

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Brook Road, Borehamwood WD6 5HL

Date of inspection: 15 June 2016



A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupil's religious literacy is good. St Teresa's offers a high quality religious education curriculum which meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and ensures progress in the development of pupil's religious literacy. The typicality of teaching is good, and builds effectively on prior learning to ensure all pupils make at least expected progress over time and reach levels of attainment that are in line with other core subjects. The school invests time and resources effectively to support the teaching of religious education and makes full use of training opportunities offered by the diocese. Staff provide a stimulating environment which supports pupils, enabling them to thrive and succeed. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent which supports their engagement in learning. Governors are well informed and are regular visitors to the school. They play an active role in supporting developments and monitoring performance.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade 1

St Teresa's is a welcoming and inclusive school offering pupils a rich and vibrant educational experience firmly rooted in its Catholic ethos. The mission statement is at the heart of the school's Catholic life: 'growing and learning in love as part of God's family to be the best we can be'. Prayer and worship are central to the daily life of the school and the recently formed 'Apostles of Mercy' provide pupils with an opportunity to give witness and deepen understanding in the Year of Mercy in a meaningful way. They are beginning to develop a greater role in planning and leading prayer. High quality collective worship nourishes pupils' spiritual growth and their knowledge of the celebrations of the Church. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being a part of this community where their gifts and talents are celebrated and shared. They take advantage of the many opportunities available to live out their faith in both the school and the wider community. They are active in fund raising for those in need, and in participating in events in the wider community. Parents are very positive about the school and express appreciation of the way their children's faith life is nurtured. Governors are passionate about the school's mission and are actively involved in its evaluation. They are fully involved in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited seven lessons and one assembly, and carried out five interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of St Teresa's, Borehamwood was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Ms Niamh Brady
Ms Liz Doonan

Lead Inspector
Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a one form entry in the LA of Hertfordshire and the locality of Borehamwood. The school serves the parishes of St Teresa of the Child Jesus and Saints John Fisher and Thomas More. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 0% and from other Faiths 0%. 1% did not declare their faith. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 65%.

There are 233 pupils on roll, with one pupil with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. Twenty six pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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Headteacher: Mrs Teresa McBride
Chair of Governors: Mr P Clancy

Date of previous inspection: 28 March 2011
Previous Inspection grades: 1

Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The school has introduced new resources to support teachers in the planning and delivery of the religious education curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to prepare, plan and lead prayer and worship have been extended. The school has participated in diocesan moderation and worked in partnership with a local school to ensure consistency of judgements.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 2

The school fully meets the requirement of the Curriculum Directory, as set out by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, which forms the content of religious education. There is evidence of a variety of creative approaches including drama, role-play and artistic responses. The school has recently adopted a specific religious education programme as its core, and enhances this with additional resources. This is the second year of the new programme and schemes of work continue to be developed. There was evidence of tasks set which encouraged pupils to reflect and develop deeper levels of understanding. This is achieved through a combination of the school's scheme of work and coverage of the liturgical cycle, their response to the Year of Mercy and Pope Francis's call to respond to social justice. There is clear progression in the content of religious education as pupils progress through each key stage.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 2

Progress is good across all key stages and attainment in religious education is in line with other core subjects. Current data indicates that rates of attainment and progress are likely to be sustained. The progress of specific groups of children such as those with special needs or children with an additional language is good. Most groups receive appropriate support, although the school recognises that further differentiation is an area for development to ensure that the needs of all pupils are fully met and to enable a greater proportion of pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment. Overall, the religious literacy of the pupils is good, as a result of the opportunities provided for re-cap and consolidation of key technical vocabulary with links to previous learning. Internal and diocesan moderation takes place regularly, and the school is exploring ways in which to further develop links within the deanery.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching is consistently good and as a result, pupils make at least expected progress over time. Across the school, inspectors observed pupils whose religious knowledge and understanding was well embedded. Of note, pupils were readily able to recall previous learning and

