

# St Teresa's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114241
<b>Local Authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	311527
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Shepherd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Parkes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Christine Boyce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Harris Street Darlington County Durham DL1 4NL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 380754
<b>Fax number</b>	01325 256005

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area that has lower social and economic circumstances than average. Most pupils are from White British families. There is a much higher proportion of Traveller pupils than usual and there are also some pupils from other minority ethnic groups. Some 4% are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Many classes are organised in mixed ages. For literacy and numeracy sessions in Key Stage 2, the deployment of an additional teacher reduces class sizes as well as the range of ability in each class. The headteacher has been in the school for two full terms and the deputy headteacher for one full term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and progress well. Although standards are below those typical for their age when they enter the Nursery they achieve consistently well and most children are working at the expected level by the time they finish Reception. This good start is due to the well balanced curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching teams. Progress then slows to satisfactory through the rest of the school. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average with reading standards higher than writing. The school has recognised this inconsistency and has introduced a curriculum that provides a better balance of writing skills and more time for writing independently. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and there is no longer such a gap between standards of reading and writing in Key Stage 1.

There is a similar contrast in achievement and standards in Key Stage 2. The national tests show that standards in mathematics and science are broadly average, but standards in English have been consistently below average and fell to well below average in 2007. The school has worked hard over the past two terms to raise standards and increase progress in English. Changes to the organisation of support staff, smaller classes for literacy, better assessment systems and an improved writing curriculum are all having a positive impact and ensuring that progress is now consistently satisfactory. Standards are below average in Year 6 because these pupils have not had the benefit of the new improvements as they have moved through the school. The progress of more able pupils is inconsistent because of a lack of challenge in some of their teaching, learning and curriculum.

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory, as are the care, guidance and support that the school provides. Attendance rates are rising and are now satisfactory due to the school's sustained efforts. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and enjoy coming to school. A typical comment was, 'School is fun with lots of things to learn.' Their understanding of keeping healthy is satisfactory as are their contributions to the community. Pupils develop good skills of decision making, which prepares them well for their future lives, but their lower levels of literacy skills reduces the effectiveness of this preparation. Behaviour is good and is a result of the successful introduction of a behaviour management system through the school. Teachers manage behaviour well in lessons, but do not consistently support pupils in understanding what they have to do to improve their work. They do not systematically provide a range of different activities to sustain pupils' concentration. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is determined to improve provision and works well with the new senior leadership team. This team have introduced new strategies effectively, but the monitoring and self-evaluation processes are not extended across the full school community. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are keen to develop their role in the school. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school, providing a good start for children's future learning. They make good progress in both age groups because of the good quality teaching and learning with teams of staff that work well together. There is a lively and stimulating curriculum. For example, children were fascinated by the big blocks of ice in the water tray. There are some missed opportunities for covering all the areas of learning outdoors. The staff provide good quality care, support and guidance, which give children confidence and ensure good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The school currently is in between coordinators, resulting in satisfactory leadership and management.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and increase achievement in writing.
- Improve provision and increase progress of more able pupils.
- Extend monitoring and self-evaluation processes.
- Provide a wider range of contrasting activities in lessons and extend pupils' understanding of their own learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 10 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. Children enter the Nursery below the level typical for their age, make good progress in both classes and the majority of children reach the expected level by Year 1. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The national assessments in 2007 show that standards are broadly average, with reading standards higher than writing. The school has identified key factors for the underachievement in writing; pupils now carry out more writing activities and the inspection shows that standards are now rising. The national tests in Key Stage 2 in 2007 are below average overall. This is due to the consistently lower standards in English. Standards in mathematics and science are broadly average. The school is addressing this major discrepancy. The new arrangements for teaching literacy are having a positive impact and the inspection judges progress as satisfactory. More able pupils do not make consistent progress because some of their work is too easy. The achievement of Traveller pupils, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep healthy but the lack of choices for healthy eating at lunchtime and lack of involvement in physical education means that they are not as effective in carrying this out. They enjoy coming to school; attendance rates are rising and are now broadly satisfactory. Behaviour was an area of concern for the school but the new systems introduced are having a very positive impact; behaviour is now good. Pupils enjoy making decisions. The school council's involvement in interviewing the headteacher candidates is a good example of

these skills. This prepares them well for their future lives, but the lower level of literacy skills at the top of the school means that their overall preparation is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, as are pupils' contributions to the community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers work well with support staff. The reorganisation of the teaching assistants to work in permanent teams is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. In contrast, teachers do not challenge more able pupils consistently enough to increase their rate of learning. Teachers manage behaviour well and pupils settle quickly to their tasks. The quality of marking is not consistent through the school. Although teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to talk about their work in pairs, this does not happen regularly enough to extend speaking skills systematically in lessons. In the best teaching, there are interesting activities, a fast pace and a very good variety of contrasting tasks that match pupils' different learning needs well. This is not evident in all classes.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. There were key weaknesses in the writing curriculum and the majority of these have been addressed. The organisation of the curriculum of Key Stage 2 into predominantly single age groups for literacy and numeracy is working well. The new spelling scheme is beginning to work effectively and the increase in the amount of independent writing is increasing pupils' progress. The curriculum for handwriting is inadequate and opportunities are missed to extend literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects. The curriculum for more able pupils is not challenging enough. There are good levels of enrichment and pupils enjoy the many opportunities to take part in clubs and activities out of school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school is at the very early stages of supporting pupils in understanding what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are keen to try to identify what their targets are but are not fully confident of the details. Safeguarding systems, including child protection, risk assessments and health and safety, are in place. Pupils say that they feel safe and that there are adults that they can go to for support. Links with outside agencies are satisfactory, with good support for Traveller pupils and pupils with English as an additional language. The school values the partnership with parents and parents in turn really appreciate the work of the school.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher sets sensible priorities and is having an impact on raising standards and improving behaviour. She is introducing efficient systems in order to increase the challenge of targets across the school's work. She uses the

local authority expertise well. The new senior leadership team has good self-evaluation skills, but the processes for involving the wider range of leaders and managers is not in place. The monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum is in the same position with not enough monitoring of lessons or specific guidance given to teachers on how to improve. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are keen to be more involved in the work of the school and to extend their monitoring role.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

28 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's RC Primary School, Darlington, DL14 8NN

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We really enjoyed the two days we spent with you and only wished we had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing.

The quality of education you receive is satisfactory. The children in the Nursery and Reception make a good start and the staff work well together to give them interesting things to do to help their learning. You make satisfactory progress through the rest of the school, although your English is not as good as your mathematics and science. By trying harder to improve your writing you will make better progress through the school. The school is going to give those of you who find learning easy more challenging work and you can make sure that you tackle this harder work enthusiastically to help you reach higher standards.

Your behaviour is good and we could see that you enjoy coming to school. You have tried hard to make sure you attend school regularly. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe, particularly when you are using the computers. You know what you need to do to keep healthy. We know that you understand the importance of using the new targets that the school has given you and we think that your school could use these more in lessons. All the adults who work in the school and your governors are going to all find out more about what are the best things about your school, and what needs to get better. You will really help by talking to them about what you think.

We really enjoyed talking to your school council and they told us all about your school. We hope that you will try even harder in future to make it an even better place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd and the team

Lead inspector and additional inspectors