

St Teresa's Catholic (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124320
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	328109
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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)	360
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	Kevin Gallacher
Headteacher	Peter Thorpe
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stone Road Trent Vale Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6SP

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Teresa's is a larger than average primary school, with an Early Years Foundation Stage covering Nursery and Reception-aged children. There is also a childcare club, managed by the school, which provides both before- and after-school care for pupils aged 3-11. Most of the pupils are White British, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number of learners with difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds a number of awards, which include Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Activemark, Extended Schools and Dyslexia Friendly status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education. The outstanding quality of provision for pupils' care, guidance and support makes a major contribution to their outstanding personal development and well-being. The school has excellent links with other schools and the local church which support pupils' well-being. The childcare club is extremely popular with pupils and parents and makes a positive contribution to the school's provision and to pupils' personal development. The parents have extremely positive views of the school. They appreciate the high standards of care that the school provides for their children, the 'dedication' of the headteacher and the 'friendliness and approachability' of the staff. One parent, typical of many, endorsed this, writing, 'Children achieve high academic and social standards nurtured in a Christian environment.' Another commented that the school 'feels like a second home and has a caring ethos embedded in the community'.

From the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Reception. In the rest of the school, pupils continue to achieve well and reach standards well above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, although standards are not as high in mathematics, particularly the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Standards are highest in reading. The progress of more able pupils in mathematics is being tackled, but strategies in place to address this issue have not had enough time to affect their achievement. Pupils' achievement is good because of the good leadership and management and the clear direction which the headteacher and the staff set for all pupils to do their best. There are good systems for checking the performance of pupils and improving teaching which help staff to use the results of assessments to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils receive good guidance on how to achieve their targets and are involved in improving their work by acknowledging, and responding to, the comments that teachers write in their books. The quality of teaching and learning and curricular provision are good. Teaching stimulates pupils through a good range of learning activities, which pupils say they enjoy. The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers pupils a wide range of activities which support both their personal development and their learning.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and show very good levels of care for each other. For example, older pupils act as play leaders to younger pupils. They enjoy school immensely and their positive attitudes are seen in their outstanding behaviour and reflected in their views of their teachers, who they say are 'kind, friendly and really get you to understand'. One parent commented, 'My child loves coming to school and feels part of the community within.' Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and stay safe. They make good choices to eat healthily and take exercise and know that they can go to any adult in the school if they are worried. Their contribution to the life of the school and the community is outstanding through their work as school councillors and in raising money for, and working with, a wide range of charities in the local and wider communities. The school council has initiated several improvements to the school, including new playground equipment, and at harvest time, pupils work with homeless people in the local area. Pupils' economic well-being is good because of their good achievement. They are developing into mature young citizens as they progress through the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because of effective leadership and good learning and development. The leader sets a clear direction and leads the team of committed staff well to ensure that the provision meets the needs of all children. Children join the Nursery with skills and abilities similar to those expected for their age and make good progress because of good learning and development. By the time they enter Year 1, their standards are above average. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and is a strength. Links with parents are very strong and they are pleased with the confident start their children make. One typically commented, 'My child is very happy and developing wonderfully well with the excellent teaching and support.' The high priority placed on children's welfare results in a supportive and stimulating learning environment in which children are nurtured and encouraged to develop their independence. Effective planning results in a wide range of activities which engage children and which they clearly enjoy. They are encouraged to show initiative in learning through play. Phonics is taught well and is having a positive effect on children's achievement in writing. The outdoor environment is used satisfactorily to promote children's learning, but the range of activities are not as stimulating as those provided indoors. Children's profiles give clear and regular information about their progress and are used effectively to plan their further activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics by the end of Year 6, particularly for more able pupils, so that it is in line with their achievement in reading and writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress and reach standards which are well above average in English and mathematics by the time they reach Year 6. Standards in reading are high. The school is tackling the progress of more able pupils in mathematics, so that they do as well as they do in English and has put a number of initiatives in place to improve pupils' problem-solving abilities. These initiatives are too recent to show significant evidence of improvement in pupils' achievement. Important factors in improving achievement have been the improved use of assessment to check pupils' performance and the guidance given to pupils to help them know how to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, are progressing and achieving well because of the good levels of support they receive for their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The regular masses that pupils attend in school make a positive contribution to their spiritual development and levels of self-esteem. Their social and moral development is seen in the strength of relationships in school and pupils' clear understanding of right and wrong. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school through the opportunities they have to participate in making decisions, for example when the school council became involved in choices about eating healthily at lunchtimes. Pupils have a good cultural understanding through their links with the wider

