



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

LEA: Essex

Inspection Date: 14th March 2018

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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: Age
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 192
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: February 2013

School Address:
Ashingdon Road,
Rochford,
Essex
SS4 1RF

Tel. No. 01702-547918
Headteacher: Mrs N Paterson
Chair of Governors: Mrs T King

Information about the school

St Teresa's Catholic Primary is a one-form entry primary school situated in Rochford Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. There are 192 pupils on roll, 45% of whom are Catholics, most coming from the parish of St Teresa, Rochford. The pupils are mainly of White British heritage with 17% coming from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. However, very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a stable staff with the appointment last year of a new deputy headteacher who is also subject leader for religious education. Over 81% of teachers are Catholics and four have the CCRS or equivalent qualification. The school is currently preparing to become part of the Assisi Catholic Trust with eight other local schools. It is also part of the Rochford District Schools partnership.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Teresa's is an outstanding Catholic school. The head teacher together with the governors, other members of the senior leadership team and the religious education subject leader are very effective in promoting the Catholic dimension of the school. Staff are excellent role models for the pupils. Prayer is an integral part of the school's daily life and is central to the spiritual and moral development of all. Pupils behave very well, work hard and thrive within a strong Christian community where they feel loved, well supported and safe. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. During the course of their time in the school, pupils make good progress.

The school has addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection in 2013. Religious education assessment procedures and tracking have been developed to improve outcomes for pupils; lesson planning has also been developed so it now consistently matches the abilities of pupils and raises attainment. Self-evaluation is accurate and the religious education action plan clearly identifies current areas for further development.

School leadership and governors are committed to improving St Teresa's further. The Catholic dimension of the school is strengthened through very good pastoral care which extends to a high level of support for families as well as pupils. A number of external agencies and family support workers are employed to ensure all pupils are able to benefit from the full curriculum offered by the school. Strong parish links also help to ensure that the Catholic mission of the school is explicit and understood by the entire school community.

There is evidence to indicate that the school has the capacity to ensure current good standards in religious education are maintained or improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas identified in the religious education action plan.
- Consolidate assessment initiatives in line with diocesan recommendations and evaluate the impact on teaching and learning.
- Give parents and carers more opportunities to comment on the provision of religious education and the Catholic life of the school through carefully focused questionnaires.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils behaviour for learning is very good. They are interested in religious education lessons and co-operate and work well in pairs or groups. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities including debate, role play and appreciation of religious art and are keen to do well and achieve the learning

objective. They have a good grasp of religious vocabulary appropriate to their ages and are able to link parables and scripture to their own lives. The introduction of resources from 'Caritas in Action' is enabling pupils to reflect on Catholic social teaching. Overall and often from low starting points, they make good progress and achieve diocesan expectations at the end of both KS1 and KS2.

The extent to which pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. They are friendly and caring, ready to help others; they, in turn, feel valued, safe and well supported. Pupils enjoy the family atmosphere; they have a sense of belonging and everyone is important. They are proud of their roles as Caritas ambassadors and religious education prefects who lead the Angelus in Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils spoken to see caring for the school as part of the wider task of caring for their world. They have a well-developed sense of service and charities supported include Cafod, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and a 'Reverse Advent calendar' when pupils brought in food and gifts for vulnerable families in the local community. Links with a school in Gambia provide additional opportunities for pupils to understand different experiences and cultures. Pupils can talk about the main events in the Church's year and know and understand the school mission statement, 'By following in the footsteps of St Teresa, we share Gospel values'.

Collective worship and the prayer life of the school is central to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. They know formal prayers appropriate for their age group and experience informal and spontaneous prayer. During collective worship and reflections observed, pupils were attentive and responsive. All classrooms have a simple, uncluttered prayer table which provides lovely focal points for reflection. Pupils are encouraged to compose their own prayers in class and at home. Weekly Masses in the church involve pupils as composers of bidding prayers, offertory procession, readers and altar servers. Reconciliation services are held in Advent and Lent. Year 6 pupils take part in a pilgrimage to Walsingham as part of their school journey as well as attending a deanery Mass at the end of the academic year and a Leavers' Mass to which parents and families are invited. Pupils experience traditional Catholic devotions including a May procession, Adoration and Stations of the Cross in Lent. The weekly Rosary Club led by the link governor for religious education is well attended.

