

St Teresa's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111694
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	289030
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Cooper

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	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Maurice Brown
Headteacher	Miss Eileen Cahir
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Callander Road Hartlepool TS25 3BG
Telephone number	01429 274936
Fax number	01429 274936

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School is larger than most. All pupils come from a White European background. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average and an average number of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Children's attainment is well below average when they first enter school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Teresa's Primary school is an outstanding school. The inspection fully supports the school's own evaluation of its work. Exceptionally high standards have been consistently maintained over the past five years and are well set to remain high. Pupils' excellent achievement is not limited to their academic performance but also extends to their personal and social development. The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. 'A brilliant school', 'The headteacher is so approachable', 'What a dedicated staff', are typical comments from parents. Their views are fully endorsed by those of their children.

The pupils' achievement is excellent. Their high standards are the product of what the school provides for its pupils. Teaching is outstanding. Pupils readily acknowledge the help they get from their teachers, in lessons and in the marking of their work. The curriculum is vital and stimulating. The provision is underpinned by excellent care and support for pupils. The school is a safe and orderly community. An acutely watchful and sensitive eye is kept on pupils' social and academic development. One pupil summarised school life by saying, 'I can't put it properly into words but school is wonderful.' Many of the parents' comments echo this sentiment. Pupils are fully confident that each individual is valued, respected and efficiently cared for. This confidence releases their potential as effective learners.

The leadership of the school is outstanding. In inspiring her staff and sharing her vision of what the school should be like, the headteacher has established a very effective leadership team. Together they ensure that the school is alert in building upon its strengths. Together they rigorously monitor standards and provision. Highly effective planning for improvement ensures that the school continues to make progress. Allied to this, the school is managed smoothly and efficiently so that the most is made of opportunities for learning within an atmosphere in which expectations are high. The school's maxim 'responsibility and respect', is characteristic of all it does. The commitment and team-work of all staff are recognised and valued by governors, who are aware of the pupils' achievement and the school's high quality of provision but allow no room for complacency. Very strong ties exist with partner organisations, including a neighbouring school with which a local children's centre is being developed, and with universities and colleges. Highly skilled members of staff are well respected for the work they do in support of other schools. No issues for the improvement of academic standards were identified at the school's previous inspection. Despite this, consistent identification of school priorities has led to many valuable developments. Given its record of improvement and effective self-evaluation, the school is capable of sustaining its high standards and improving even further. It provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are consistently high and pupils' achievement is outstanding. The pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. Their attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The children make very rapid progress in the Foundation Stage and meet or exceed expectations for their age by the time they join Year 1.

Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Key Stage 1 and reach well above average standards. During the past five years, the results of the tests and assessments of Year 2 pupils have been consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make similarly excellent progress in Key Stage 2 and standards are uniformly high, as shown in the results of the national tests of the Year 6 pupils, which are always well above the national averages in English, mathematics and science. The school has the test results of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils; although they are as yet to be validated, they are similar to the excellent results of previous years. The school sets and meets very challenging targets for Year 6.

The pupils' high achievement is not limited to the basic subjects of English, mathematics and science. The work seen on display, in books and during lessons, shows a remarkable range of achievement. For example, the pupils work as young historians and their art work is that of accomplished painters. During their individual work, they show imagination and initiative. Pupils make very good use of their excellent literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary. This is very clear in the pride they take in their work. Behaviour is excellent and is a very positive influence on learning and the life of the school. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are quick to say how safe they feel and that they respect the measures taken by the school to ensure their well-being. They appreciate all the school does to ensure their healthy lifestyle, relishing their many opportunities for vigorous exercise and learning well from teaching about a healthy diet. In recognition of the school's fostering of physical activity, it holds the Active Mark. Discussing the importance of their enjoyment of school, one boy said, 'Well, you learn better if you enjoy lessons.' Pupils appreciate the benefits stemming from the work of the school council. Younger and lonely pupils value the 'friendship stop' and their playground 'buddies' with their purple bibs. Pupils know how their learning and social development benefit when they work together. A growing understanding of environmental issues is exemplified by the number of outdated Yellow Pages they have recycled. They are being very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future role in society because they are acquiring a very wide range of life and learning skills. The school holds an award for achievement in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding. It has a consistently strong impact on the quality of learning through its brisk pace and lively nature and accounts for the excellent progress made by pupils. Parents and pupils are unequivocal about the respect they hold for the quality of teaching. Tasks set are appropriate to pupils' developmental needs; they are challenging and match the pupils' abilities. It is made very clear to pupils what they need to learn. Frequent discussions highlight ways in which pupils can be successful learners. Tasks are interesting and pupils are usually deeply engrossed in their work. Teachers use questioning well, supporting pupils effectively as they develop good collaborative skills. Relationships are exemplary. A lively