to use this to inform their current work. This was particularly noticeable in Nursey, where pupils could identify and recall objects following a recent church visit. Where best practice was seen, there was a clear sense of direction in the learning, which was supported by evidence from books. Teachers build skilfully on prior learning and demonstrate good subject knowledge which supports pupil progress. Talking partners was an effective strategy used across the phases, where pupils were encouraged to share their ideas. This was particularly effective in a Key Stage 2 class where pupils deepened their understanding of the story of Saul through probing questioning and discussion. Teachers have high expectations of pupil involvement in their learning and pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning. Pupils receive quality feedback on their work to which they respond well. The learning environment is vibrant and dynamic. Teachers ensure a calm and positive climate which contributes to the learning taking place. Progression can be seen throughout the school and this will continue to improve as assessment becomes more rigorous and systematic.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

Leadership and management of religious education are good. The school has moved through a new phase of transition in recent years. There is a clear vision and commitment to religious education and a sharp focus on improving teaching and learning throughout the school. The focus on high expectations and the drive to continuously raise standards is shared by staff. Through its subject development plans, the leadership team has identified a clear focus on improving outcomes in each key stage, although the full impact of these plans has not yet been seen. The headteacher and religious education coordinator model good practice for less experienced teachers and those new to Catholic schools. Governors receive regular, accurate evaluations of the action plan for religious education, following the monitoring process of teaching and its impact on learning. The leadership team know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and actively support staff development in the areas of need. The school's own self-evaluation is robust and demonstrates that it has a clear perception of the way forward and an ambitious determination for improvement. The senior leadership team is committed to continuing professional development, making full use of diocesan training opportunities, in-house modelling and coaching, and they continue to develop key networks with other schools. As a consequence, individual and whole school training needs are effectively identified and supported. The drive, ambition and determination of the senior leadership team, led effectively by the Headteacher, have ensured that key strategic decisions impact directly on improving standards.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Enable pupils to demonstrate a deeper understanding of their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve in their next steps of learning.
- Further develop the quality of teaching by implementing clearer structures and expectations of planning, monitoring, review and moderation.
- Ensure the quality and frequency of homework deepens pupils' religious literacy and understanding.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has increased the involvement of the parish priest with school and class liturgies and acts of worship. This, together with the introduction of the 'Apostles of Mercy' empower the pupils to lead and grow in the understanding of their faith, and respond to Pope Francis's call to live out corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Worship is greatly enhanced by music and singing continues to be a strength of the school. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available to Key Stage 2 pupils during Advent and Lent. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality and grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith in their everyday lives have been found through a focus on 'Spirituality Week', Laudato Si and the tenets of Catholic social teaching.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade 1

The school recognises religious education to be at the core of the curriculum, which is reflected in its budget allocation and the quality of resources in use. 10% of curriculum time is given to religious education in accordance with Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The school has implemented extremely good support for continuing professional development and the induction of new staff. Governors are well informed and are regular, welcome visitors to the school. They are committed to the continuous evaluation of religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The school's dedication to their patron, St. Teresa, is portrayed through child-centred displays and statues which influence their understanding of their commitment to live out the mission statement in their everyday lives. The learning environment is outstanding with attractive classroom displays and prayer tables which reflect the Church's year, and are used as a focus during classroom liturgies. The quiet courtyard at the centre of the building provides an area for prayer and reflection for the whole school. The school is very well maintained and staff and pupils clearly take pride in its vibrant and dynamic environment.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

