

St Teresa Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117466
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312625
Inspection dates	16–17 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Doneo
Headteacher	Mr Mark Holdsworth
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Brook Road Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 5HL
Telephone number	0208 9533753
Fax number	0208 3815273

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	16–17 April 2008
Inspection number	312625

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who require extra support with their learning is higher than most schools, and varies year-on-year. In some year groups, the proportion is very much higher than the national average at nearly a half. A higher than average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. However, a lower percentage of pupils than nationally are known to be eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry fluctuates year on year. In recent times, school data indicates that it is slightly below the levels expected for children's ages. There have been many changes to the leadership of the school in recent years. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2007 following a period when there was an interim head. There have also been significant recent changes to staff. Three of the five teachers new to the school are at the start of their career. The school has been awarded the Forest School accreditation, Healthy Schools award, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, Hertfordshire Early Years Kitemark and a national award for speaking and listening.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Teresa's provides pupils with a satisfactory education. It provides a satisfactory level of care and support for pupils overall. However, pastoral care is excellent. Pupils say they feel safe and happy. As a result, they are positive about the school, clearly enjoy their lessons and attend very regularly. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good and a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent.

There has been significant turbulence in the past, which resulted in some groups of pupils making less progress than they should. However, the new headteacher has quickly forged a new team, with a strong, whole-school ethos and a determination to raise standards further. The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a sound range of enrichment and activities outside the school day. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make sound progress overall throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics and progress is good in an increasing proportion of lessons. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, progress in mathematics and reading is stronger than in writing and therefore standards in writing, while broadly average, are not quite as high as in mathematics and reading.

The headteacher has a good understanding of standards across the school. The coordination of subjects is in a state of transition, due to a number of changes to staff. In addition, the whole-school systems to monitor pupils' progress and to show how well particular groups are doing in all subjects are not developed sufficiently. While there are very efficient systems in place to track and monitor progress in reading, writing, mathematics and the Foundation Stage, this is not yet the case in other areas of the curriculum. Because of this, leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The governing body is keen and members visit regularly. They provide a satisfactory level of support and challenge for the school. Improvements made since the last inspection show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Although there are good aspects to much of the teaching, these are inconsistent. Class teachers know their pupils well; have good relationships with them and a consistently high expectation of their behaviour. They work hard to make lessons interesting and appealing. However, in too many classes, teachers do not use their marking of written work as well as they might to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. This is particularly the case in relation to improving their use of writing in other subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good overall. It is exceptionally good in the teaching and learning of early skills in recognising letter sounds. On occasion, teaching and learning are excellent, particularly for the teaching of literacy skills. Children settle happily into the unit, because of the good quality of care that all staff provide. Routines are well established and children know what is expected of them. As a result, behaviour and personal development are good.

Children progress well and their achievement is good. Although there are variations year-on-year, due to the variations in the make up of each cohort, standards on entry to Year 1 are generally in line with those expected for children's ages.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make effective use of marking and feedback to pupils to help them improve their skills in writing across the curriculum.
- Develop easily manageable systems to monitor pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Develop teachers' skills of managing and monitoring a subject.

A small proportion of 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 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in Years 1 to 6. However, there have been some variations in the recent past and data indicates that there were times when achievement for some groups was inadequate. Currently pupils from all groups, including those who need extra help with their learning, the more able and those who speak English as an additional language are making at least steady, satisfactory progress. They are on track to attain the suitably challenging targets the school sets for them and achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their ages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet, the need to take exercise and how to keep themselves safe. They have many good opportunities to develop their social skills well. Pupils have a good understanding between right and wrong. They have the opportunity to become school councillors, playground 'buddies'. Their independent learning skills are satisfactory. Pupils are thoughtful and articulate, and express themselves well. They take a great interest in learning about other countries and cultures, and provide support for a children's home in the Philippines. They generally behave well in and out of the classroom. Their attendance is good. Pupils readily get involved in community activities such as singing at a local home for the elderly. Their skills in teamwork and capacity to cooperate with one another are particularly good. The sound development of pupils' key skills help them to prepare for the future life. Their spiritual development is outstanding and plays a distinctive role at the school. This is fostered through many opportunities to reflect, pray and consider important issues such as forgiveness and how to act this out practically in their own lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While satisfactory overall, teaching is improving and a significant minority is good. Lessons proceed with minimal fuss or delay. Teachers make good use of exciting resources and many practical experiences. In this way, pupils are interested and pay attention. Some pupils say of their teacher that they 'make learning fun'. Teachers know their pupils well and marking of books is regular and frequently offers praise. However, it is variable in quality; the new marking policy is not yet fully implemented in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Visits and visitors planned to make learning more interesting are chosen well to interest the pupils, for example, the visit to the Globe Theatre. The residential visit in Year 6 is much enjoyed by pupils and provides opportunities to develop socially and be challenged physically. The school plans themed days and weeks, such as book week, to enthuse pupils about literacy. The range of activities outside of lessons helps pupils develop health and fitness and encourage interest in different activities, but there is not a wide enough range for younger pupils. There is sufficient time given to basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics but the opportunities to improve ICT skills, whilst satisfactory, are underused in other curriculum areas. Links between subjects are not always explicitly made and therefore there are missed opportunities for effective learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are very well cared for in a harmonious and happy school. Staff work hard and enthusiastically to create a caring, respectful and supportive learning environment in which pupils say they feel safe. They know who to go to if they have a problem and are given clear reminders of how to keep safe or who to see if they have a concern. Parents are positive about the care provided. One parent said that the school 'takes the educational and welfare needs of the children very seriously.' However, the guidance for academic progress is not as strong. The lack of rigorous assessment systems in subjects other than English and mathematics means that planning and target setting to speed up progress is imprecise. The more able pupils, whilst being catered for satisfactorily overall, are not always provided with opportunities that challenge their thinking and tasks do not consistently extend knowledge or skill. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and visible throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There have been many changes to the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. Currently, a significant proportion of staff are at the start of their career and so there is a heavy burden, in terms of taking whole school responsibility for subjects, on the remaining staff. Many good new initiatives and policies have been put into place, although it is early to evaluate the impact of some of these, such as new tracking systems in English and mathematics. The headteacher has a very clear view of the school and his evaluation of all aspects of standards is accurate. He has swiftly and effectively established his high expectations both of pupils' personal development and thought for others. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of the Roman Catholic ethos. Governors are keen to extend their role and have already undertaken meetings with the school council to ascertain pupils' views.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 ¹ 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?	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
How well 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	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

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?	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

18 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Teresa Roman Catholic Primary School, Borehamwood, WD6 5HL

I am writing to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. I especially want to thank all those of you we met in groups and talked to in the playground and at lunchtime. This was very helpful to us and it was lovely for us to hear about your work and how much you enjoy being at school. We want to share with you the things we found out about your school.

Here are the really good things about your school.

- You enjoy school and so attend very regularly.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes do well because the teaching is good.
- Teachers tell you a lot about how to be healthy and stay safe.
- You behave well and so school is a pleasant place to be.
- Your spiritual development is excellent.
- Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting.
- Your new headteacher knows your school very well and also knows what to do to improve it still further.
- Staff look after you very well and the care taken to ensure you don't worry about things is excellent.

There are some things that can make your school even better.

- Teachers should help you to make even better progress in your writing.
- The teachers should get better at checking how well each of you do in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, so that it can help you even more to make the best possible progress.
- We have also asked your headteacher and governors to help your new teachers to develop their skills in being responsible for managing and monitoring a subject across the whole school.

We know you can help in these things by continuing to come to school regularly and doing your very best. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector