

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Hawkwell

Ashingdon Road, Rochford, SS4 1RF

Inspection dates

13–14 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and other school leaders, with the support of staff, have ensured rapid and substantial improvements to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' promotion of good teaching is highly effective and leads to pupils' good progress. Progress in writing is outstanding and standards are rising rapidly.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and supports leaders in ensuring improved teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are kept very safe. They are highly committed and enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Their excellent personal development underpins their good academic progress.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging for all groups of pupils. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, laying the foundation for pupils' good progress.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start with their education in school. They are taught well and make good progress.
- All groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While improving year on year, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is a little lower than that found nationally.
- Standards in mathematics, while improving, lag behind those in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by the headteacher on four of the observations.
- Inspectors met the headteacher, the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, staff who have additional responsibilities, including subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 44 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the opinions shared through 33 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Daniel Kilborn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average primary school.
- Children in the early years provision (Reception class) attend full time.
- About one in seven pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This proportion is a third less than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- One in six pupils is disabled or has special educational needs. This proportion is broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs an out-of-hours learning activities club.
- The last section 5 inspection called for an external review of the work of the governing body. The review resulted in the removal of the governors' powers. These have subsequently been restored. There are many newly appointed governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school receives support from a National Leader of Education.
- Since its last section 5 inspection, the school has received two monitoring inspections in April and October 2013. These visits checked on the school's progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the learning needs of the most-able pupils are fully met so that they attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - checking to make certain that the work set for them is consistently demanding.
- Strengthen the focus on promoting pupils' skills and knowledge in mathematics, so that standards improve to match those in reading and writing, by:
 - developing pupils' command and use of times tables and their ability to multiply numbers
 - giving pupils the confidence to use these skills to solve mathematical problems.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The ambition, drive and teamwork of the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body are bringing about significant and rapid improvements. Consequently, pupils' progress is accelerating and standards are rising, including those of the children in the early years provision.
- Staff do all they can to ensure there is no discrimination and that everyone is respected and treated equally. This determination is reflected in equal access to the range of learning opportunities available to every pupil. It also contributes to leaders' success in bringing about the school's positive culture of teaching, care for the individual and the pupils' excellent behaviour.
- School leaders are bringing about improvements in teaching. Arrangements to check and evaluate the quality of teaching are thorough and effective. Good use is made of external advice and support. Working closely with other schools to share and develop good practice is also bringing considerable benefits. As a result, teaching has improved and is good.
- Subject leaders provide good guidance and support for their colleagues. These leaders' actions make a positive contribution to improvements in pupils' progress.
- The school's self-evaluation is highly perceptive and measures its performance accurately. School leaders are analytical and reflective in how they evaluate what the school achieves, and there is clear recognition of what needs to improve. Staff are rightly proud of what they have achieved from better teaching. However, no one is complacent and, consequently, there is a tangible and effective drive to sustain the current improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Staff training is effective and staff morale is high. All respond well to guidance. They are very supportive of each other in responding to initiatives which are bringing significant improvements in their professional practice and to pupils' achievement. Arrangements for the management of staff performance are effectively applied and working well. These arrangements in teaching contribute considerably to improvements in pupils' progress.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school's work and are pleased with their children's progress. The school is good at keeping parents and carers well informed about their children's development. The school also provides helpful courses, meetings and guidance for parents to support their children's learning.
- The school provides pupils with an extensive range of learning opportunities and additional activities that meet their learning needs well. The early years provision gets children off to a good start with their school education, where their basic skills of literacy and numeracy are prominent features.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their personal development is outstanding. Daily acts of collective worship in assemblies, links with the church and community, musical tuition, the choir, a wide range of sporting activities and educational visits, including residential experience for Year 6 pupils, all make a valuable contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. Consequently, pupils' personal development is exceptional and they learn successfully the rights and responsibilities of citizens in modern British society.
- An after-school, out-of-hours learning activities club is available and enables pupils to enjoy many activities which contribute to their learning.
- The primary school sports funding is making a positive contribution to pupils' physical development and well-being. Participation levels are rising and pupils' fitness is improving. The school's football team is top of the local schools' league and pupils regularly do well in a range of athletic events. The sports coach is effective in improving the skills of both staff and pupils.

