

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

College Road, Up Holland, Skelmersdale, WN8 0PY

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good in this happy and vibrant school. Pupils make good progress in learning to read and write. They make outstanding progress in mathematics, especially in Year 6 where teaching is particularly strong.
- Teaching is good. Some is outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning because activities are interesting. Pupils love sport and music because specialist teaching helps them to be successful and reach high standards.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Excellent behaviour is seen in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel entirely safe in school and are exceptionally polite and always willing to help. They display great pride in their many achievements.
- The headteacher's leadership gives clear direction. The deputy headteacher and middle leaders provide strong support and everyone pulls together. Methods for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are excellent.
- Leaders and governors manage the performance of teachers very well. The impact of this good leadership is seen in good teaching across the school and the rise in achievement since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' writing at Key Stage 2.
- An ambitious governing body supports school leaders and challenges them to improve.
- Parents are highly satisfied. One summed it up by saying 'this is a wonderful school.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. The work set for the most-able pupils is sometimes too easy and their progress slows.
- Pupils do not always use their reading and writing skills confidently and successfully in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of 12 lessons. One of these lessons was observed jointly with the headteacher. Altogether, seven teachers were observed and teaching was seen in all classes. Inspectors looked at pupils' books to gain evidence about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their progress in reading and what they like about reading.
- Meetings were held with seven governors, the headteacher, middle and senior school leaders, a representative of the local authority and with all teachers. Informal meetings were held with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including records of pupils' progress, the school development plan and records of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a number of policies including those for child protection and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at 40 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They spoke to a number of parents as they brought their children to school and looked at parents' responses to a questionnaire the school had issued.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marylin Massey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Teresa's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. There are no pupils whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below the national average. A below average proportion has a statement of special educational needs or is supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed to their posts within the last year.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding and so all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can by:
 - making sure the work set is hard enough for the most-able pupils so they learn at a brisk rate and reach the highest levels of which they are capable
 - ensuring pupils use their reading and writing skills confidently and successfully across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding in line with what is typical at this age. They quickly adapt to school life and make good progress. In one lesson, children showed a firm grasp of early reading skills as they read a postcard from Penguin who had gone to live in Blackpool. Children usually enter Year 1 above expected levels.
- Good progress continues across the school and this is seen currently in pupils' books, school data and evidence from lessons. Progress is particularly brisk in Year 2 and Year 6 where there is strong teaching. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment are usually above average overall in English, although not enough make better than expected progress in writing. In contrast, in mathematics, standards are well above average and a good number make better than expected progress.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in reading and writing. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) well to help them to read unfamiliar words. Writing skills develop quickly in Year 2. Pupils also make good progress in mathematics, becoming confident in counting and ordering numbers. In 2013, by the end of Year 2 pupils' standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics were above average.
- Achievement is good overall across Key Stage 2. It is outstanding in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment are well above average; a significant proportion reaches higher than expected levels. This is because they are skilfully taught how to apply their knowledge and solve problems. Progress in reading is good and pupils read frequently. By the end of Year 6, over half are reading at a level beyond that expected at this age.
- Progress in writing is also good and pupils do particularly well in learning to punctuate, spell and use grammar. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average by the end of Year 6, although in contrast to reading fewer reach the higher level. Nevertheless, achievement in writing has improved since the last inspection and currently Year 6 pupils are writing successfully in a range of styles.
- Although progress in reading and writing is good across the school it is not as strong as in mathematics because there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills. For example, the quality of written work is not as good in pupils' history books as it is in their literacy books.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are given individual support. The few pupils who are from minority ethnic groups make good progress because teachers plan carefully to meet their needs.
- Pupil premium funding has had a positive impact. Pupils eligible for free school meals get additional support from teaching assistants and make the same good progress as those not eligible for a free school meal. The attainment of the pupil premium group in both English and mathematics is above that of similar pupils nationally. The gap between this group and pupils at the school not eligible for free school meals has been eradicated.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall, particularly in mathematics. However, in some lessons the work set is too easy and when this happens their progress slows.
- School leaders and all staff foster good relations, tackle discrimination and provide equal opportunity for all pupils to learn. This helps all groups of pupils to make good progress. Pupils achieve well in music and sport. They leave well-prepared for the next stage of education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching across the school underpins pupils' good achievement. Pupils' books and the monitoring of teaching by school leaders confirm good teaching over time. Some teaching is

outstanding – for example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils rapidly learnt how to measure and calculate, in Year 2 pupils were enthralled by the teacher in the role of Little Red Riding Hood and in Year 6 pupils make exceptional progress in mathematics.