community and the wide range of activities they participate in to develop their understanding. Their enjoyment of school is seen in their good attendance and in their outstanding support for each other. 'It is nice because you ask each other for help,' commented one pupil.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with pupils and manage them extremely well. They plan well to meet the needs of the different ages and abilities in the class and use a wide range of teaching and learning approaches to engage and stimulate learning. Occasionally, lessons are too teacher-led and when this happens, pupils become fidgety because they are not sufficiently involved in the lesson. In most lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to work with other pupils in pairs and small groups. They share resources well and show high levels of concentration, for example when writing play scripts based on 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. 'We do lots of discussions, which helps our learning,' commented one pupil. Marking identifies clearly to pupils what they need to do next and teachers use assessment well to plan further activities. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good levels of support for pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the pupils' needs well. Learning is planned effectively so that pupils have good opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in all their subjects. Good practice was seen in science and in design and technology. A number of initiatives have been put in place recently to improve pupils' achievement further, for example a thinking skills initiative for more able pupils, although this has not yet sufficiently impacted on pupils' achievement. An extensive programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development and well-being extremely well. There is a wide and varied range of after-school activities which encourages pupils, for example, to take their musical skills into the community. There is excellent enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors. This supports both achievement and personal development, including pupils' cultural awareness through visits to France and visitors from different cultures coming into school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The welfare of the pupils is at the heart of the school's mission. The school aim is to ensure that 'all members of the school community are healthy, feel safe and valued'. As an outcome of this aim, pupils are nurtured and supported in a family atmosphere, enabling them to mature into sensible young people who gain excellent personal skills in preparation for life ahead. The provision the school makes to ensure this happens is wide-ranging, including the childcare club and excellent links with outside agencies to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. The childcare club provides well for pupils both before and after school. Learners with difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and guided, and links with the local high school ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of pupils' education. Procedures for safeguarding and the welfare of pupils are rigorous and fully meet requirements. Academic guidance is good. Pupils know their targets well and what they need to do to improve their work. They appreciate

the help their teachers give them through acknowledging the comments on their work and this helps them to achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors set an extremely clear direction for the school, as seen in the well above average standards of attainment and excellent personal development of pupils. This common purpose and success in improving the achievement of all pupils indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Self-evaluation is good, with effective systems for checking provision and improving the performance of pupils. Subject leaders have a clear role to raise standards but several recent initiatives have not been sufficiently evaluated to ensure that they are having the impact needed. Governors fulfil their duties well and challenge the school effectively to improve provision and raise pupils' standards and achievement through their regular links with subject leaders. The school makes a good contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. There is a clear plan to improve pupils' awareness and understanding of different faiths and cultures, based on a clear analysis of the needs of pupils and the community. The school's actions promote pupils' understanding of others in the local, wider and global communities well, engaging well with people from different faiths and backgrounds at a variety of levels.

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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?	1
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	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?	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	1
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**

16 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6SP

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We thought you were extremely polite and helpful. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say. We know that you are proud of your school and enjoy your time there. We think that St. Teresa's is a good school with a number of strengths. These are the main things we found out about your school:

- you make good progress in your work and reach standards that are well above average for your age. Those of you who are more able do better in your reading and writing than you do in your mathematics
- your behaviour is excellent and you show very good attitudes to your learning
- you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe
- the school provides you with a wide range of activities, which you say that you enjoy and which help you to achieve well
- you make an excellent contribution to the life of the school through the different jobs you do, such as school councillors and play leaders
- you are taught well and say that your teachers 'make you laugh and help you to do your work well'
- you know your targets and how to improve your work
- the adults in school look after you extremely well and they all work hard to help you do your best.

In order to make the school even better, we have asked the staff to do the following:

- help those of you who are more able to do as well in your mathematics as you do in your reading and writing.

You can help by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

Yours sincerely

Brian Holmes

Lead inspector.