

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Devon Street

Devon Street, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 4HX

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils progress in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics in the last two years has not been as good as it should have from their individual starting points.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress and not enough pupils make better than expected progress.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- On occasion pupils are not given tasks that are set at the right level and this slows their progress; this is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- The quality of marking is not consistent and pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. They do not always have time to respond to any guidance given.
- The information about pupils' performance, gathered from the new data system, is not yet used effectively enough to check the impact of teaching and learning on rapidly raising their achievement.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking on the progress that different groups of pupils make and improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- Achievement in writing has improved and the majority of pupils now make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other and their environment.
- There has been an improvement in attendance, which is above average, and a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent.
- The headteacher, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher has put into place some key actions to help improve pupils' progress and as a result the school is improving.
- The governing body has improved its understanding so that it is better able to challenge the school about its performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. They also looked at pupils' work, some of which was done with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered by inspectors. The inspectors spoke to a group of parents. They also took account of the 18 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona McNally

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Teresa's Catholic Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been some staff changes, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- In April 2013 a new deputy headteacher was appointed.
- A new headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2014.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils and this formed part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is good or better to raise pupils achievement in all subjects, especially in mathematics by:
 - ensuring marking consistently shows pupils what to do to improve and that they have time to respond to this
 - making sure that the work pupils are given, particularly the most able, is at the right level so they make good progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making more effective use of the school's improved data systems to regularly and rigorously check on teaching and learning so that it brings about rapid improvement
 - developing further the role of middle leaders in checking how well different groups of pupils are making progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- By the end of Key Stage 2, the standards reached by pupils in 2013 were below those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The staff changes, especially in the older classes over the past two years have contributed to pupils' progress not being as good as it should have been by the end of Year 6.
- From Years 1 to Year 6 pupils' progress from their different starting points, particularly in mathematics, has been variable and is not yet consistently good. This is because the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good or better.
- Evidence from a range of inspection activities including reviewing pupils' work, observing lessons and analysing school data show that progress is improving and an increasing number of pupils are making the progress expected of them or better across the school, especially in writing. However, the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress needs to be further improved, especially by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Through Key Stage 1 pupils make expected progress and in 2013 the proportion of pupils reaching the average level at the end of Year 2 was similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2013 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made progress similar to other pupils. They were less than a term behind their classmates in writing and a little over a term behind in reading and mathematics. However the gaps between the standards reached by eligible pupils and others across the school vary and have not yet closed in the current Year 6. Of those pupils eligible in Year 6 the majority are also pupils who have special educational needs. Evidence shows they are making better progress than previously, especially in reading and writing.
- Across Years 1 to 6 the achievement of the most able varies and requires improvement. This is because work is not always difficult enough, especially in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in 2013 at the end of Year 6 was below national average in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small number who have English as an additional language make good progress from their different starting points because they are well supported by staff. This demonstrates the schools commitment to tackling discrimination and providing equal opportunities.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language and personal development. They make good progress and most achieve skills that are expected for their age by the time they start Year 1.
- Improved and effective phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is helping to improve pupils' reading skills. In the Year 1 phonics (letters and their sounds) check last year an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected level which was a marked improvement on the previous year. Younger pupils enjoy reading and read regularly at home. They use their skills well to work out unfamiliar words.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good enough for pupils to make consistently good progress. Teaching is improving and there is clear evidence of more good teaching in school over the past year, particularly in writing.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across subjects and year groups. Although it has improved, particularly in writing, it does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to

improve their work and pupils are not always given enough time to respond to any guidance given.