- Pupils say their teachers provide 'fun lessons' and are 'kind' and 'hard working.' There are warm and positive relationships in all classes. Teachers plan carefully to make lessons interesting; they manage pupils' behaviour well and ensure that pupils are considerate of each other. Consequently, pupils develop exceptionally positive attitudes and learn to concentrate, try their best and strive to succeed. This promotes pupils' social and moral development successfully.
- Literacy skills, including reading and writing, are taught well in English lessons. For example, in Year 6, because the teacher gave clear explanations, pupils gained a firm understanding about how to construct a debate using rhetorical questions. Teachers expect pupils to check their written work and present it carefully and pupils respond well to these high expectations.
- The good teaching of mathematics over time is evident in pupils' books which are carefully marked to show pupils how to improve. Teachers plan a broad range of mathematical activities, including practical work to help pupils solve problems, and this develops pupils' ability to think logically and use their knowledge.
- Teachers use the skills of teaching assistants well, particularly to support the learning of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Although teachers plan different work to meet pupils' varying needs, in some lessons the work set is too easy for the most-able and consequently they do not make rapid progress.
- Pupils' written work in literacy is marked assiduously and pupils say this helps them to improve. However, there are not enough good opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills across different subjects. When they do, sometimes not enough is expected of them. Consequently, written work in different subjects is not reaching the high standards shown in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Both behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils acquire exceptionally positive attitudes towards school because everybody (leaders, governors, teachers and all staff) expect the very best at all times. Consequently, pupils are extremely proud of their school, keen to take responsibility and try their utmost in lessons to achieve as well as they can.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There have been no exclusions. In lessons, pupils listen intently, follow instructions carefully and work exceptionally well together. Around the school, pupils are extremely polite and work and play together in harmony. Older pupils love to help younger pupils, for example as playtime buddies, prefects or as members of the school council. As one pupil put it, 'I love helping the little ones because I have a kind heart and strong knees to bend down and care for them.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel entirely safe in school. Parents are unequivocal in saying the school keeps their children safe. The school's provision for personal and social education is outstanding. Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well and pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Bullying is rare because pupils are taught how to be tolerant of difference and considerate of others. However, pupils have a firm grasp of different types of bullying and how to respond to it because school leaders have made sure that there is a highly effective programme to teach them about this.
- Attendance levels have been well above average for some time. Pupils are keen to get to school and into lessons because they love to learn. Leaders make sure that pupils' attendance is checked and they reward good attendance. Year 3 pupils were delighted to be rewarded for their excellent attendance because they could take the 'Attendasaurus' dinosaur back to class after the celebration assembly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership is firmly rooted in making sure teaching promotes high standards. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher. They give a strong and clear lead to others but also make sure that leadership is shared. Middle leaders make a telling contribution, for example, by successfully inducting teachers new to the school and providing models of good practice that others can emulate.
- Although most leaders are relatively new to their current posts, they have not been content to simply maintain the school's good achievement but have developed teaching strategies, improved systems for checking on teaching quality and gained the confidence of parents. The impact of this is shown, for example, in the improved achievement in writing at Key Stage 2 and in the successful progress of those in receipt of pupil premium.
- Methods for checking on teaching and tracking pupils' progress are excellent. This ensures leaders have a thorough grasp of what works well and what could improve. Priorities for improvement are relevant, agreed by everyone and clearly expressed in the school development plan. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and based on secure information, for example, leaders acknowledge that the most-able pupils could be challenged more and that literacy skills could be further developed in various subjects.
- The appraisal of teachers' work is thorough and high expectations are set by all leaders. Pay awards are given after carefully considering the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement and so enhancement is merited. Further training is relevant and useful and the school has successfully built links with other schools in the area so good practice can be shared.
- Leaders and governors provide a broad, relevant and stimulating education for pupils. Visits to places of interest and 'Wow Weeks' make learning exciting. Provision in music is excellent, for example, pupils played violin as classes came into assembly and later one played a jazzy piece of music on the tenor horn. The Primary School Sport Funding has been used to good purpose to increase participation and provide additional activities, including water polo for the most-able pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to close the gap in achievement between pupils eligible for a free school meal and those who are not. The money is used to buy additional support and pupils have an individual plan setting out what they will learn and how much support they will get.
- Leaders and governors are appreciative of the support of the local authority, particularly through the school adviser. Although the school is 'light touch' the local authority has been able to lend effective support for the induction of newly qualified teachers and the appointment of senior leaders.
- The ambition of leaders, managers and governors has created an ethos where everyone pulls together and relations are positive. Since the last inspection, school leaders have built on existing strengths and enhanced achievement in key areas like writing. The school is a vibrant community where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for exceptionally well and where pupils are prepared effectively for the future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed and strive continuously to make sure pupils get the best education possible. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement because the headteacher keeps them well-informed and because they visit regularly to find out for themselves. Governors challenge the school to improve but also provide the necessary support to enable it to happen. They make sure the performance of staff, including the headteacher, is properly appraised and that pay awards are merited. They manage the budget carefully and make sure pupil premium money is making a difference for the better. Governors make sure safeguarding requirements are met.

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	119695
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	439590

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Holland
Headteacher	C Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2009
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