atmosphere of mutual respect characterises lessons. Pupils' work is very well marked so that they understand clearly how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It fully meets national requirements, responding as necessary to current initiatives. Its particular strengths lie in the way it is planned to extend and develop pupils' skills and in the logical way in which links are made across the curriculum. It provides well for excellence and results in much enjoyment. Not only do pupils make great progress in the acquisition and use of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) but they also acquire very mature skills as young scientists, geographers and artists. For example, a local study of the town gave pupils a deep insight into local culture, geography and history and provided ample opportunity for them to put their extensive skills to excellent use. Similarly, outstanding work resulted from a visit to the local newspaper when pupils each produced their own broadsheet. Personal and social skills are consistently well developed through the whole school curriculum. Parents and pupils alike express their appreciation of the breadth of the curriculum, which is richly enhanced through after-school activities and by visitors and educational visits out of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school is vigilant in ensuring that national requirements for safeguarding pupils are securely in place. No stone is unturned and everything possible is done to provide a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment for pupils. The way in which staff work together sets a high-quality model for pupils. Parents are highly appreciative of the level of pastoral care provided. All pupils are valued and included. Arrangements for the support and care of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for potentially vulnerable pupils are equally as good as those for gifted and talented pupils. Added to this high quality of personal care, the school has very sharply focused arrangements for tracking academic progress. Pupils' high degree of academic success owes much to the speed with which the school can identify possible lack of progress and quickly intervene with well targeted support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and ensure the pupils' high academic and personal achievement. Leaders at all levels have effective professional qualities, and the way staff work together is first class. Their dedication and commitment stem from the example set by the headteacher, who has the full respect of staff, parents, pupils and governors. Given her strength of purpose and clarity of vision, excellent procedures have been established to manage the school with great efficiency. Consistent strategies for self-evaluation and improvement planning are allied to accountability of staff and governors. Good opportunities for professional training lead to a bright and enthusiastic approach to lessons with very positive benefits for pupils.

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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	1
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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Teresa's RC Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 3BG

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome shown to me during my recent visit to your school. You are very good at making everyone - children, adults and visitors – feel comfortable and welcome. Some messages from your parents mentioned the 'family of St Teresa's' and that it is very like one big family. You have something very special in your school and I believe it is because you learn so well from what you are taught about responsibility and respect.

Your school is very special. The standards you attain in your work are very high and you make excellent progress. You told me you were 99% excellently behaved. I did not see the one per cent that is not excellent. Your attendance at school is much better than that of other schools. In lessons, you work hard at becoming really good learners and you are acquiring not only good literacy, numeracy and computing skills, but also those that help you to produce splendid work in many subjects. When you saw me trying to write my notes quickly, I was told that you have 'a thing about good writing' in your school. Your work looks so good it demands to be read.

You are not the only ones who work really well in school. All the adults around you think deeply about what you need to learn. This is why you were able to tell me about so many enjoyable and challenging lessons. Your teachers have a very good understanding of how to help you learn well and how to plan interesting work. You told me how well school cares for you. It does that in so many ways including keeping a very careful eye on your progress. These very positive elements of your outstanding school are very carefully planned by your headteacher, the staff of your school and its governors. They make a really good job of making the school a special place for you. I was told that the big challenge in your school is to keep things as good as they are. The adults around you are determined to do so. You can help by continuing to make a very big effort. I know you can do that because I have seen it in your work and lessons. Well done.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Cooper

Lead inspector