- On occasion the activities which pupils are given are not planned well enough to get the best out of all pupils, particularly the most able. This slows the rate at which pupils learn and is particularly evident in mathematics. Pupils recognise this and older pupils in particular say that they would like their mathematical work to be harder.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils say that teachers make learning fun. In the Reception class children avidly listened to 'Martha the eco warrior' talk about how to save the planet, spontaneously asking questions about litter, water wastage and light pollution. This ensured their learning moved on a good pace.
- Teachers use questioning well to ask pupils to explain what they understand and to build on their prior learning which is improving their rate of progress. In one class pupils quickly grasped the new concept of identifying half past on clocks, with some pupils moving on to quarter past because the teachers explanation and questioning promoted this well.
- There is good use of teaching assistants to support pupils in class and in small groups, especially those who need additional support.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is typically good and pupils make good progress from levels that are below those which are usual for their age. Activities are well matched to children's interests and needs. Children spoke with enthusiasm about baby bear's trip in to space, acting this out with confidence. Using developing phonic skills they confidently wrote and read their postcards about his adventures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, in the playground and in the hall pupils' behaviour is well managed including when they move up and down the stairs.
- Pupils say that overall behaviour is good but recognise that it could be better. The school council are currently looking at making improvements to the current behaviour system and have already identified and acted on some aspects around school which they felt could be improved.
- The small number of parents who met with the inspectors felt that behaviour was good and that pupils are successfully supported in improving their behaviour when it is needed.
- In lessons behaviour is mostly good and pupils show they have positive attitudes to learning, especially when they find tasks interesting. Pupils are happy to support one another and share their ideas. In one instance younger pupils helped a classmate with her reading. When activities are not hard enough so that the pace of learning is too slow some pupils become restless and do not work as well.
- Pupils who attend the school's breakfast and after school provision are well looked after and pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer. Their behaviour is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for. The themed weeks which the school holds on e-safety and anti-bullying help reinforce pupils' understanding of how to keep safe, including on the internet.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and any are acted upon quickly. The pupils who are 'bully busters' meet each week with the deputy headteacher to talk about and sort out any incidents which have been brought up. They understand that although the majority of pupils understand about different types of bullying this does need reinforcing for others.
- Pupils show respect for their environment and are keen ambassadors for promoting eco awareness. Older pupils spoke to the youngest pupils in one session about their work on recycling and litter picking.
- Attendance has improved and is above national average and there has been a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are frequently away from school. This is because systems to check regularly on pupils' attendance have improved.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although there is evidence of improvements, particularly in writing and attendance, achievement is not as good as it could be.
- The headteacher, with effective support from the newly appointed deputy headteacher has put in place actions which are leading to improvements in pupils' achievement. These actions include regular meetings to discuss pupils' achievement and more regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's new data system has enhanced the quality and accessibility of information on pupil achievement but it is not yet used rigorously by leaders enough to check on the quality of teaching and learning so that improvements are rapid.
- The school uses a variety of methods to assess the quality of teaching including scrutiny of work and examination of teacher's planning. As a result leaders and managers are aware of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time and provide staff with guidance on how to improve. Through coaching and training the quality of teaching has improved, especially of writing but it has not improved quickly enough, particularly in mathematics for pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Middle leaders are involved in checking on the quality of teaching through checking the quality of pupils' work. However, they are not yet fully involved in checking on how well different groups of pupils are doing to improve the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Leaders, with appropriate support from the local authority, have put in place measures to raise standards and improve progress across all subjects. The training and support the school has received from a literacy consultant, for example, has resulted in improved results in writing across the school.
- The parents who spoke to inspectors were supportive of the school and say they are kept well informed about how their child is doing.
- The school makes good use of the school sports funding to improve pupils' participation in and enjoyment of sport. The use of specialist coaches both during the school day and for after school provision has led to increased participation. The pupils also spoke enthusiastically about the 'Fun and Fitness' club run by a teaching assistant as it helps them with learning new skills, especially before taking part in competitions.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of subjects and activities such as a residential trip, specialist music teaching and a specialist counselling programme for some pupils. This provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and understand the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve it further. Governors have received training to help them improve their work through the local authority, archdiocese and HMI. This has improved their effectiveness. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching, how this is checked on and have had the opportunity to look at examples of pupils' work and talk to subject leaders. The headteacher and governing body regularly discuss teachers' pay progression as part of the performance management process. They have a good understanding of the information they are given on pupil progress which has improved their ability to challenge leaders about school performance. They check on how money is spent, including the use of pupil premium and the school sports funding. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets all statutory requirements.

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	104807
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	431658

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Ashcroft
Headteacher	Paul Allen
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2012
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