

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122781
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	327795
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Best

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)	420
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	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bernard Howes
Headteacher	Mr William Milburn
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingsbury Drive Aspley Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG8 3EP

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and serves a number of Catholic parishes on the west side of the city. The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language are well above the national averages and are increasing year-on-year. The main groups represented are White British, Asian and African, together with other White and mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, with the majority of these having speech and language difficulties. While the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, there is significant social disadvantage in the locality.

Children start in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage classes in the September following their fourth birthday and, after a phased start, attend on a full-time basis. Until this school year, children started in the September or January following their fourth birthday. The school's assessment of children's skills and experiences when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen from below to broadly in line with expectations for their age since the last inspection. However, the range is wide and a minority of children are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils joining the school other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than average.

The school runs a breakfast club each school-day morning and has recently received a Healthy Schools award. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Teresa's is a good Catholic school. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its overall effectiveness. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement. Pupils from many different backgrounds achieve well in a calm and orderly environment in which individuals are valued and respected. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Those from minority ethnic groups, particularly those for whom English is not their first language, benefit from the effective support the school gives them. At the end of Year 6, standards are just above the national averages in mathematics and science, and just below the national average in English. Pupils have a good understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling and different styles of writing but a significant number of more able pupils narrowly miss the higher level because they are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to secure this.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well both in lessons and on the playground. In nearly all lessons, their attitudes to work are very positive. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and healthy, and make good contributions to their school, parish and local communities. Their development of skills that will contribute to their future well-being is good overall. However, while they successfully participate in team work, use their initiative and successfully acquire key skills in literacy and numeracy, their application of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in learning is hampered by the school's small number of computers.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff manage pupils well and the excellent working atmosphere in classes is based on mutual respect for others and their regard for the school's ethos. Parents and carers strongly support pupils' enjoyment of school and willingness to learn. Lessons are carefully planned and delivered but learning objectives, although shared with pupils, are not always specific enough. This is because assessment and tracking information are not used rigorously enough to refine teachers' expectations and focus pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work. The school provides pupils with a good range of curricular and other activities. The curriculum is well adapted to meet pupils differing needs. Personal and social education is good, especially the programmes for drug education and anti-racism. The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. The school caters well for pupils' pastoral care, working closely with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils, parents and carers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and senior staff provide purposeful direction for the school. This is effectively informed by a regular programme of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of statutory and other assessment information. Appropriately challenging targets, set in conjunction with the local authority, are met or exceeded. Governors are well informed about the school's work and, through their developing links with senior staff and subject leaders, they are gaining good first-hand evidence to support the detailed reports they receive.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter school with a wide range of knowledge and skills which are, for the majority, broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their

learning and development, entering Year 1 with broadly average standards. Girls do well in their communication, language and literacy skills but boys have relatively weaker early writing abilities. There are some very new initiatives to improve boys' motivation, interest and ability to begin to write, but it is too soon to see a real impact. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Shortcomings in provision have been accurately diagnosed and a good start made to making improvements. Staff have benefited from a good number of well-targeted training courses. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. The best lessons help children to gain knowledge in an enjoyable and varied way, for example, using books to gather information about pets. Teaching assistants provide children with good support. Less effective teaching does not ensure children are focused enough on what they are doing. Sometimes groups are too large for adults to successfully cater for all levels of ability. ICT is not well used as a teaching aid to captivate children's interest. Children's personal development is satisfactory. They enjoy what they are doing and behave well but there are not enough opportunities for them to develop their independence, for example, by pursuing their individual interests. At times, children do not respond positively and quickly enough such as when they are asked to help pack away. The promotion of children's welfare is satisfactory. Staff take good care of children and while systems to check on how well children are doing have recently improved, there is still some way to go before they provide a clear overview in order that weaker areas can be swiftly identified. Although there is a new soft surface area, there is no daily planned opportunity for children to enjoy purposeful play outside.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by implementing current best practice in all areas of learning, including the use of the outside area.
- Ensure that teachers make rigorous use of assessment and tracking information to enable more able pupils to reach the higher levels, particularly in writing in English.
- Increase the number of computers and pupils' access to them so that they systematically use and apply their ICT skills in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are broadly similar to the national averages. In the last three years, overall results at the end of Year 2 have slightly improved during a period of year-on-year increases in the proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science, enabling results at end of Year 6 to be maintained at just above the national average over the last three years. In English, although pupils make satisfactory progress during the key stage, results have fallen over time due to fewer pupils gaining the higher levels in writing.