Grade 1

The school's provision for prayer and worship is outstanding and a key part of every school celebration. Prayer and liturgy are a strength and are integral to the life of the school through class prayer times, reflections and assemblies. Pupils participate respectfully and with ease and opportunities for personal quiet reflection permeate the school day. Pupils are often engaged in the planning and preparation of worship through writing their own prayers and are beginning to take a more active role in leading worship through the Apostles of Mercy. Cross-curricular activities during 'Spirituality Week' empower pupils to reflect more deeply on their own spirituality through prayer stations, meditations and open letters to God. Pupils enjoy a rich variety of prayer experience drawn from the Catholic tradition including Rosary Prayer group in May and October and the liturgical seasons are woven into the life of the school. The school comes together to celebrate the feast days of St Teresa, Corpus Christi, St Blaise and Sts Peter and Paul to which parents and governors are also invited. All Key Stage 2 pupils are offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. The portfolios and gallery on the school website evidence

the rich variety of opportunities available to the community to celebrate and nurture their faith awareness. Pupils are empowered to develop their spirituality and engage in worship in a rich variety of manners and settings. Worship is planned using visual presentations, music, drama and song to promote pupil's reflection and thinking. The response to the call from Pope Francis during this Year of Mercy includes a 'Mercy Door' representing all members of the community. This, together with the recently formed Apostles of Mercy group, reminds all pupils of their commitment and response to corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. Pupils also participate in diocesan events, and enjoy being part of the wider family of Catholic schools. The parish priest is a valued and regular visitor to the school. During his interview with inspectors, he outlined how the spirituality of the pupils of St Teresa's is evident during parish celebrations, including the Walk of Faith and celebrations of 90 years of Catholicism in the local area.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

Grade I

The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice is outstanding. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and appreciate their commitment to the Catholic life of the school. They are proud to belong to St Teresa's and know they have responsibilities to the school, to each other and to the wider community. There is a strong focus on the call to serve through the classroom, assemblies and strands of Catholic social teaching. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need locally, nationally and globally. Conversations with pupils demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of the plight of others less fortunate than themselves and the need to support them through their fundraising. They recognise that their actions and example can have a great effect for good and enables them to put Gospel values into action. Pupils are offered many opportunities to take roles of responsibility and respond to these very positively. These roles include the Apostles of Mercy, Team Captains, Year 6 Citizens, Eco Warriors, School and Sports Councils. They help and care for each other willingly and enjoy contributing to making their school a happy and harmonious place to be. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities the school offers and are happy to play their part. Pupils are well supported in developing their gifts and talents and these are celebrated weekly by the school community.

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

Grade I

The school has forged an outstanding partnership with its parents and parish. There is a strong culture of effective links with parents through International Day, Grandparents Day and Science Week. The parents' forum engages families in pupils' learning and development and provides opportunities for parents to express views on their child's education to which the school listens and responds. The school website is very informative and supportive to the community. Religious education newsletters are produced termly and inform parents of learning expectations and key celebrations. Questionnaires overwhelmingly indicate that parents support the school and appreciate the high standard of education and Catholic life which it offers. The school participates well in the wider life of the diocese, whether attending teacher and governor courses offered by the diocese, or working in conjunction with its diocesan adviser. Parish links are excellent; the parish priest acts as a valuable learning resource and his presence is greatly appreciated by the entire community.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

Grade 1

The leadership and management of St Teresa's have a clear understanding of the Church's mission and is clearly committed to this. They demonstrate this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral education at its heart. Catholic life is central to the work of the school and leaders ensure that all aspects reflect the richness of a Christian way of life. Laudate Si and the Year of Mercy have been given high priority and it is clear that the whole school has engaged fully with these celebrations. The school's evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement is accurate, and it is evident that there has been a relentless drive for improvement which is shared and supported by governors. The induction and support of new staff is strong through quality continuing professional development and ongoing support. The dedication of the headteacher empowers the school on its journey through identified actions and priorities. The school engages with the diocese through training for staff and governors, participation in Masses and moderation. The school recognises that it now needs to develop and widen its links with local Catholic schools. Governors make a significant contribution to the work and Catholic dimension of the school. They have a high level of expertise and fully understand their role as governors of a diocesan Catholic school.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Develop the role of the Apostles of Mercy to ensure that pupils are empowered to plan and lead worship with confidence
- Formalise arrangements for monitoring and developing the Catholic life of the school