

St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108039
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309579
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	511
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Cockshutt
Headteacher	Mr John Hutchinson
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barwick Road Crossgates Leeds West Yorkshire LS15 8RQ

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2008
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the eastern outskirts of the city in a residential area with mostly local authority housing. It is much larger than average and has significantly more boys than girls in some year groups. A recent building programme provided additional accommodation from September 2008, when 47 pupils and 11 staff joined after a nearby school closed. Ten per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds: a very small proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average but the number with a statement of special educational need is average. A new headteacher took up post in April 2007. The school has a number of awards including the Inclusion Charter Mark and is an Investor in People. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is through Nursery and Reception units. On site there is a day nursery, which is privately managed and not the subject of this inspection.

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. Typical comments from parents include, 'children love it', and, 'we wish they could stay here 'til they were 18'. The energy, expertise and experience of the headteacher are making a big difference. Effective leadership and management are improving the quality of teaching and learning and as a result, standards are rising. The headteacher's skills are complemented well by those of the deputy headteacher. With the full support of the staff, and governors of both schools, the recent changes to the school population and staff have been managed superbly.

Pupils enter the EYFS with skills that are generally below those typical for their age. Achievement is good across the school. Inspection evidence shows rising standards at Year 6 in English, mathematics and science from the overall above average levels of 2007. Standards are rising at Year 2 but not enough pupils are achieving highly and the boys' performance lags significantly behind that of the girls. Effective strategies have been put into place to raise standards throughout the school. Pupils are grouped by ability for mathematics in Years 5 and 6, for example, but not for English, as literacy is promoted through work for pupils in most other subjects. Teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement helps staff to intervene effectively and support any pupil not making the progress expected of them.

There is no doubt that pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most behave very well in lessons but, occasionally, when teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging or interesting work, pupils' behaviour suffers. All have a sound knowledge about other religions and cultures and their contribution to the school and local community is good. Pupils are prepared well for their future. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and staff lead by example to promote pupils' social skills in the caring and supportive atmosphere of the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and has a major impact on pupils' good attitudes towards school and their good progress. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge ensure pupils are highly motivated and as a result, most make exceptional progress in these lessons. Teaching is less effective when pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given. There has been a strong emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics and science and the good quality curriculum reflects this. Staff are developing 'our school curriculum' to give more emphasis to creative skills and the development of investigative skills through topics. In some classes, pupils do not have enough opportunity to be creative.

Parents clearly appreciate all that the school does for their children. The level of care, support and guidance is good and has a significant impact on pupils' personal development. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those learning to speak English as an additional language is outstanding. It enables all to be fully included in lessons and to do well.

Overall, leadership and management are good. Each educational phase has its own designated leader and effective support by subject leaders. Good systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, including standards, give staff an accurate assessment of all aspects of the school. The skill and drive of the headteacher is helping to weld staff, governors and pupils into a cohesive community which is striving for excellence. This reflects the schools' status as an Investor in People. As a result, there is a good capacity for the school to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good and is a developing strength of the school largely due to the good quality of leadership and management. Improvements over the last year have paid dividends in the significant increase in standards. Most children enter school below the levels expected for their age. In particular, many children have immature speech and underdeveloped social skills. Despite this, most achieve very well in the EYFS to attain levels above those expected for their age by the end of their Reception year.

Teaching is good with classrooms that are efficiently organised and managed and warm relationships between adults and children. Activities are well planned and geared nicely to all the areas of learning. There are good opportunities for children to develop their speech through well planned role play and discussion. Arrangements to track the progress of each child and to monitor the choices they make are efficient. Children behave well, although a small minority have yet to learn to adapt to the systems and expectations. The good relationships with adults help children to feel safe and secure. Despite the school's best efforts, the limitations of the accommodation impede the extent to which staff can provide an exciting and imaginative range of activities to promote learning outdoors. The school is preparing to fund improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics for boys and more able pupils.
- Provide a more creative curriculum which encourages and develops skills of exploration, investigation and problem solving.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have tended to fluctuate from year to year depending on the different proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each year group and the balance of girls and boys. More rigorous assessment and careful tracking of pupils' progress have enabled the school to target support for pupils who are not making expected progress and this is helping to raise standards. In Year 6, in 2008, inspection evidence shows that standards improved and the school met its targets in each subject. Standards in 2007 were overall above the national average and have risen since then in all tested subjects with no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Almost all pupils make good progress. The progress made by lower achieving pupils is remarkably good in some cases. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics with the upward trend in the proportion achieving expected standards being maintained. However, boys are not doing as well as girls and relatively few pupils attain highly. The school's Inclusion Charter Mark reflects the good progress pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make. Their needs are identified, appropriate learning targets are set and staff provide effective support in lessons. The school effectively supports pupils learning English as an additional language from its own resources and they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy what it provides for them. In general, they behave well. During the two minute silence for Armistice Day, for example, pupils responded with great respect and maturity. By contrast, away from the confines of the classrooms, there are occasional pockets of misbehaviour, because not all pupils have developed a sense of self-discipline. The school's Healthy School awards and Activemark reflect pupils' clear understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The well-run school council is an effective means of fostering responsibility and giving pupils a say in the running of their school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All know about the dangers of drugs, how to deal with bullying and are provided with good opportunities to explore their feelings and emotions. Reflective assemblies highlight a range of themes that link closely to the pupils own lives and the Christian character of the school. Encouraged by a system of rewards, pupils' attendance is above the national average. Most unauthorised absences arise as a result of holidays taken during term time, despite the school's efforts to discourage this practice. Community links are strong and together with rising standards and good personal development pupils are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inevitably with such a large staff there is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning. The careful assessment of pupils' progress is giving teachers a clear indication about how effective their teaching is and which pupils need extra attention. The main features in the most successful lessons are a cracking pace which holds pupils' interest and challenging activities which engage pupils and encourages them to investigate independently or solve realistic problems. In an outstanding French lesson, it was the teacher's enthusiasm and excellent subject knowledge which made the lesson fun and kept pupils on their toes. Teaching and learning are not as effective when teachers talk for too long and activities are insufficiently demanding for pupils. All staff make good use of the recently installed interactive whiteboards and computers to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils who have learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. As a result, these groups make the same good progress as their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is of good quality. There is a strong focus on ensuring that English, mathematics and science are planned carefully to meet pupils' different needs and ensure that standards rise. Literacy and numeracy are promoted effectively in other subjects and this impacts well on standards. The quality of displays of pupils' work is functional rather than stimulating or inspiring for pupils. This has already been identified by the school as an area to improve. Staff have made a good start on developing a more creative curriculum to combine skills from a range of subjects. The displays of work resulting from this are helping to create a more attractive learning environment in some classes. The contribution the curriculum makes to pupils' personal development and well-being is very good. The school provides a good variety of well attended enrichment activities such as residential visits and after-school clubs. However, few of these

cater for younger pupils. The partnership between home and school is a strength as shown by the very positive response of parents. The parents are well informed about what pupils are doing in lessons which helps them support their children's learning at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school where pupils are given good guidance and support. A strength is the way in which all pupils are included in what the school offers. Well chosen programmes of activities ensure pupils who need extra help make good progress. This is evidenced in the good support provided by teaching assistants in lessons and through the range of excellent individual learning plans for children experiencing difficulty. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are welcomed into the school, and closely supported in their learning until their command of English improves. There are clear procedures for promoting good behaviour: most pupils respond well. The school works very well with outside agencies to ensure that consistent care and support are given. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current safeguarding requirements. Most pupils know what their individual targets are in literacy and numeracy, but some of these are not challenging enough. Teachers' marking is very thorough. In some classes, however, it is mainly congratulatory rather than offering guidance on how to further improve work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by an experienced headteacher. This is having a positive impact on standards. An effective management team is valued and supported. Parents and staff are enthusiastic in their praise of the senior leadership. The school has a clear vision of how to raise standards further. Along with the governing body, leaders and managers are taking an active part in school development planning which demonstrates detailed analysis and accurate priorities. Standards are monitored closely by all staff who share a collective responsibility to ensure all pupils make sufficient progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning is a regular feature of the school calendar. Although this is positive and successfully promotes staff self-esteem, it sometimes does not give teachers enough information on how they can improve.

The successful integration of pupils and personnel from a neighbouring school reflects the commitment of the headteacher, governors and staff of both schools to create a cohesive school community. The school contributes well to community cohesion.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Inspection of St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Leeds, LS15 8RQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when my colleagues and I came to inspect your school.

You are right to be proud of your school! It is a good school and we can see why you enjoy every day so much. All the staff take good care of you and are always there for you when you need them. It is a credit to the hard work of your headteacher and governors how well pupils from the other school have settled in. You have also played your part in making them feel welcome. School is just like one big happy family.

In the Nursery and Reception units, your teachers and their helpers make sure you have lots of interesting things to enjoy both indoors and outside. Those of you who were pretending to be park keepers did a good job digging over the vegetable patch!

It was good to see all of you in Years 1 to 6 getting on so well together and to see your good behaviour in lessons. Your Healthy School and Activemark awards have certainly helped to give you all a good understanding about living a healthy lifestyle. Most of you concentrate well and work very hard for your teachers. They are quick to help you if you need it.

Most of you are doing well in English, mathematics and science. The inspection found that the school needs to concentrate on improving how well some of you do in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, so that more children achieve highly and so that boys and girls do equally well. Also, for your teachers to plan some even more exciting and creative things for you to do in your topics so that you can use your skills and knowledge to good effect. You can help by continuing to enjoy school and working hard in lessons.

Thank you again for making our visit to your school such an enjoyable one.