Overall, there are no significant differences in the standards or achievement of boys and girls. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and the impact of this benefits their achievement by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, especially those for whom English is not their first language, make good progress because they are well supported in developing their knowledge and use of language, particularly their subject vocabulary in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good overall. The school's strong and distinctive ethos very effectively shapes pupils' respect and regard for others. Their spiritual development is strengthened by the high quality of singing in assemblies. However, some pupils have a limited understanding of the traditions and faiths of other cultures. Pupils support one another well through initiatives such as peer and buddy support, and the play leader scheme, for which older pupils have training in supporting the younger ones. Pupils are polite and display very good personal skills when in conversation with visitors. Attendance is above average and the school monitors absences carefully. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the recently awarded Healthy Schools award and confidently point to the changes that this has had on eating habits and their attitudes to keeping fit. They are well aware of safety issues, including the dangers posed by use of the internet.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and to the local communities. They have a good understanding of the democratic processes of becoming elected to the school council. Members take their responsibilities seriously and talk confidently about the influence they are having in the school. Beyond the school pupils have good awareness of others in their local community. In addition to supporting a range of charities, pupils in Years 5 and 6 work on a regular basis with youngsters in the nearby special school. Pupils also entertain, and develop their relationship with, older people living in the nearby residential home.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is a good pace to learning in most lessons so that pupils concentrate well and maintain their interest. They settle quickly and work well on their own or in small groups. Pupils respond confidently to well-crafted questions that test and extend their understanding. Teaching assistants give good support for pupils who require additional help with language or who need to take smaller steps in learning. In most classes, pupils' work is regularly marked and although comments increasingly provide advice about the next steps in learning, they often lack a specific focus. Overall, staff make effective use of the available learning resources but the limited provision of ICT equipment restricts its more effective use in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are well established and successfully support pupils' good achievement. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports, many at competitive levels through the house system and by playing with other schools. A good number of pupils have the opportunity to play musical instruments or to sing in the choir. Themed days, incorporating a number of subjects, are being developed to cover chosen topics in more depth and widen pupils' horizons. There are, however, limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum in order that they can systematically develop and apply the skills they have gained at home and in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes effective arrangements for first aid, safeguarding pupils and supporting those pupils who are looked after by the local authority. The well-attended breakfast club provides a healthy start to the day. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language, are provided with good support. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced year group targets in English and mathematics. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has improved this academic year but it is not uniformly embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team have a good vision for the school's development and sustain its ethos well. The process of school self-evaluation has benefited from the fresh perspective of the new deputy headteacher. The school's priorities for development are focused on improving pupils' achievement, with suitable arrangements in place for funding, monitoring and evaluating outcomes against realistic goals. Staff are well deployed to support pupils' needs and this makes a valuable contribution to the school's good provision for equal opportunities. In their responses to the inspection questionnaires and in conversation with inspectors, parents are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the commitment and help of staff. A small minority would like the school to take more account of parents' and carers' views. The school enjoys good working relations with its partner providers and there are good links with the neighbouring school to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.

The school's understanding of, and response to, promoting community cohesion is satisfactory. It has strong links with the parishes it serves and several contacts with the local community, all of which directly benefit pupils, parents and carers. These include providing a breakfast club and offering adult education classes in conjunction with a local college. The school helps pupils to understand how their school is different from others in countries abroad but there are sometimes missed opportunities for them to develop a deeper understanding of the lives of those from different faiths, ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	3
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**

30 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Nottingham, NG8 3EP

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school earlier this week. We are grateful for the time you gave us to talk about your work and everyday life in school. Your good behaviour, kindness and respect for others impressed us and we can appreciate why you enjoy the school's calm and orderly atmosphere.

St Teresa's is a good school. You achieve well because teaching is good, you work hard and the staff take good care of you. Some of you have extra help from staff in learning English. You make good progress, particularly in getting to know about letters and sounds, different ways of writing and learning the special words used in numeracy and science. By the time you get to Year 6, you all have a good understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, those of you who could get to the higher level in writing do not always do so. To help you, we have asked your teachers to use the information they have about what you know and understand to tell you exactly what you need to do to reach higher levels.

You showed us that you know how to use ICT to look for information and present this in a variety of different ways. However, the school does not have enough computers for you to regularly develop and apply these skills in different subjects so we have asked the school to put this right.

For the first time, all children started in the Reception class at the beginning of this school year. Those children have settled down well, enjoy school and are making satisfactory progress. This could be improved and we have asked the staff to do this by finding out about different ways to help children learn both inside the classroom and in the outside area.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Mike Best

Lead inspector