Pastoral care is regarded as the shared responsibility of all staff and governors as well as the local parish priest who is a frequent visitor to the school. A breakfast club is provided to support family life and a wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich the life and work of the school. Pupils spoken to talked enthusiastically about the school and know where to go when they need help. The project of the Unicef Rights of the Child is raising awareness of the needs of children throughout the world and pupils are able to reflect on their own responsibilities. The Caritas Ambassadors enjoy preparing and participating in liturgical celebrations as well as caring for the Sacred Space.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The leadership of the school's Catholic life is outstanding. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by all members of the school community. All the staff clearly promote the Catholic life of the school and are excellent role models for the pupils. There is an annual pilgrimage to Walsingham or other places for staff and governors. The Catholic mission of the school is unambiguous and evidenced in its daily life and within the wider community. There is a range of lovely religious education related displays in classes and around the school which are linked to topic themes, the liturgical year, particular events or specific payers.

The new subject leader who is also the deputy headteacher is enthusiastic and highly motivated to ensure religious education is regarded as a core subject. She works closely with deanery colleagues to share good practice and current initiatives. She is an experienced teacher who is able to demonstrate lessons and work alongside colleagues. School based in-service training is used effectively to support and develop staff skills and subject knowledge. The subject leader is currently trialling assessment without levels which will be evaluated in due course.

The governors are aware of their responsibilities and understand the strengths and areas for development of the school. They make frequent visits and are well placed to challenge and support. The link governor for religious education is extremely knowledgeable about the school and has a good understanding its day-to-day activities. She makes regular monitoring visits and joins the subject leader for learning walks and book looks. She then prepares reports for the full Governing Body. The parish priest also works closely with the school to support religious education and act as a teaching resource. He visits every week as well as welcoming pupils to the church for periods of Adoration.

The school communicates well with parents and carers through newsletters, curriculum information sheets and its website. Families are frequently invited to school celebrations and Masses held in the nearby church and attendance is good. A high level of support is indicated by the response to religious education homework and requests for help from the parents' association. However, parents have not been given an opportunity to comment on the Catholic life of the school or the provision for religious education

Provision

Grade 1

Good planning, lively pace and effective use of talking partners result in teaching being good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are able to include a range of interesting and engaging activities. Particularly good differentiation was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils explored the symbolism of bread with reference to Jesus' words, 'I am the bread of life in St John's gospel. A high level of challenge through discussion enabled all pupils to grasp links with Holy Communion and the Last Supper. In Year 2 all pupils were fully engaged in an exciting role play depicting the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem as part of the story of Palm Sunday. The gospel account was read by some pupils and everyone enjoyed singing 'Hooray for Jesus.' This was followed by a letter writing activity where pupils retold the events to a friend. Differentiation was by support and a range of challenge questions. All pupils achieved well. Workbooks are well presented and marking is positive and includes 'next steps' to enable pupils to make further progress. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and provide good support for individual or groups of pupils.

The school devotes 10% of teaching time to religious education and uses the diocesan recommended programme, "Come and See" which is enhanced by the Caritas in Action social teaching and material from Brentwood diocese including 'Journey in Love' Very good links with the local parish also support pupils' knowledge and understanding of Catholic beliefs and traditions. Pupils spoken to confidently described the different sacraments and the links with scripture. Other faiths are taught well through 'Come and See' and links with the school in Gambia. The religious education curriculum is further enriched through the school's charity work and, its musical flair. The school has been working on the assessment of pupils without levels in line with diocesan recommendations. Pupils' work is moderated within the group of local Catholic schools and shared with members of staff to enable them to plan well to meets the needs of pupils.

Collective worship is well planned and there is a variety of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Classes attend weekly Mass in church on a rota basis as well as periods of Adoration. The parish priest leads a weekly assembly in school throughout the year and also leads the Stations of the Cross for pupils in Lent. Very good use is made of the sacred space which provides a tranquil area for pupils, staff and the weekly Rosary group. On the day of the inspection the headteacher led a powerful assembly exploring the fifth Station of the Cross where Simon of Cyrene carries the cross for Jesus. Two Year 5 Caritas Ambassadors formed a tableau which was the focus as the headteacher explored ways to offer help to those in need. Pupils were reverent and attentive and eager to contribute suggestions linked to prayer and alms giving. Singing was excellent. Achievement is celebrated in special assemblies to which families and governors are invited. An Advent service is led by Years 3 and 4 while Year 6 leads a Stations of the Cross service for the

whole school community. The provision for prayer and collective worship is well planned and makes an outstanding contribution to the faith journey of pupils.

The inspector would like to thank all members of the school community for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended during her visit.