

# The St Teresa Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101238
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	307620
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Keating
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Cosgrave
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Bowes Road Dagenham RM8 2XJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8270 4757
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8270 4756

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- what are senior leaders doing to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly the higher attainers in maths and science?
- what impact are maths and science leaders having on raising standards by improving the percentage of pupils who gain the highest level of attainment?
- what evidence do leaders have to demonstrate outstanding personal development and care, guidance and support?

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of school documentation, observation of lessons, conversations with learners and discussions with teachers and senior staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected 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

The school serves an area containing some pockets of deprivation, but the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Just under a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage of those who are learning English as an additional language is lower than average. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties is lower than average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is a little above average. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Parents are delighted with, and praise the school overwhelmingly for the work that it does. A high percentage of parent questionnaires were returned to the school, many of which pay tribute to the hard work of the headteacher and her staff. One wrote, 'We feel very lucky to be part of this wonderful school'. Inspection evidence shows St Teresa's provides a good standard of education for its pupils and in some aspects, it is outstanding. Through thorough monitoring and evaluation this is a school which knows itself well. Improvement since the last inspection shows that the school is never complacent and is constantly driving forward effective change. This can be seen clearly in the Foundation Stage, which is now good, where determination and diligence has paid huge dividends. In light of this, it is clear that there is good capacity to make further improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels move towards the same vision and good team-working is evident. The headteacher's calm, but firm approach to leadership ensures that she retains high quality staff. She is very well supported by her exceptionally capable deputy. Governors involve themselves in the work of the school and carry out their role as critical friend well.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are significantly above the national average and have been so over a number of years. Although there are fluctuations in results, this is generally because of the low numbers of pupils in each year group. Achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with broadly average skills for their age and leave at the end of Year 6 with high levels of attainment. In 2007 there was a dip in the percentage of pupils reaching the highest levels and this was particularly the case in mathematics. This was because some higher attaining pupils left the school prior to the national tests and others were admitted whose attainment was lower.

Pivotal to the school's success is the way in which pupils behave, co-operate with others and develop caring and responsible attitudes. Pupils say 'Everyone here is friendly, we don't need playground buddies because we all do it automatically, all of the time!' It is really quite exemplary! This is rooted in the school's Catholic ethos which promotes outstanding spiritual development. Pupils also learn about the faiths and cultures of others and have celebrated the Chinese New Year as a whole school and some year groups have studied Diwali and Hanukkah. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and secure. One spoke maturely about how it is important to know and understand the dangers of the internet so it can be used safely. Pupils know and understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. All have participated in a 'Healthy Eating Workshop'. Their contribution to the school and local community is valued. For example, they organise charity events and visit a local home for the elderly where they sing. Preparation for life beyond St Teresa's is also excellent: high levels of basic skills equip them well.

Teaching at St Teresa's is good. Lessons are characterised by short, sharp activities which promote concentration and participation. Teacher's questioning skills are a strength. Pupils say, 'None of our lessons are boring' and 'We do lots of activities and we're building our brain up higher!' Teachers' use of visual and tactile resources is good, and teaching assistants are deployed well because good quality lesson planning by teachers ensures that this is the case. In a science lesson good use was made of the internet so as to provide the opportunity for pupils to interact with mirrors, to reflect light, to hit a target. Teachers take the chance to link areas of the curriculum together to enhance learning. For example, the World War 2 project encompassed history, geography, art, English, information and communication technology as well as involving a local historian. A very close check is kept on pupils' progress. This information

is generally used well to plan the next steps for pupils although this is not always the case in mathematics. This sometimes results in work not being as well matched to pupils' abilities as it could be, and their progress slows. Tasks set are the same for all learners which leaves some lower attainers struggling and some higher achievers not being fully challenged.

Good learning extends beyond the classroom, through the very good range of activities that enrich the curriculum and the well-organised opportunities at lunch time and after school to attend clubs. Pupils excitedly told the inspector about the computer, choir and athletics clubs which they particularly enjoy. Also, they took great pride when talking about participating in a concert with many other schools at a large venue in London. Pupils have also written their own newspaper, 'The St Teresa Times'. The good curriculum benefits from a range of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils have the chance to take part in a residential visit to Wales and take trips to Eastbury Manor where they entered a poetry competition. Those in Years five and six are able to learn French.

The provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding with assessment and academic guidance being a real strength. The data analysis and pupil progress tracking systems serve their purpose well and the performance of those pupils who are in danger of falling below expectations is 'boosted' appropriately. Safeguarding is good. Pupils are looked after extremely well and the school has the complete confidence of parents. Parents and pupils know who to come to if they have any issues and know that things will be effectively dealt with. Teachers provide very good written and verbal feedback for pupils and give them clear, individual learning targets. As a result, pupils have an accurate and clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. All pupils, regardless of gender, ability or background are valued and included fully in everything the school offers. Excellent support is provided for pupils who are potentially vulnerable, or have particular needs, and well-managed links with outside agencies contribute to this.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Since the time of the last inspection there has been excellent improvement made in all aspects of the Foundation Stage. This is because the Foundation Stage leader is highly competent and knows quite clearly what actions need to be taken to bring about rapid and effective change. Children enter the Nursery with the skills expected of their age and they make good progress. However, communication and language development are relatively weaker than other areas on entry but effective steps have been put into place to ensure speedy improvement. Assessment is detailed, well structured and organised. This means that all staff know exactly what individual attention each child needs to ensure maximum progress. The school provides a good range of opportunities which are matched well to the children's needs. Teaching is good and the children really enjoy their time at school. In a Reception class numeracy session they were seen practising their counting skills in a highly motivating way. Children gleefully rescued the class teddy bear from a 'number island' by counting forwards and backwards to nine. Excellent questioning skills also ensured that both higher and lower attaining children were supported and challenged in their learning. The excellent behaviour of the children in the Foundation Stage sets the expected tone for the rest of their time at St Teresa's. This makes a real impact on how well the children achieve.

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

- Improve tasks set in mathematics so that they offer support and challenge for learners of all abilities.

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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 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	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### 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?	1

<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**

24 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The St Teresa Catholic Primary School, Dagenham, RM8 2XJ

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my day! I would like to congratulate you on how well you behave and show care and consideration for each other. This is really important because it ensures that you are able to learn in a calm and pleasant atmosphere. I was pleased to hear how much you enjoy coming to school because your learning is fun! I was also glad to know that you realise the benefits, but also the dangers, of using the internet. I was very interested in all the clubs and activities you take part in. No wonder you enjoy school so much!

Your headteacher, her deputy and all the other teachers and adults do a very good job. The education provided for the very youngest children in your school is a lot better now than it was when the inspectors came the last time. They all work well as a team and that's why your school keeps improving. Teachers teach you well and provide interesting things for you to do. They also ask questions which make you think hard.

Even though your school is already good there is something it can do to be even better. I have asked that your teachers make sure that the work they set in maths suits all of you better so that you don't find it too hard or too easy.

I wish you all the best in St Teresa's.

Kind Regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector