



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Section 48 Inspection Report

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

Inspection Date: 7th July 2014

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Pamela Brannigan

URN 115153

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: 168
Appropriate Authority: Essex
Date Previous Inspection - unknown
GRADE 2

School Address: Elsenham Crescent
Basildon SS14 1UE

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Headteacher: Mrs Nuala Cashell

Information about the school

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School is an academy and part of the Basildon Catholic Collegiate Trust in Basildon in the county of Essex and the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of Our Lady and All Saints Basildon. There are currently 168 pupils aged 4-11 on roll of whom 30% are Catholics. The remaining pupils are mostly from other Christian backgrounds.. There is an above 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 around the national average. The number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding is average.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Satisfactory 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Teresa's is a good school which has made strenuous efforts over the past year to improve both the quality of religious education and Catholic Life for pupils. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development and the capacity for sustained improvement are now good. Outcomes for pupils, the quality of teaching and the provision for Catholic education are good and improving rapidly. The new headteacher has put in place a strategic improvement plan for religious education linked to teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring to move the school forward. Pastoral care is good and shared by all members of the school community including the priests from St Basil's Church, a parish sister and the Learning Support manager. From September a part time chaplain will join this team. Relationships in the school are good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents welcome the religious education in the school, appreciate the good communication with staff and the way the school keeps them informed. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with diocesan expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement and has put in place systems which ensure self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous. An almost completely new team of teachers have been appointed in the past year and the leadership team has put in place systems which are leading to better outcomes for pupils. The school is currently embedding the new religious education programme 'Come and See' which is leading to significant improvements in teaching and learning. Rigorous monitoring of teaching, planning and workbooks has ensured that areas for improvement are quickly identified. Tracking of pupil progress has ensured that groups who achieve less well are given appropriate support strategies. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has good systems to share good practice and support new teachers.

The headteacher, senior leadership and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. Senior staff 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 have the CCRS or equivalent qualification.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows very good leadership of a Catholic community through her focus on standards in religious education and prayer and worship. She is well supported in these areas by her staff. Governors recently appointed have a wide range of expertise and have involved themselves in the life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The new religious education subject leader is well placed to support colleagues and has attended diocesan training linked to the new religious education scheme.

What the school should do to improve further.

The school has identified that it needs to develop and maintain the priorities in the Religious Education Strategic Plan. These are to:

- improve the quality of religious education in the school
- embed the monitoring system for teaching and learning in religious education
- develop and refine assessment in religious education.
- Continue current good practice in tracking to ensure all groups achieve their full potential in religious education.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including Young Leaders, membership of the School Council, monitors and as prefects. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including the Catholic Children's Society, support for the Philippines disaster appeal and Cafod as well as a Harvest collection of food to help homeless people. Groups of pupils have been involved in entertaining elderly people in the local community. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is generally good and pupils value the sense of community created within the school.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. There are daily whole school or class based assemblies which involve children as appropriate for their age and development. They understand prayer as a time of reflection and are learning the traditional prayers of the Church. Year 6 pupils have an annual retreat day which provides an opportunity for renewal prior to transition to secondary school. Older pupils are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives. Pupils know the importance of worship and are given opportunities to write their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by all 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. A support manager helps individual pupils and their families and also responds to any concerns voiced by children. The 'Journey in Love' programme is used throughout the school to support pupils as they mature. Both priests from the parish are frequent visitors to the school, one as chaplain and one as a governor. In addition an Ursuline sister comes in every week to support readers. Pupils say they 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 and the approachability of staff.

Attainment and progress in religious education are good. Lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and pupils worked with interest. Pupils enjoy religious education and work very well together. They are eager to participate in activities and keen to achieve. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are increasing and leading to a better understanding of religious concepts. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate a varied range of tasks. Standards of attainment are generally in line with diocesan expectations.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The new headteacher supported by senior staff and governors demonstrates very good leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for the Catholic life of the school and is bringing about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. 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. She has developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed, accurate and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Along with the subject leader she has an excellent knowledge of areas for development in religious education and is 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 embeds the 'Come and See' religious education programme. The school is putting in place strategies to give further challenge to the ablest children and ensure all groups achieve their full potential. Staff development is very good and includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors, many appointed in the past two years work closely with senior leadership and now 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, learning walks and monitoring visits. The experienced link governor is familiar with assessment in religious education and comes in frequently to visit to classrooms and attend assemblies, masses and liturgies. Governors are now closely involved in all aspects of the religious life of the school and are in a good position to challenge and support effectively. They have engaged in diocesan training which has enabled them to evaluate provision and contribute to improvement.

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. Pupils' ethnic backgrounds are celebrated in 'multi-cultural' week with speakers leading them to value their place and importance in their school and wider community. Pupils are given opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising which they often initiate. They also have responsibility for the care of the prayer garden which is currently being enhanced by a specially commissioned Stations of the Cross. Good provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences in the light of faith. There are good links with schools in the local community through music and sporting events including an inter-school Christmas concert. 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 enables them to support their children's learning.

Provision

Grade 2

Provision for prayer and worship at St Teresa's is good. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection an assembly led by Early Years pupils focused on friendship and caring for each other as part of the school's understanding of Jesus' teachings. Pupils were engaged and reflective throughout and singing was very good. Bidding prayers written and read by pupils were included as well as the traditional prayers of the Church. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has an attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts, and display boards which generally include children's work. Whole school and class masses as well as age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. Both priests from St Basil's Church are frequent visitors and support the school through masses, liturgies and chaplaincy as well as Reconciliation in Advent and Lent.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or outstanding. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. Pupils respond well and appreciate the new approach to which this has given rise. In all classes observed pupils worked well and made good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of the outstanding lesson observed. Good support by teaching assistants enables all groups of pupils to make progress. Marking is positive and often includes suggestions of ways to improve. Good and improving assessment, planning and tracking supports the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. 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 leading to improvements in provision. 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 review 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 breakfast club and many extra-curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current 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.