- The pupil premium funding is used to maximum effect as shown by the positive difference it makes to pupils' learning and progress. The school employs a pupil premium champion whose work is bringing significant benefits for pupils.
- The local authority has made a valuable contribution in helping the school to overcome the weaknesses highlighted by its last section 5 inspection. In particular, its support has contributed to improvements in teaching and in governance. For example, teachers benefit from observing good practice in other schools.
- The local authority enables the headteacher to work closely with a National Leader of Education and this support contributes positively to school improvement. The school uses its informal partnership with several other local schools effectively in sharing expertise, specialist staff, training opportunities and resources. This arrangement is also proving very beneficial to school improvement.
- Statutory requirements and all procedures to safeguard pupils are applied. As a result, pupils feel safe and are safe in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have benefited greatly from the training they have received and fulfil their duties well. They are effective and tremendous advocates for the work of the school. The headteacher, senior staff and teachers value the support that governors provide. Governors are very knowledgeable about the progress made by all groups of pupils. They analyse and accurately interpret the data on progress and attainment. They are well informed and effective in holding the school to account for the quality of its work. Governors contribute well to the planning for school improvement and are actively involved in the performance management of staff. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and make sure that staff pay is justified by the progress made by pupils. They have a good understanding of the positive impact that the spending of additional funds, such as the pupil premium and the primary school sports funding, are having. Governors ensure that all the required arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe are in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour, including that of children in the Reception class, during lessons and around the school is exemplary. It is over three years since there has been cause for any pupil to be excluded.
- Pupils are eager learners who apply themselves with great enthusiasm during lessons. They show sustained interest in whatever is being taught and are always keen to contribute, share their ideas and do their best. From the youngest upwards, their capacity to get on with their work, often without the direct supervision of an adult, is impressive. The neat and tidy way in which pupils present their work is exceptional.
- Pupils are eager to embrace responsibilities, which they see as an honour. They are proud to be members of the school's pupil council, to play for school teams and to participate in activities, such as the choir. The care and support that pupils of all abilities give to each other is admirable. They are always eager and willing to help each other. Pupils are very appreciative of the ways in which the school recognises and celebrates their efforts and achievements.
- Attendance is broadly average. A small number of pupils sometimes struggle to attend as often as they should. The school does all it can to support them and their families to meet their needs.
- The school works effectively to ensure that pupils have an excellent understanding of traditional British values and are well prepared to take their place in the community. These priorities are reflected in the school's core values, which include: hope, compassion, respect, justice, responsibility, courage, wisdom and integrity. Even the younger pupils are very aware of what these terms mean in practice.

- Pupils are very knowledgeable about the culture and traditions of pupils who are from backgrounds that are very different to their own. They raise significant funds and exchange letters to support children who attend a school in the Gambia.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are meticulous in making sure that pupils are safe while in their care.
- Arrangements to ensure that all adults are appropriately checked for working with young people are applied rigorously. Access to school premises is secure. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and secure and their parents agree with them that the school is a very safe place to be.
- The care that staff provide for pupils is exemplary and the provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is exceptional. Staff are very clear that this level of care is essential for pupils to thrive academically, which they do. Pupils are very appreciative of this support. They are confident that should they face any problems there is always a member of staff they can go to who will help them to sort things out.
- Pupils say instances of bullying are rare and that staff are very helpful in ensuring that any issues are resolved amicably and quickly. School records endorse these views. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including the potential dangers posed by the internet and social media, and are sensitive to the possible damage that this can cause.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The last inspection identified weaknesses in teaching that left some groups of pupils not making the progress they should. This is no longer the case. School leaders have worked effectively to improve teaching, which is resulting in pupils making good progress.
- Enthusiastic and vibrant teaching, including that in the Reception class, motivates pupils to become very committed to their learning.
- Teachers are expert at making work demanding but manageable for the majority of pupils for most of the time. This good practice includes pupils who are disadvantaged, the disabled and those who have special educational needs. Increasingly, teachers are making work demanding for the most-able pupils. However, there are times when the work set is not hard enough for the most able and, consequently, they do not attain as well as they could.
- Basic literacy skills are taught well and this is reflected in pupils' excellent progress in writing. Teachers also promote pupils' enthusiasm for reading and their ability to read well.
- An improving picture is evident in the impact that the teaching of basic numeracy skills is having on pupils' progress in mathematics. However, there are still times when teachers do not give sufficient attention to pupils' command of times tables and to their ability to multiply. For some pupils, this means that they lack confidence in using number, which restricts their ability to apply these essential skills when they try to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills particularly well. This enables pupils to answer questions, participate in debates and increases their confidence as learners.
- Additional adults, such as visiting specialist teachers, learning support and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to supporting pupils' learning during lessons and with small groups and individuals. Disadvantaged pupils, the disabled and those who have special educational needs benefit greatly from the attention of these staff. Increasingly, the most-able pupils are also gaining from work carefully targeted at their learning needs, in small groups with these staff.

