



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Section 48 Inspection Report

Name of School: St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy School,

Inspection Date: 20th March 2014

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Pamela Brannigan

URN 138311

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 218
Appropriate Authority: Essex CC
Date of previous inspection: -

**School Address: Clairmont Road
Lexden Colchester CO3 5BE**

Tel. No. 01206 508445
Fax No. 01206 500929
Headteacher: Mrs Frances Booker

Information about the school

St Teresa Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in Lexden, Colchester in the county of Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school converted to an academy in 2012. It serves the parishes of St Teresa's Lexden and St Mary Immaculate and the Holy Archangels Kelvedon. There are currently 218 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 94%. There is a below average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average as is the number of pupils who receive the pupil premium.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires Improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Teresa's is an outstanding school with a Catholic ethos which permeates all areas. Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education and the capacity for sustained improvement are excellent. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development are interwoven through religious education, prayer and an understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community. Senior leaders are excellent role models and have put in place initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school as well as teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by all members of the school community. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel well cared for and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of school life. Parents welcome the Catholicity of the school; appreciate the good communication with staff and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with and often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2009 identified no major areas for development other than the continued implementation of current good practice. Since then the implementation of the agreed understanding of levels of attainment in religious education have informed lesson planning and assessment. Staff inset to assist the introduction of the new religious education programme 'Come and See' has also ensured sustained improvement. Currently moderation meetings are held each term in school and the school has also hosted a deanery day to share judgements with other Catholic schools. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has very good strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. Senior staff and governors are very good role models and all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Five teachers hold the CCRS qualification and a further member of staff is about to begin it.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community. The headteacher and subject leader

have a clear focus on prayer and worship in which they are well supported by all staff. Governors have a wide range of expertise and many are involved in the life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The religious education subject leader is outstanding and is well placed to support colleagues. She has attended diocesan training linked to the new religious education scheme which she has disseminated to colleagues.

What the school should do to improve further

As identified in the School Improvement Plan

- Continue moderation of pupils' work both internally and across the Deanery.
- Develop the role of the Liturgy group in self-evaluation.
- Provide story sacks to support home-school links
- Consider providing a day of reflection or Retreat Day for Year 6.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils make a very good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School Council, Fairtrade, Liturgy and Eco groups and as prefects. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Catholic Children's Society, Children in Need and Cafod. Pupils also support the parish link with a school and orphanage in Uganda and have raised funds to help this work. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is excellent and pupils value the sense of community and belonging created within the school.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are eager to take part in assemblies and lead class acts of worship. They have an age appropriate understanding of the liturgical year, its seasons and celebrations. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. Older pupils are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. Pupils value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children, the quality of education and the approachability of staff.

Attainment in religious education is very good and progress is outstanding. All lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Pupils spoken to said they enjoy their religious education lessons and

appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. They are eager to participate in activities and work well together whether in groups or pairs. They have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and are able integrate religious ideas into their own lives. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate very good progress made by all groups. Standards of attainment are in line with or exceed diocesan expectations.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher supported by her subject leader demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for the Catholic life of the school. She communicates a clear Catholic vision to the whole community which is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The subject leader has developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed, accurate and identifies areas for improvement. Together the headteacher and subject leader have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

Senior leaders monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. There is currently a very strong focus on planning and assessment as the school consolidates the implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme and the updated Curriculum Directory. The school has put in place strategies to give further challenge to the ablest children. Much emphasis is placed on staff development which includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors work closely with senior leadership and have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report, meetings with subject leaders and monitoring visits. Governors are closely involved in all aspects of the religious life of the school and are in a very good position to challenge and support effectively. They play a significant role in the compilation of the school improvement plan.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths which are well taught. There are very good links with other deanery schools including the secondary school to which many pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.. Pupils are given exceptionally good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising, fair trade activities and involvement in the local community, Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the good level of contact with the school which includes an invitation to attend the 'Come and See' celebration in their children's classrooms and enables them to support their children's faith journey.

Provision Grade 1

Provision for prayer and worship at St Teresa's is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are very well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection a prayerful assembly led by the headteacher on the Stations of the Cross linked St Teresa's words, 'Christ has no body now but yours' with the need for the whole community to help each other. Pupils interpreted this prayer through movement and the liturgy group led the singing. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year. There is a prayer garden available for pupils and classes. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The priest from St Teresa's parish supports the school through masses, liturgies and acts as chaplain on an informal basis. Pupils visit the church for masses and to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions. Links with both parishes are very good with many pupils acting as altar servers and as members of the folk group at St Teresa's.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is excellent. During the inspection all lessons observed were outstanding. They are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. The school has made a major investment in resources including sets of bibles for each class in Key Stage 2 and pupils benefit from the wide range of activities involved in religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils work very well and make very good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of most lessons observed. Very good support by teaching assistants is a feature of lessons especially in Early Years. Marking is positive, interactive and generally includes suggestions of ways to improve. Very good assessment, planning and tracking supports the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is outstanding. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The new religious education programme 'Come and See' has been in place for a year and is currently being embedded. The headteacher gives religious education a central place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. The support given to families through a wide range of extra curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.