

St Therasas Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107158
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	331281
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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)	246
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	Mrs S Caesar
Headteacher	Mr P Nelis
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Prince of Wales Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S2 1EY

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Inspection number	331281

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

When the school was inspected in May 2008, it was given a notice to improve and asked to address issues related to provision and children's achievement and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement and standards in science in Key Stages 1 and 2 as well as the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress in science. It was subsequently visited in January 2009, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

Description of the school

This average size school draws pupils from an area of significant economic and social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is more than twice the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved the Activemark and the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSIS) award.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises Nursery provision with up to 52 part-time places each morning and afternoon and also a Reception class. The school runs its own breakfast club from 08.15 to 08.45 each school day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Theresa's is a good school. Strong leadership and a clear focus on equipping pupils with the academic and emotional skills to do well and become successful citizens underpin its rapid yet sustainable improvement since the last inspection. These qualities also demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further. In accordance with section (13) 5 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Strong partnerships with parents, the local community and other schools and organisations enrich pupils' experiences and broaden parents' involvement in their children's learning. Parents are quick to praise the school, confirming, for example, that, 'I couldn't have wished for anything better for my children', 'I am proud of the school', and, 'St Theresa's is providing my children with towering levels of education'.

Children's starting points in Nursery are, typically, well below those expected for their age, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics as well as aspects of their social skills. Although they make rapid progress through Nursery, this slows in Reception. This is because it is taking the still relatively new Early Years Foundation Stage leader longer to improve the quality of learning and development in Reception. The school also recognises that provision relating to children's learning outdoors does not reflect the better quality found indoors. Even so, children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. This represents a strong improvement since the last inspection and provides a firm basis on which to build pupils' ongoing development and success. Pupils make good progress through the rest of the school. By the time they leave Year 6, their attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. In particular, improvements to the monitoring of science ensure pupils now make similar progress in all three subjects.

Strong relationships combine with consistently positive adult role models to promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils are self-disciplined and mature in their outlook and have a strong sense of fair play. They behave very well and engage effectively in their learning. Pupils show a clear understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives as they exercise daily in school, eat nutritious lunches and snacks, and regularly discuss how best to make sensible choices in their lives. They eagerly take on responsibilities, both in school and in the local community, deciding how to remodel facilities or on the best ways to raise funds. Pupils play a full part in the spiritual and social life of the local community and enjoy very close links with the local church.

Pupils experience mostly good quality teaching, and lessons usually grab their attention effectively. From time-to-time, some teachers are not as confident in their management of classes and so the quality of these lessons dips to satisfactory. As a result, the pace of some lessons is too slow and pupils lose their enthusiasm for learning that is present in livelier lessons. The good curriculum engages pupils' interest through increasingly practical activities that fire pupils' imaginations and encourage problem solving and creative solutions, both useful skills for the future. Pastoral care is of high quality and parents are very appreciative of how well the school looks after their children. Considerable improvements to the tracking of pupils' progress, particularly in science, ensure that staff take into account the individual needs of all pupils when planning lessons.

Stable staffing has been a key feature in developing the skills of the whole staff team. As a result, the headteacher is able to delegate, with confidence, a range of additional responsibilities

to senior and middle leaders. Staff are mutually supportive, yet quick to challenge existing practice and so develop more effective ways to accelerate pupils' learning. Leaders pay close attention to ensuring equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination so that all groups do equally well. Sound governance provides the school with unwavering support and pays satisfactory attention to community cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make rapid progress in the Nursery and move into Reception with typical skills for their age. Here, their rate of progress slows, although their satisfactory achievement in Reception means that they join Year 1 with the expected age-related skills. There is strong evidence that the school has made huge strides to improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents agree as many confirm, 'My child has had an excellent start in the Nursery'. Warm relationships characterise the provision. The 'language rich' environment is well laid out and makes best use of the available space. An array of eye-catching activities and displays engage children's interest so that they settle quickly at the start of sessions. They play happily as 'ice cream sellers', sing 'Hey, Mr Shark! You can't catch me!' and use the soft toy model fish to bring the actions to life. Children are friendly and readily engage in conversation with visitors, showing confidence and improving language skills. They tidy up efficiently when they hear the 'putting away' song. Currently, the provision outdoors is limited in the range and quality of activities available to children and the levels of challenge these offer. Children may not decide for themselves when to learn and play indoors or outside and this restricts their growing independence. Robust assessment and observation systems ensure that staff have a clear understanding of what children know, understand and can do. Their skills are well documented in individual, detailed 'Learning Journeys'. The new Foundation Stage leader has made an important start in developing robust early years' education and in improving previous practice. There is clear recognition that more remains to be done to develop provision further for children in the Reception class where individual activities for children lack sufficient challenge and focus.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a more consistent quality of provision throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Strengthen provision for outdoor learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards overall are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress by pupils from well below average starting points. Although children in the Early Years Foundation Stage now develop broadly average skills by the end of Reception, this was not the case for the pupils currently in Years 1 to 6. Their starting points were lower at the start of Year 1. A far greater proportion of pupils in each year group are now working at the levels expected for their age. This is because rigorous monitoring offers appropriate challenge to pupils and supports a much better match of work to ability. More pupils reach the required levels and beyond in science as well as in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning to speak English as an additional

language achieve as well as other groups of pupils. This is because the same systems are used to assess every child in each subject and so dips in performance are speedily identified and addressed through a programme of individual support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are confident and articulate. They say that 'St Theresa's is a good school', and, 'There are lots of trips – we're not always stuck inside'. Good relationships prevail here. Pupils are well-mannered and greet visitors cheerily. Pupils show good self-discipline as they come into school in an orderly fashion without direct supervision, and busy themselves in productive activities. However, even though pupils behave very well, they are limited in what they can constructively achieve at break-times as there are too few resources for them to use outdoors. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are respectful of each other's feelings and relate well to adults. They make a firm contribution to the spiritual life of the school through sweet singing, colourful art and craft work, and sensitive support for each other and for people in difficult circumstances around the world. Pupils have a keen awareness of their own culture and a growing knowledge of the faiths of the world. However, their understanding of diversity in Britain is underdeveloped. Pupils' attendance is average and parents recognise the importance of bringing their children to school regularly and on time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Many lessons are of a consistently good quality; an increasing proportion is outstanding. In the more effective lessons, teachers introduce the relevant technical vocabulary and demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They are confident and brisk in their delivery and move pupils' learning along at a very good pace. In less successful lessons, pupils do not engage as well with tasks. Teachers do not insist upon careful listening and so some pupils are then unsure about how to complete the tasks set. This lessens their work rate. All teachers prepare increasingly practical activities that capture pupils' interest. For example, they 'launch rockets' on the school field. Teachers plan carefully and match work well to pupils' abilities to challenge them robustly. Teachers work well with teaching assistants, who usually support pupils effectively in lessons. One-to-one support sessions are particularly noteworthy as they raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. For instance, pupils who engage in the specialised reading programme thoroughly enjoy these sessions. They have a clear understanding of where they are up to in developing their skills and beam with delight when talking of their success and their new-found love of reading. Appropriate support for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language, are moving them on rapidly in their learning. Parents have a clear understanding of what their children learn. They typically comment, 'Staff have often given me ideas on how to develop and support my children's learning at home'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well planned and increasingly practical curriculum ignites pupils' interest in their learning. A clear focus on involving pupils in investigative work in science, for example, is continued

wherever possible in other areas of the curriculum and pupils respond eagerly to these opportunities. There is very effective use of information and communication technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all. Some good cross-curricular work produces interesting and challenging types of writing as shown, for example, in the recording of a Year 6 debate about smoking in public places. The school recognises, however, that work to link pupils' learning across subjects beyond literacy and numeracy is still developing. The curriculum fosters pupils' personal and social development well and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships, healthy lifestyles and the world beyond their neighbourhood. Plentiful visits out and visitors into school, along with a varied programme of extra-curricular activities, stimulate pupils' creative, literary, scientific and sporting skills in enjoyable, and memorable, ways.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils and parents confirm that this is a very caring school. Pupils feel safe and there are robust systems to ensure their safety, health and well-being. The school meets current requirements for safeguarding pupils. Concerted and well targeted efforts by mentoring staff ensure that attendance levels continue to rise. Eye-catching displays illustrate this clearly to pupils and parents, along with the rewards available. A 'role of honour' provides an interesting photographic record of the school's best attendees going back many years. The competitive edge to match these historical scores is strong among pupils. Lunchtime staff have the same high expectations of pupils as their teachers, as well as a good understanding of their dietary and medical requirements. Ancillary staff maintain a clean learning environment that encourages pupils to take good care of resources and communal areas. Very effective assessment procedures ensure that teachers have a clear knowledge of where each pupil is up to in terms of their learning and what they must do next to improve their skills. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide some developmental pointers. Nonetheless, the quality of these comments is inconsistent and it is unclear if pupils follow up improvement points before moving on to their next piece of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Much has changed in terms of practice and procedure since the last inspection. However, wholehearted parental support remains undiminished. There are clear strengths in the overall strategic leadership of the headteacher and the positive contributions made by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The headteacher spearheads an unfaltering focus by all staff on accelerating pupils' achievement and raising the standards they reach. Staff rise well to this challenge. Individual teachers now take clear responsibility for the progress of pupils in their class. Subject coordinators monitor progress in their areas carefully and use their expertise well to develop the skills of other staff. For example, a new system to assess and record pupils' progress in science is now in place. This mirrors effective procedures in English and mathematics and is seen externally as a model of good practice. The school is responsive to suggestions from all stakeholders and this helps to cement a good family atmosphere. It pays sound regard to community cohesion. Outreach work within the local community, along with regular support for local, national and international charities helps pupils and parents to raise their own aspirations, while developing the life chances of others. Even so, the school recognises that

there is more to be done to develop pupils' awareness of diversity in British society. Governors are keen ambassadors for the school and provide effective support, although they do not yet offer sufficient challenge to the leadership in terms of moving the school forward.

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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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	3
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 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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Sheffield, S2 1EY

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I came with another colleague to inspect your school. We were very impressed with the warm relationships and happy faces we found. It is clear that you and your parents highly value being part of this strong family at St Theresa's.

Some of you will remember that when inspectors last came to your school, they found that there were some important things to improve. Everyone connected with the school has worked very hard to make these areas significantly better and I am pleased to report that St Theresa's is now a good school. So well done everyone!

You all work hard and achieve well because your teachers know exactly what it is you need to do to move on quickly in your learning. You all get on really well together and support one another, which is good to see. You told us that you feel safe in school and your parents confirmed that you are well cared for, whatever your individual needs. We saw this, too, and agree with you. You develop strong links with the local parish and play a positive role in the community that holds your school in high regard.

Part of our job is to see what could be even better at St Theresa's. We have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes experience equally good opportunities to learn and develop. We would also like to see better provision for those children when they are learning outdoors. Although we saw lots of good lessons, we have asked your school to make sure that every single lesson is good or even better, so that you can work very effectively all day long!

Enjoy the summer.