- No time is wasted in lessons and the challenge provided enables pupils to reflect, gather their thoughts and draw on their existing knowledge to respond well. For example, teachers use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Pupils' answers to questions are often met with additional questions which challenge their thinking and test their knowledge even further.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is meticulous. The needs of any who show the slightest sign of falling behind are quickly identified and met. Assessment of progress and attainment is accurate and used effectively to identify the next stages in pupils' learning. This represents a significant improvement because, prior to the last inspection, some assessments of pupils' attainment and progress were inaccurate, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The marking of pupils' work is exemplary. It is detailed, helpful and informative. It lets pupils and their parents know precisely what stage pupils have reached and what steps they should take to improve further.

The achievement of pupils is good

- At the time of the last inspection, some groups of pupils were not achieving as well as they should. This is no longer the case. As a result of effective teaching, all groups of pupils, including children in the Reception class, are making at least good progress.
- Since 2013, pupils' progress has improved and standards are rising. Some historic data about pupils' progress over Key Stage 2 inferred their progress was not as good as it was. These data were flawed. Inspectors analysed samples of work retained by the school which cover the time period involved, which strongly affirm that pupils' progress was good.
- At Key Stage 1, attainment was above average in 2014. Currently, standards in mathematics are on course to be broadly average, but are edging ever closer to being above average. The school's concerted focus on reading and writing have put English standards on track to be securely above average.
- At Key Stage 2, standards in reading and mathematics are on course to be broadly average. Standards in writing are on track to be above average.
- For both key stages, current standards represent good progress in reading and mathematics and outstanding progress in writing. This is clearly endorsed by the progress seen during lessons and, over time, in pupils' books.
- Some of the most able achieve well in all subjects and especially in writing. However, attainment of the higher levels at both key stages is no more than broadly in line with national results. Occasionally, the work set for the most able does not challenge them enough. The school is aiming for higher standards from these pupils across the year groups and some improvement was observed during the inspection. For example, the current Year 5 contains a significant number of pupils who are already working at levels that are well ahead of those expected for the end of the key stage.
- Most pupils use the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. However, a minority of pupils still struggle to use and apply their knowledge of multiplication. This tends to slow their progress when attempting to solve mathematical problems.
- Phonics (the understanding and application of the sounds made by letters and words) is taught well. Consequently, the results of the annual phonics screening check compare favourably with those found nationally. Coupled with the effective teaching of speaking and listening, these skills are laying a solid foundation for pupils' outstanding progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are supported well and show great enthusiasm for learning. The standards attained by these pupils are also rising. They show clear enjoyment and pride in their achievements in mathematics. Many are also passionate and

successful readers.

- Disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well from the good support they receive. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 attained below the standards reached by others in their classes. However, in 2014, eligible pupils in Year 6 attained higher standards than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. These eligible pupils attained slightly lower standards in writing and mathematics than all pupils nationally, but were over two terms ahead of all pupils in reading. Inspection findings indicate that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making good progress and are on track to achieve well.

The early years provision

is good

- Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year and invariably covers the full range of abilities. It is usually below age related expectations. However, many children arrive with personal, social and emotional development that is at a good level. This helps to lay the basis for subsequent good progress in other areas of their learning.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. School leaders are working effectively to ensure that children have access to helpful learning experiences and to good teaching and support. Accurate assessments are made of children's progress. Their progress and development in each area of their learning are observed closely.
- Links with parents and carers are a strength. The school keeps them well informed about all aspects of their children's progress.
- The behaviour of children and arrangements to ensure they are safe are outstanding. Children thrive socially and physically. They rapidly make friends and settle to meeting the high expectations of their teachers and teaching assistants. Many soon become remarkably independent, often sustaining their interest in activities for considerable amounts of time without direct adult intervention.
- Teaching is good and enables children to thrive in all areas of their learning. Activities are planned precisely to meeting children's varying learning needs. Teachers provide a good range of activities covering all areas of learning, including opportunities to work in a very stimulating classroom environment and in the outdoor learning area.
- Teaching supports children well in acquiring the basic skills of speaking and listening, in understanding the sounds made by letters and words and early writing techniques. There is also a good balance between activities that offer children an element of choice and others that are led and checked in detail by staff.
- The proportion of children currently on track to join Year 1 with a good level of development for their age compares favourably with that expected nationally. This represents good progress from children's various starting points. This is also a significant improvement over 2014 when the number attaining at the expected level was below the national figure.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115165
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	441996

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey-Ann King
Headteacher	Nikki Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2013
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