

# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 103456          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Birmingham      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308327          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 7 November 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | John Eadie      |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                                                  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided                                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                                                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                                    |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                                          |
| School                                    | 205                                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                       |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Steve McPhillips                                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Patricia O'Kane                                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 April 2003                                             |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Butlers Road<br>Handsworth Wood<br>Birmingham<br>B72 1NG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01215 549581                                             |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the reasons for the fall in standards in mathematics and science in the national tests in Year 6; why standards in mathematics in Year 2 have risen when writing standards have fallen; whether teachers challenge more able pupils sufficiently and whether low-level disruption is affecting pupils' learning. Evidence was gathered from discussions with leaders, managers, pupils, staff and parents; visits to all classes; observation of other aspects of the school day such as assembly, break and lunchtime; and analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular, data on pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 this report.

## Description of the school

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School draws pupils from a wide area, though the proportion of Catholics in the school is declining and they now represent about a quarter of the pupils. The school is very popular, with about three applications for each place. There is a very broad ethnic mix, with no numerically dominant group. Although about a fifth of pupils speak languages other than English at home, almost all have sufficient command of English to take a full part in school life.

## 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 in which, 'Children have many opportunities to develop a wide range of gifts and talents.' This was typical of many very positive comments made by parents. One of the school's major strengths is that the Catholic ethos pervades everything that the school does. Parents from the wide variety of faiths represented in the school recognise and appreciate the caring and supportive environment. Every child and adult is valued, which is borne out by the parental comment that 'The kind, caring atmosphere enables the children to develop a sense of responsibility, independence and confidence.' Pupils are well behaved and the harmony evident between pupils and families of all races and faiths is a model which is worth emulating.

When children join the Reception class, their levels of skills and knowledge are lower than those expected at that age. They make good progress and reach standards above those expected when they start in Year 1. Good progress continues through the rest of the school and, by the time they leave, pupils have reached standards that are comfortably above average. Standards in English are particularly high, with nearly two thirds of the pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in the national tests in 2007. Part of the reason for these high standards is that the school has worked hard to raise pupils' attainment in reading and writing. A further reason for standards in English being so good is that pupils are often able to practise their writing skills in other subjects, such as religious education and history. A relative weakness is that information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning in other subjects.

The principal reason for pupils' good progress through the school is good teaching. In most lessons, teachers use a wide range of practical activities, matched well to the abilities of their pupils. These activities interest and enthuse the pupils, who say, 'Teachers make lessons fun.' There are a good number of other adults in classes, who support pupils' learning well. This is particularly the case for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who do not speak English at home, who can therefore take a full part in all activities and make the same progress as their classmates. Teachers' marking is generally good and gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils spend too much time sitting listening.

Attendance rates are high, which is a reflection of pupils' thorough enjoyment of school life and particularly the wide range of extras provided for them. Pupils were enthusiastic when talking about the sporting opportunities and the trips out of school, especially the chance to go on a residential trip to Wales. They also spoke enthusiastically about the many opportunities to perform, for example, in the choir or at one of the Christmas or end-of-year productions. Pupils feel they are well cared for and they are confident that any problems they have will be quickly sorted out. Although pupils are very well involved in the local community and particularly the church, they are not so involved in decision making in school. Pupils say that they would like to have more opportunities to express their views about school life. Pupils' adoption of safe and healthy lifestyles is good. They are very aware of the needs of others when they are playing and many bring healthy snacks in for playtime. Pupils also enjoy the project undertaken in Year 5, when they form a small business venture to grow plants and sell them. This, and their good development of basic skills, prepares them well for their future.

Fundamental to the pupils' developing sense of responsibility and independence is the outstanding pastoral care. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and risk assessments routinely carried out for all aspects of school life. The staff know all pupils and their circumstances very

well and this extends to the whole-school community. As one parent typically put it, 'Everyone – pupils, staff and parents – is always concerned and ready to help.' Academic support and guidance are good. There are very thorough systems in place to check regularly on pupils' progress and make sure that any in danger of falling behind are identified quickly. There are then good strategies to help them catch up. Really challenging targets are set for pupils' progress from year to year and most achieve them. There are very specific targets to help pupils see how they can improve their work in writing, which is one of the reasons for the high standards in English. However, these targets are not so clear in mathematics and science and pupils do not clearly understand how they can do better in these subjects. This is a key reason why standards in these subjects are not as high as in English.

The key to the success of the school is very effective leadership and management. The headteacher has gathered a strong team of staff and governors and, together, they have a clear vision of the way forward. This is based on accurate analysis of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Good plans are made to address weaknesses, although the pace of change could be quicker. The school tends to sit on developments for too long to see just how effective they are rather than continuing the process of ongoing improvement. A further area for improvement is that, although there are good plans to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning, these tend to be too focused on detail rather than striving for overall improvement of teaching and learning. A strong partnership has been developed with parents, who say, 'Everybody is very approachable, friendly and helpful.' Governors provide very good support and are fully involved in the process of assessing the school's effectiveness. There is a clear common vision and the school has progressed well in recent times, which shows that it is well placed to continue on the upward path.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

When children join the Reception class, the staff rightly concentrate on children's personal and social development. This ensures that children settle quickly and make a good start, which parents appreciate. Teaching is good and a good range of activities is planned for the children, based on an accurate assessment of their prior learning, ensuring that they make good progress. The provision is well managed and a good number of other adults support groups and individuals well. There is a good balance of activities led by an adult and those which children can choose for themselves and, as a parent quite rightly said, 'The environment is stimulating.' Children make good progress in all areas of learning, though this progress is rather variable between different aspects. Although the children's physical development is enhanced using the hall and the playground, there is no secure outside area that can be used to extend children's progress in other areas of learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Set clear targets for pupils in mathematics and science so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring in order to raise the quality of teaching still further.

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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 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

### 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage                                                                                                         | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements                                                                                                   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|                                                                                                          |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How well do learners achieve?                                                                            | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress                              | 2 |

### 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                                                                                    | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners                                                                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |
| 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 the 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 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|                                                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 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  |



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham B20 2NY

Thank you so much for your welcome when I visited recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and hearing how enthusiastic you are about your school. Your information helped me a great deal, particularly when you talked so eagerly about all the extra things you enjoy, such as trips out of school and the productions you take part in. You are right to be proud of your school as it is a good school. You told me that you are listened to well by all the staff, but you have ideas to improve the school which you do not always have an opportunity to put forward.

I think the best things about your school are the following.

- You make good progress and reach above-average standards, especially in English, as you are being taught well.
- Your teachers are particularly good at providing a range of interesting activities to help you learn.
- You behave well, work hard and are developing well into sensible and responsible young people.
- All adults take really good care of you and make sure that you are safe and cared for well.
- You make a good start to your learning in the Reception class.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff have good ideas about how they can make the school even better.

I have suggested to the school that the following things should be improved.

- The targets that you have in maths and science are not as clear as those you have for writing and they are not so good at helping you see how to improve your work.
- When teachers check how well you are being taught, they do not always make it clear how teaching could be made even better.

Best wishes for the future and I know you will do all you can to help your headteacher and staff to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie Lead inspector