

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Basildon

Elsenham Crescent, Basildon, Essex SS14 1UE

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong leadership has led to major improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. She has created a positive ethos and raised expectations about what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils behave well and their personal development and welfare are outstanding. The strong commitment to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development permeates all aspects of school life at St Teresa's. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of their place in the world and demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other and the adults who teach them.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. School leaders have made effective use of appraisal to identify where teaching needed to be improved. They have taken effective action to support and challenge teachers, where necessary, and this has had positive results.
- Improvements in teaching have led to pupils making better progress and attaining higher levels than previously. Evidence of these improvements can be seen in the end of key stage results over the past two years and the work in pupils' books.
- Children make a good start to their school life in the early years foundation stage. They make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move into Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. School leaders track progress carefully and ensure that additional funding is used well to support learning and ensure that these pupils make up lost ground.
- The quality of work in subjects such as geography and history is not of the same high standard as that seen in English.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to read high-quality children's literature. Too few read regularly and widely.
- The leadership of subjects is not sufficiently rigorous. As a result, leaders do not know well enough where weaknesses still remain.
- Additional adults are often not deployed effectively to support teaching, learning and assessment.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers do not provide enough activities that help pupils to understand how to use their knowledge and skills to reason and solve problems. This limits the progress that they make.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - developing the skills of, and specifying more closely, the role of subject leaders and ensuring that they make regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - improving the quality of the curriculum in geography and history.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - using additional adults more effectively to support pupils' learning
 - providing a wider range of high-quality reading books for pupils to choose from
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strong and effective leadership from the headteacher has secured good improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. She has developed an effective and committed staff team who have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the way they behave. This has resulted in pupils making better progress and achieving higher standards in reading and writing. Progress is also improving in mathematics. However, further work is needed in this area if pupils, particularly the most able, are to achieve what they are capable of.
- Staff morale is high at the school. Staff feel valued. Responses to the staff survey show that staff are fully supportive of the school's leadership team. All staff said that they enjoy working at the school and that they are treated with fairness and respect.
- Teachers value the appraisal process. They see it as both challenging and supportive. They also say that they benefit from regular opportunities for professional development, both at school and through local networks and training events.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects. During this inspection inspectors saw evidence of effective teaching in Spanish and music. However, the work seen in geography and history books was generally uninspiring and lacking in challenge. Middle leaders do not make regular checks on the quality of pupils' work in these subjects or provide sufficient guidance and support for teachers.
- The headteacher, supported by the whole staff team, has developed excellent relationships with parents. They are fully supportive of her and staff who work at the school. They value the work that has been done to improve the school. All of those parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that the school was well led and managed. There was also a 100% positive response to the question about whether or not they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. In classes and around school, Christian values are lived out on a daily basis by staff and pupils. Pupils value diversity and respect the views and opinions of others. They have a good understanding of different cultures and religions. The tolerance and respect that they develop at the school prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- St Teresa's provides pupils with a safe and caring school community where pupils feel valued, are well looked after and learn well. There is a strong focus on safeguarding and developing pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The nurturing ethos that underpins the school's work has resulted in a clear collective identity, which embraces both British and Christian values.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used to fund additional resources and also employ a PE coach, who works alongside teachers modelling good practice and generally enhancing teaching and learning. The coach also runs clubs both during and after school and this has resulted in an increase in participation. Pupils understand how participation in sport contributes positively to healthy living.
- The school receives a good level of challenge and support from the Basildon Education Services Trust. An adviser works regularly with school leaders, including governors, to review the school's performance and check on the accuracy of the school's self-

evaluation. The school also works closely with local schools to share and develop good practice and ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and attainment are accurate.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Regular visits to the school and reports from senior leaders enable governors to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Governors ensure that appraisal is used effectively to set challenging targets for the headteacher and other members of staff. They understand the link between pay and performance and ensure that decisions about pay reflect the impact of staff on the school's performance.
- Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are fully compliant with the most recent requirements. They ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date, and they carry out regular checks to ensure that all pupils are safe and well looked after.
- Governors ensure that both the pupil premium funding and the PE and sports premium funding are spent appropriately to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Governors share the headteacher's ambition for the school to improve further and become outstanding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given a high priority at St Teresa's. Systems for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children are comprehensive and record-keeping is meticulous. School leaders, including governors, ensure that up-to-date safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. Staff receive appropriate and timely training. All members of staff are fully aware of their duties in relation to keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been at the heart of the school's recent development. Strong leadership from the headteacher has eradicated inadequate teaching and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now typically good. This enables pupils to make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
- The relationship between pupils and teachers is extremely positive. Teachers have high expectations and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Both of these factors have played a big part in the improvements seen at the school since it converted to become an academy in 2013.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. The teaching of phonics has improved. Over the past two years, the percentage of pupils passing the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average. Although pupils continue to make good progress across the school they do not have access to a wide range of high-quality books. This means that too few pupils read widely and develop a love of reading.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently; providing good feedback to pupils about their strengths and the areas they need to work on to improve further. Pupils respond well to the guidance. They

develop into confident and competent writers and show a good understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

