

St Teresa's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105951
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308993
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr D O'Driscoll
Headteacher	Mr J Bourke
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	Clarendon Road Irlam Manchester M44 5ZA
Telephone number	0161 7778203
Fax number	0161 9212053

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an urban area of average socio-economic circumstances on the outskirts of Salford. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need.

The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2000.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which the personal development and well-being of the pupils and the quality of the care, support and guidance the school provides are outstanding. It is deservedly popular in the local community. Parents are unanimous in praising and valuing the school with comments such as, 'I'm really happy my children are at St Teresa's. They love going to school and they are making good progress. St Teresa's is teaching them values that will help them as they grow up'. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. It offers good value for money.

Pupils' progress and achievement is good because teaching is good and purposeful. From broadly average starting points pupils attain consistently above average standards in national tests by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in English, mathematics and science is high but the proportion attaining the higher levels is not as high as it should be. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because teaching and support are particularly effective in meeting their needs.

Pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's work. Underpinning it are strong Christian values, which give the children a firm grasp of moral values and respect for others. They enjoy coming to school as seen in above average attendance levels. One pupil summed up the views of many: 'I really like it here. My teachers help me a lot and we all get along with each other. It's a bit like a big family!' Pupils feel safe in school. They have confidence in adults to help them sort out any problems. They enjoy taking on responsibilities. For example, they run all aspects of the healthy tuck shop and contribute enthusiastically to the successful school council, which has brought about significant improvements to playground facilities and equipment. The self-confidence such activities promotes is evident in the pupils' welcoming and inquisitive demeanour. The school prepares its youngsters very well to take advantage of the next stages in their education and their future lives.

Good teaching at all stages means pupils make good progress as they move up through the school. Good teaching is complemented by a good, broad curriculum with a wide range of enrichment activities that adds to learners' enjoyment. The school has developed effective systems for monitoring progress and setting realistic but demanding targets. However, teachers are not using the information effectively enough in planning their lessons to match work to the needs of different groups of learners. This is resulting in some lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Leadership and management are good. Parents think highly of the headteacher's ability to run a happy and harmonious school in which their children make good progress. A strong focus on identifying issues for improvement and strategies to raise standards and achievement are giving the school good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with attainment that is below that usually expected of children of their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in response to good teaching and good management which identify clearly what children need to know and how they learn. Adults plan enjoyable lessons and activities which are firmly based on a curriculum that meets each child's needs. These activities help children to develop positive

attitudes to school and set a solid foundation for further learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children reach a level that is about that expected for their age. Children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and supported effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the attainment of more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of lesson planning so that work is accurately matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The profile of attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage has changed. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 started school with broadly average attainment levels, whereas children entering the Foundation Stage in recent years have attainment levels below those expected for their age. The good start that children make in the Foundation Stage is continued throughout Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 children achieve well to attain just above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards are reflected in the latest Key Stage 1 national results. In Years 3 to 6 after a dip in 2006, Key Stage 2 national results bounced back well in 2007, especially in science where targeted intervention has brought about impressive improvement. Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, make good progress to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These standards are also confirmed by the latest national test results. The school achieved its demanding targets for pupils to attain the expected levels. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in English, mathematics and science was below the school's targets, and is not yet high enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well as they move up through the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the care and commitment given to them by all adults in school. Pupils' outstanding social development is fostered by their participation in a range of events, including valuable residential visits and outdoor pursuits. These activities add significantly to pupils' high levels of self-esteem and independence. Despite being a school with very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, pupils have impressive understanding of the diversity of other cultures. Pupils are fully aware of how to lead healthy lives and understand the need to eat the right sort of food. They take full advantage of the sporting enrichment activities on offer. It was a pleasure to see the eager anticipation of a large group of girls and boys preparing for an after-school cross-country run despite rainy and windy weather! They know how to avoid potential hazards and feel safe from oppressive or rough behaviour at school. Older pupils support younger ones by being playground buddies, for example. Pupils also make a very positive contribution to wider community cohesion through their involvement with the church and links with community events, such as environmental work and tree planting initiatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have a clear commitment to helping pupils succeed and have established good relationships with them. As a result behaviour is very good and little time, if any, is wasted in lessons. Teachers make good use of resources, particularly information and communication technology (ICT) to add variety and interest. Teachers know their subjects well and question pupils well to make them think. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures that these pupils make good progress. Teachers have a wealth of information at their disposal to judge how well their pupils are doing and what they should be capable of. However, this knowledge is not used consistently to plan for and provide work that offers enough challenge for the more able pupils. Consequently, they sometimes do not make as much progress as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all the learners. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. The school has only limited space available for ICT, but it makes good use of its computer facilities to support learning. The taught curriculum is enriched through the teaching of a modern foreign language in Years 2 to 6. The active participation of a foreign language assistant adds to pupils' enjoyment and cultural awareness. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which helps pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. The popular gardening club encourages pupils to care for and value their environment as well as providing them with first-hand experience of healthy food. Trips out, including a residential to Wales for Year 6 pupils, add to their enjoyment as well as raising levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Adults provide an outstanding level of care and guidance. Parents agree that this is a real strength of the school, commenting, for example, that this 'is an exceptionally caring, child-friendly school.' with a 'dedicated staff and an equally dedicated leader'. The school makes excellent use of support services and as a result pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by teachers and knowledgeable teaching assistants. Other vulnerable children also receive outstanding support, including support from outside agencies, so they feel fully included and able to benefit from what the school provides. The school knows its pupils very well. Outstanding liaison with the local Catholic High School ensures that pupils are very well prepared and look forward to going to secondary school. Systems for safeguarding children are in place. The carefully structured programme for promoting personal, social, health and citizenship education helps pupils to understand how to keep safe and to deal with their own feelings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and promotes good teamwork. Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Leadership provides a clear focus on raising standards and achievement. For example, planning has been improved recently to take account of a wider range of stakeholder views and concentrate more sharply on priorities for improvement. The early impact of these strategies can be seen in the improved 2007 Key Stage 2 test results. Leaders and managers monitor teaching and learning effectively and regularly. The outcomes are used to identify professional development needs related closely to improving teaching and learning. The monitoring of the effectiveness of lesson planning, however, is not sufficiently rigorous. Subject coordinators and middle managers are secure in their roles and carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically and knowledgeably. Senior leaders support them in their work and hold them to account responsibly. Leaders and managers have forged good links with the local community. The school is highly regarded by parents and the community it serves. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously. They are very supportive of the school and question its work and effectiveness appropriately.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Inspection of St Teresa's RC Primary School, Irlam, M44 5ZA

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. What you told us helped us in making our judgements about your school.

You will be pleased to hear that we think you go to a good school. We were impressed with your behaviour and how well you all get on with each other. You told us you like school and we saw evidence of that in the happy and enthusiastic way you went about things. The adults working with you take exceptionally good care of you and are very keen to make sure you do as well as you can. They provide you with good teaching so that you make good progress in your learning as you move up through the school. However, we think your teachers need to plan their lessons more carefully to make sure that what they ask you to do matches closely what you are able to do. We also think that more of you should be getting the higher levels in the tests you take and we are asking your teachers to make work a bit more challenging to bring this about.

Your headteacher is very committed to providing every one of you with a really good start to your education. We are confident that you will do all you can to help him achieve this and take advantage of all the good things the school has to give you.