

St Teresas Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119695
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327112
Inspection date	24 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	203
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 Phillip Holland
Headteacher	Mr Peter Atherton
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	College Road Up Holland Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 0PY
Telephone number	01695 623842
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing
- the factors contributing to consistently good standards in science
- the effectiveness of guidance in helping pupils to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation in bringing about improvements.

Evidence was collected from performance data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils, parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This slightly smaller than average sized primary school serves an area of social and economic advantage. Fewer pupils than average are from minority ethnic backgrounds, none of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable housing development within the area served by the school, with changes in children's attainment on entry. The school has links with the parish and the local high school.

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. It provides an excellent level of care, guidance and support for its pupils and their personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Pupils say how much they enjoy the interesting lessons and the extensive and varied range of additional activities on offer. Their attendance is above average. They understand the value of a healthy diet and readily take up the many opportunities for vigorous exercise that the school presents. They, themselves, have helped to launch the 'beat obesity' programme. They are very aware of how to keep safe, for example, through road safety and cycling courses, and try to make sure that nobody in the playground is left out. They make an excellent contribution to the school community as school councillors and by helping younger pupils. They also value and recognise their place in the wider community as they join in parish events and raise money for charities at home and abroad. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and assume their responsibilities with enthusiasm and confidence. Their excellent behaviour and their growing awareness of other faiths and cultures help to prepare them very well for the future.

Accurate assessments of children starting in Reception over the last three years indicate that they currently enter school with skills that are above what are usual for their age; previously children entered with a range of skills that were broadly typical for their age. They make good progress during their time in school and standards are generally above average when they leave. Improvements in teaching in Key Stage 1 have resulted in good improvements in standards since the last inspection. In the national assessments for Year 2, standards have been above average for the past three years and pupils achieve well.

Standards are above average overall in Key Stage 2. In the 2008 national tests for Year 6, standards in mathematics and science were above average. Almost three-quarters of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in science, reflecting good teaching and knowledgeable leadership in the subject. Standards in English were broadly average. The school's analysis shows that pupils achieved well in reading, but writing was a comparative weakness. While the school's strategies to improve writing have led to improvements in Key Stage 1, they have yet to compensate fully for slow progress in writing in previous years for older pupils in Key Stage 2. While pupils' achievement is good overall and it is satisfactory in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, achieve well because of the very good level of support they receive.

Teaching and learning are good and, consequently, pupils make good progress. Teachers' high expectations and consistent approach are strong factors in ensuring pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour. Lessons are generally interesting and well planned, and so pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers explain the work carefully, but sometimes pupils do not have sufficient time to complete their own tasks to make the most of the activities. Work is regularly marked and teachers take time to discuss with pupils what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is good. The strong programme of personal, social and health education and the wide range of sporting activities assist pupils' personal development very well. Parents appreciate the way staff give so freely of their time to provide and support numerous after-school activities which enhance learning. The use of the stimulating outdoor environment and the contribution of specialist visitors help pupils to achieve consistently good standards in science. The variety of strategies to address the identified weakness in writing skills have

helped to raise standards in Key Stage 1, although the full impact is not yet evident in Key Stage 2.

Parents support the inspectors' view that the quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. They say that the school puts their children first and that the support given to those who need it is special. The skilled support staff are well deployed and the school seeks help from other professionals where needed. Consequently, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, achieve at a similar rate to that of others. All the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place. There are very good systems to assess and track pupils' progress and to provide additional help where needed at an early stage. Pupils understand their own targets for improvement and work hard to achieve them. They are very proud to 'score goals' when they achieve a target and are very keen to score a 'hat trick'.

The school is led and managed well. The strong ethos, rooted in the school's Catholic tradition, makes a significant contribution to the high level of care and pupils' personal development. The school monitors and evaluates its work carefully and accurately to plan improvements. Recent strategies to improve writing have helped to raise standards in Key Stage 1, but have not yet been sufficiently evaluated to ensure they are having an impacted on standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the needs of the school and are supportive and effective in bringing about improvements, for example, in improving the accommodation.

Community cohesion is good. There are beneficial links with the parish, and ministers from other Christian traditions contribute to assemblies. This practice does not yet include leaders of other world faiths. The local pageant, which the children joined in two years ago, was judged to be such a success in bringing the community, including different faiths, together that it has become a regular bi-annual event. The school has developed links with one in Uganda and with organisations in Eastern Europe to help pupils to appreciate different cultures.

Improvements since the last inspection, including pupils' outstanding personal development, the quality of teaching and the effective current focus on raising standards even more indicate the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children currently enter the school with a range of skills that are above what are usual for their age. The school successfully builds on this promising foundation so that children make good progress in the Reception class and almost all achieve and many exceed the recommended learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

The high priority placed on personal, social and emotional development promotes excellent outcomes for each individual child. Children enjoy coming to school because of the interesting range of activities on offer. They develop a very good understanding of keeping healthy; adults are good role models and join them for fruit snacks and encourage them to enjoy regular exercise. The children know how to keep safe and respond well to the regular reminders to wash their hands before eating. They make a very good contribution to the school community as they listen to others with respect, put up their hands and tidy away equipment they have used. Children work well together even when not directly supervised as, for example, when a group used puppets to retell the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Their good basic skills and the confidence to try hard prepare them well for Year 1.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Teaching is good; it comprises a good range of purposeful, practical activities that engage children's interest. Adults explain activities clearly, although occasionally children can be left too long on the carpet and become a little restless. Good use is made of the interesting outdoor area to extend learning. There are good systems for assessing children's learning through direct observation and the information is used well to plan work for different groups. Every effort is made to involve parents in children's learning. Parents respond well by helping their children with their 'talk homework'.

Welfare is outstanding. There are excellent arrangements for introducing children to school before them starting in Reception. Parents report that this helps children to settle very quickly and develop good attitudes to learning from an early age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies to improve writing to ensure they are having a sufficient impact on standards of older 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?	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1

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?	1

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**

27 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, WN8 0PY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Mr Massey and I enjoyed joining you in lessons and hearing your views. We agree with you and your parents that St Teresa's is a good school - in fact some things about it are outstanding. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and by your enthusiasm for lessons and all the additional activities that the school provides.

Teaching is good and you work hard so you make good progress. You reach standards that are generally above what can be expected for your age in reading and mathematics and you achieve particularly well in science. Pupils in Year 6 certainly enjoyed working with their visitor to learn more about mini-beasts.

The school takes excellent care of you all. There is always an adult to give extra help to those who need it. Teachers mark your work carefully and tell you what you need to do to improve. You told us that you enjoy achieving your targets and are proud when you score a 'goal', even more so when you score a 'hat trick'.

When we inspect a school it is part of our job to suggest ways in which even a good school could be better. As you know, the school is using many ways to help you do as well in writing as you do in other subjects. We want the teachers to check to make sure that this is helping all of you, particularly the older ones, to improve your writing.

We wish you every success with your writing and we hope you continue to enjoy learning so much.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead inspector