- Teachers are working hard to provide greater levels of challenge in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. Improvements have been made in some classes and these are reflected in improved outcomes at the end of key stage 2. However, further improvements are required. Many pupils still spend too much time answering similar questions unnecessarily, rather than being asked to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to investigate and solve problems. This prevents pupils, particularly the most able, from making faster progress and developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The additional adults who work in classes to support teaching and learning are not always deployed to best effect. For example, in one mathematics lesson that was observed during this inspection, a teaching assistant was working with a group of pupils on a different topic to the rest of the class. These pupils would have benefited much more from working with the teacher and the highly effective lesson that the rest of the class were engaging with.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is founded on the commitment of school leaders, including governors, to develop good citizens through a strong Christian ethos.
- Pupils are proud of St Teresa's. They attend regularly, wear their uniform with pride and enjoy school – developing excellent relationships with fellow pupils and the staff who teach them.
- Staff give a high priority to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is a 'thread' that runs through all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils feel nurtured and well cared for. Parents value highly the school's positive ethos and the values that staff promote.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both in the community and when using the internet and social media. Older pupils understand the risks associated with extremist views and were able to articulate their thoughts on this issue to inspectors.
- Parents value the close knit community that has been created at St Teresa's. One parent said on Parent View, 'My children often refer to it as their 'school family' as they say everyone is kind, caring and always look out for each other'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's caring ethos and clear codes of conduct ensure that learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning. However, in some subjects, such as history and geography, they do not show enough pride in the way that they present their work. Too often, work is untidy and the quality of presentation does not match

that seen in English and mathematics books.

- There are few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying at the school. School leaders keep detailed records of any incidents that do occur and follow these up assiduously. Consequently, pupils feel very safe while at school and know who to turn to if they experience any kind of problem.
- Pupils enjoy breaktimes and lunchtimes. These are happy and sociable occasions during which pupils play well together and support each other. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given, for example as play leaders. Other pupils have been elected as 'Article 12 Ambassadors', representing pupils' views to school leaders and getting involved in projects such as the improvements to the school's prayer garden.
- Members of staff feel well supported by school leaders and believe that behaviour is well managed at St Teresa's. Parents share this view. All of those who responded to Parent View believe that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and deals effectively with bullying.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The quality of work seen in pupils' books, and the school's recent end of key stage test results, shows that standards are improving at the school and that pupils' achievement is now good.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are taught well and quickly develop an understanding of reading, writing and number. The effective teaching of phonics helps children to develop early reading and writing skills well. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move into Year 1.
- In 2015, pupils' progress and attainment in reading and writing was around the national average at the end of key stage 2. This represented good progress from starting points when they joined the school that were generally below those typically found. Provisional results for 2016 show further improvement in both areas. Attainment was above the national average in both reading and writing.
- The key stage 2 results in 2015 showed that pupils' attainment in mathematics was significantly below the national average. The 2016 results show significant improvements; however, the work seen in books during this inspection indicates that further improvements are needed in this subject. Too few pupils are working at the expected standard and the most able pupils in particular are not achieving as well as they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least similar progress to other pupils nationally with similar starting points. This is leading to differences in attainment diminishing by the end of Year 6. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is at least as good as, and often better than, other pupils in the school. Indeed, school leaders have identified the performance of White British pupils as a relative weakness and have plans in place to address this issue.
- Pupils who join the school at different times during the school year achieve well. The gap in standards attained between these pupils and those who have been in the school since the Reception class closes as they move up through the school. These pupils make good progress from their starting points, which are often lower than those

expected for their age.

- Improvements have been made to the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs are now accurately assessed and their progress is tracked carefully.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start at the school in the Reception class with a level of skill and understanding generally below that typically found in children of this age. Good teaching and effective leadership ensure that children make good progress in their first year at school. In 2015 and 2016 the percentage of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average.
- Leaders have developed effective systems to ensure that children make a smooth transition into school. Staff liaise closely with pre-school settings and develop strong relationships with parents, through visits to the school during the summer term and home visits before the children start at the school each September. This helps children settle well into the school once they start. They quickly learn routines and establish good relationships with the other children and the adults who teach them. This reflects the highly effective safeguarding systems at the school.
- Staff provide good care, guidance and support which helps children to develop confidence and develop good attitudes to learning. During this inspection, children still in their early days at school were seen showing good levels of concentration, confidence and perseverance when completing tasks and engaging in activities with their peers. However, sometimes children spend too much time sitting on the carpet listening to adults. This results in their concentration waning and slows their learning.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Staff are deployed effectively to support children's learning. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and progress well. School leaders identified that many children start at the school with poor communication skills. In order to support these children the school recently appointed a member of staff to work specifically on language development but it is too early to assess the impact of this work.
- Good use is made of the learning environment, both indoors and in the large outdoor area where a range of activities are provided across all areas of learning. Regular assessments of children's progress help staff to plan a range of activities that provide challenge and enjoyment for the children. During this inspection, a large group of children was seen playing in the 'mud kitchen'. They worked together extremely well, some filling pots and pans while others collected freshly made mud with garden tools and buckets.
- The good progress that children make in the Reception class means that by the time they move into key stage 1, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	139917
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10019585

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lettie Bourke
Headteacher	Nuala Cashell
Telephone number	01268 553502
Website	www.st-teresasrc.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-teresasrc.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Teresa Catholic Primary School is part of the Diocese of Brentwood Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom school receives additional government funding through the pupil premium, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average; the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above average.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the school became an academy in 2013. Most of the teaching staff have been appointed since this point.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is around the national average.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the year is well above that normally found.
- A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, operates on each school day from 7.45am to 8.45am.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons. Three of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and scrutinised work in their books. They also looked at the school's plans for improvement and information about teachers' appraisal.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the pupil support manager.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors and a representative of the Basildon Education Partnership.
- An inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour and life at the school. Another inspector listened to pupils read. An inspector also visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke with parents before school and scrutinised the 32 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered responses to the 16 questionnaires that were completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Amanda Godfrey

Ofsted Inspector

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