjoyed the visiting theatre company's presentation about healthy eating
- the school is very well run.

The school is always looking for ways to become even better and has started to help you understand and express your feelings and share them with other people. Because you are so keen to do well and can be trusted to work on your own, the school is looking for ways that you can learn about the things you are most interested in and increase your research skills. I am sure you will do your best to ensure that the school continues to build on its success.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector