



INSPECTION REPORT

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Amanda Pritchard
Chair of Governors: Mr Romeo Maddelena

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 4th – 5th December 2012
Date of previous inspection: 22nd - 23rd June 2010

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Maisie Foster

Description of School

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School has a wide catchment area serving two Bristol parishes: St Teresa's and St Vincent's. Of the 209 pupils on roll at the time of inspection 94% are baptised Catholics. The school community reflects wide cultural diversity. A larger proportion of pupils than is expected nationally come from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils learning to speak English as an additional language (EAL) is also above the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN).

This popular school is oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; **Grade 2:** Good; **Grade 3:** Satisfactory; **Grade 4:** Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Teresa's is an outstanding school which has built on the good standards achieved at the last inspection to reach this level of excellence. It is a highly effective school. The Headteacher is a source of inspiration to the whole school community which works with commitment, dedication and hard work to achieve its shared vision of the school's mission. The outstanding leadership of the RE subject leader has played a large part in the school's accelerated rate of progress. The staff work unstintingly to support each other and the pupils in the service of Christ. The ethos of the school is characterised by trust and a sense of belonging, encouraging pupils to develop a sense of self-worth and to respond to the high expectations set for them. Teaching is good and in many cases outstanding, and assessment is excellent. As a result, pupils of all abilities make rapid progress.

The work of the Governors is exemplary, guiding, supporting and maintaining the Catholicity of the school through effective structures and procedures. In this they are ably led by a long-serving and perceptive Chair and a dedicated parish priest.

Parents are closely involved in the life of the school and their support and appreciation for its work are wholehearted. As one parent wrote:

"All staff are dedicated as role models for the children...practising Christian values by supporting each child's needs ...so that they can develop into positive, respectful, happy and loving human beings."

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The Catholic life of the school is integral to all aspects of its development and is at the heart of its entire endeavour. The leadership and management of the school at both

Governor and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) levels are strong and highly effective. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and share a clear sense of direction for its further development.

The high quality of teaching and assessment result in pupils becoming effective learners and the well-developed self-evaluation systems ensure that staff regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their practice. Continuing parental support adds to staff confidence and sense of purpose. Pupils' behaviour is consistently exemplary which contributes significantly to their very good and in some cases, excellent achievement.

The school is in an excellent position to maintain improvement.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

As the school has accurately identified in its School Improvement Plan (SIP)

- continue to build on the already excellent practice in assessment in pursuit of every child making exemplary progress
- ensure that marking consistently informs pupils of the next steps in their learning and that teachers give them time to respond
- embed fully the new Curriculum Directory in the ethos and practice of the school.

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

The quality of pupils' learning is excellent: these primary age children have a real understanding of their faith and know that their belief must affect their lives and their behaviour if they are to be followers of Christ. They can articulate the mission and vision of the school and how these make it distinctive. They are able to talk about their own faith journey.

Pupils are confident in planning and leading reflections and benefit from the excellent models provided by the staff, particularly the Headteacher. As a year 6 pupil stated:

"I love Mrs Pritchard's reflections. They show us the beauty of God's creation and His love for us. We have time to think and if we are troubled we can find guidance which helps us."

In addition to the spiritual development which is fostered through time to be still and reflect, there is a special code used by the Headteacher which provides a thought for pupils to reflect on later. For example, "WWJD?", which stands for "What would Jesus do?"

The strong sense of being part of a class and school family promotes a willingness to share responsibility and show support for each other. Pupils take seriously the second

commandment to love one another. They treat each other with high levels of respect and care, and benefit from the excellent example of the adults around them. They know that they are valued and loved and that their views are listened to and acted upon. As a consequence pupils grow in self-belief. The exceptional care shown to them by the whole school community nurtures trust. Parents appreciate the uncommon love and excellent relationships from which their children benefit emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. As one wrote:

"The school's Christian ethos is distinctive. The children truly smile with the face of Jesus. Everyone comments on it. They are delightful, attentive in class, kind and considerate to all around them; showing love of God and love of one another. These children are the future of the church and it would not surprise me if more than one boy in the current Year 6 entered the religious life."

Pupils benefit from the exceptional levels of trust between themselves and the staff. High expectations characterise the relationship and staff are consistent and fair in their approach to any problems that may arise. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are eager to take responsibility for themselves and each other. Older pupils are trained to be playground leaders. They learn leadership skills which help them develop personally and socially, while giving an example of what it is to be a follower of Christ, serving one another. The Buddy system, where older children accompany younger at the celebration of Mass, engenders the same consistent vision of love of God and love of each other.

They share learning about their faith together. For example, Reception children shared their prayer maps of the Our Father with Year 4, who taught them how to sign the prayer. Both groups of pupils learned from each other. They reinforced what they knew as they explained it to someone else, gained in self-worth as they were listened to with courtesy and respect. They knew that they were sharing and growing in an important aspect of their lives, their prayer life.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Dynamic Collective Worship inspires pupils to personal reflection and thoughtful responses which deepen their faith. Searching questions encourage the pupils to think beyond the obvious. In recalling the Gospel story of the journey Mary and Joseph made, the Headteacher challenged the pupils to think about their own faith journey: what they take with them, what they leave behind and what they bring to God, leading to the significant question *"How does God want me to live?"* In their responses pupils displayed their ability to reflect sensitively on other people's experience, to empathise, and to consider their own relationship with God, as they considered those of Mary and Joseph. The power to move was evident in the pupils' total absorption when listening or when watching powerful images; their thoughtful comments and their exemplary behaviour. Some pupils prolonged the time to reflect and the stillness in which to pray by voluntarily staying at the end. Careful preparation of reflections, the use of well-chosen artefacts, images using ICT, and engaging music create an atmosphere of prayerfulness and a feeling of the closeness of God.

Pupils prepare and lead reflections with care and are growing in confidence and skills. They are learning the importance of personal response through the writing of Reflection

Journals where they have an opportunity to take time to consider their own private response and record it for themselves. This confidentiality reflects the trust the pupils have in the adults around them and in each other.

Pupils are enthusiastic about leading prayer and their planning of reflections and liturgies promotes not only spiritual but also social and personal development. They plan as a team with their class or school family, listening to each other, making decisions and choices and problem-solving. Through such activity, they reinforce their knowledge of the Scriptures and traditional prayers and texts. They increase their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills as they research for information and images which will engage interest. Working collaboratively they learn to make compromises, listen to each other and find affirmation of themselves. In one reflection, a pupil explained that in his search for becoming closer to God in Advent, he had talked to his mother who said that Christmas was not about presents. It was about the life we have, the gift of God's Son and the gift of family. Pupils shared their thoughts, hopes and life experiences in an atmosphere of trust, appropriate to the vision of the school.

Parents are involved in the prayer life of the school through shared opportunities such as Prayers bags which are taken home. They and their children enjoy responding to the question or prayer which is part of the Religious Education (RE) newsletter. Pupils pray with confidence and a facility borne of a culture which promotes prayer as an activity as natural and as necessary as breathing.

Pupils make significantly above nationally expected progress from KS1 to KS2 in terms of value added measures. All pupils make good progress in RE and the progress of some is exemplary. Well-targeted support is given to pupils with Special Educational Needs or with English as an Additional Language. By the end of KS2 pupils are religiously literate and able to use appropriate vocabulary to express their understanding. The school focuses on developing language and understanding so that pupils are empowered to think deeply about their beliefs and articulate them, expressing the impact they have on their lives and world view.

The varied approaches to teaching RE engage the interest of pupils and motivate them through their enjoyment of learning. In a cross-curricular piece of work, Year 1 pupils enjoyed the experience of making musical instruments in science and then took great pleasure from writing a psalm to praise God, using their own instruments. Older pupils enjoy using their knowledge of Biblical stories and making them into play scripts, which they then act out. A Year 6 pupil observed:

"It is a fun way to help our learning..... If you are in that person's shoes you begin to understand how they might feel."

They grow in understanding and knowledge in RE, while developing skills of collaborative working, empathy and confidence.

Grade 1

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

The whole school community, staff, governors, pupils and parents, are united in their vision of supporting each other in their ambitious drive towards excellence in all things, including their duties to God and the mission of His church. The quality of the work of leaders and managers is excellent.

Leaders and managers know the school well and are committed to fulfil its vision of excellence in all areas of its Catholicity. The school's leadership understands fully and is wholeheartedly supportive of the Church's mission in education, articulated by the RE Link Governor, who is also the parish priest and school chaplain:

"The role of Catholic education is to continue the mission of Christ, expressing God's word to enable our children to be open to His word and to receive the sacraments and the Holy Spirit and develop their talents to become good citizens and active members of God's church."

The Headteacher, in particular, is a source of inspiration to the school and its wider community. Parents themselves reflect the shared vocabulary of the school family and the gains it has made and is still making in its spiritual journey. Many mentioned the emphasis on spiritual development as an important factor when choosing this school for their child.

The Catholic life of the school is vibrant, explicit in every aspect and is of paramount importance. It informs all systems, structures and strategies in theory and in practice. Self-evaluation is of a high calibre and leaders and staff are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the light of Christ, as expressed in their Mission Statement.

Governors, well-led by an experienced and competent Chair, have worked hard to produce and refine effective systems for self-evaluation which contribute to the drive towards school improvement. They are well-organised, with clear systems of communication and accountability. This results in accurate information and clear data to inform decision making. Leaders and managers know the school well and have a deep commitment to its vision. The Catholic dimension of the school is its driving force. The Catholicity of the school is monitored, reviewed and reported in every Headteacher's report to the Governing body so that they are well informed as to its status and well-placed to make further decisions. Training ensures that the requirements of the diocesan guidelines are implemented, as are canonical and statutory responsibilities. A rigorous recruitment process supports the Catholicity of the school: both in the appointment of the present Headteacher and that of staff at all levels. If the candidate appropriate to the vision of the school cannot be found then an appointment is not made.

The Catholicity of the school is supported and challenged where necessary by the excellent contribution of an exceptional school chaplain and governor. As a regular and frequent visitor in school, he is known and loved by the whole community. Parents strongly regard him as an important influence in their children's lives and his positive relationships with staff, the Headteacher, other governors and parishioners make him

well-placed as a trusted and informed liaison person. His regular meetings with the Headteacher and RE subject leader ensure monitoring and evaluation are implemented by action to further the vision of excellence.

The school chaplain also supports staff in their spiritual development. He helps them to plan liturgies and reflections, to deepen their subject knowledge and their commitment to develop as the people of God in a Catholic school. They benefit from the formal professional training they receive and the many informal opportunities for discussion and guidance. As parish priest and RE link governor, he supports the teaching of RE through classroom visits and planning liturgies, including the celebration of Mass. His direct approach and gentle sense of humour engage pupils and encourage their learning through questioning, demonstration and using visual aids, such as artefacts and symbols.

The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Their close knowledge of the school and its effective ways of promoting and developing its Catholicity are facilitated by the large percentage of them who are parents. This ensures an immediacy of communication and information at a day-to-day level as well as at strategic level. Governors engage effectively with parents and pupils and seek to know their views and respond to them appropriately. The attendance of governors at school celebrations, including Mass and Collective Worship, and social events, provide a visible presence for the wider community and is a means of their being informed about wider community life. They know their school family well, are proud to be part of it and work with commitment in the pursuit of its vision.

The school has a high profile in the community as a place of welcome and inclusion which is a central tenet of the school and is shared by all. The strong vision of the school family, united in the common purpose of inspiring each other towards excellence, binds the whole community together. Pupils refer to it in everyday parlance, parents comment on it and staff and governors demonstrate it every day in their work.

Pupils are proud of their cultural identity and respect the similarities found in faith practices. As stated by a Year 6 pupil:

"Everyone has a different way of worshipping and we should respect their way. Disrespect is not what Jesus taught us."

Pupils take part in, and watch their peers participate in, a range of creative opportunities in art, dance and drama which celebrate diversity. They see themselves and their friends celebrating together joyfully and their sense of identity as part of the school family is strengthened.

The school actively promotes equality and eliminates discrimination, with curricular and extra-curricular activities open to all. Those who are most vulnerable are well-supported by highly skilled members of staff, including an outstanding inclusion and pupil support leader. The school is successful in its integration of all cultures and pupils are aware of this and regard it as a blessing. A Year 3 pupil prayed:

"I know that we are all made in Your image and likeness, God. Every one of our faces is different. We have different coloured skin and hair and we are Your family. Thank you, Father, for all of us."

Effective partnerships with local Catholic schools provide extended opportunities for pupils to work together in a variety of contexts, for example, The Big Assembly.

Themes of Collective Worship and assemblies make explicit the issues of equality, social justice and global concerns, with opportunities for pupils to explore them further. Pupils' opinions are sought through questionnaires and surveys and acted upon. They grow in self-worth, knowing that they are listened to with respect and consideration.

Pupils' participation in the School Council and the ECO group provide another vehicle for democracy in action. Pupil Voice plays a significant role in the appointment of new staff and is astonishing in its serious intent and insight. Human rights and their balancing responsibilities are displayed in every classroom, reminding everyone of their importance. The school is working towards a Rights Respecting School Award.

Visitors from other faiths and visits to places sacred to people of other faiths, broaden pupils' horizons and help to prevent the formation of stereotypical views. As one pupil said:

"I like learning about God and I want to know what other people consider God to be."

The composition of the governing body reflects the diversity of the community it represents. Parent and parish links are strong. Sacramental preparation takes place within the parishes and the school supports the process with its usual welcoming spirit.

Grade 1

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Prayer is at the heart of the school's way of working at every level of activity. It is central to its being and its relationships. The prayer life is inspirational, well-planned and well-resourced. It engages pupils and adults within and outside the school. Pupils lead prayers regularly and are enriched by the inspirational examples of prayers and reflections they experience. The school, led by an ardent choir, sing their praise to God confidently and with conviction. Collective Worship is well-planned, reviewed and evaluated so that the quality of experience leads to spiritual development which is progressively built on as pupils progress through the school.

Provision is exemplary. Resources are of exceptionally high quality and used effectively to develop awe and wonder. Pupils appreciate the time and thought the Headteacher and staff give to ensuring that their spiritual needs are met. Opportunities for professional training are given to staff so that they are confident in the reflections that they themselves deliver. Reflections at the beginning of every staff meeting give the prayer life of the school its proper status and help to bind the staff family in a bond of prayer. Staff provide examples of shared support and collaboration as they work in pairs to plan and deliver moving reflections which have the power to inspire and help participants grow in faith.

The implementation of *God Matters* has had a significant impact on the RE curriculum because it is more Christ-centred and grounded in Catholic teaching than the previous programme of work. Led by an outstanding and hard-working subject leader, teachers have reviewed and evaluated their planning so as to amend it to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. Pupils with EAL and SEN are well-supported by skilled Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and make good and better progress.

Enrichment activities abound and creative approaches engage the pupils' interest and enthuse their learning. RE is at least as well-resourced as the other core subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and in many cases outstanding. The leaders of the school have worked with drive and energy to put strategies and systems in place to develop teachers' expertise, subject knowledge and accountability. As a consequence, teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. Where practice is best, lessons are well-planned and taught with conviction and enthusiasm. Pupils themselves are then engaged and motivated to learn. Teachers and LSAs know their pupils well and build on prior knowledge to ensure secure learning. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils promotes effective learning. Good classroom management strategies ensure that little or no teaching time is lost in addressing negative behaviour. Skilful questioning by teachers and LSAs is used to assess what pupils know and can do, so that the next steps in pupils' learning can be implemented.

The school has worked intensively on improving the quality of assessment. To enable even more accurate assessment of progress, the able RE subject leader has produced more detailed levels of attainment from the broad levels of attainment used nationally. Furthermore, she has spent a year working with two subject leaders from other Catholic schools to produce an assessment document for the RE programme *God Matters*. Teachers use trigger words such as *to recognise* and *to understand* in order to make their learning intentions clear. This common approach brings clarity and consistency across the school. The assessment procedures are supported by suggested questions to explore what pupils know orally but may not be able to record in written form. This ensures a closer matching of teaching to the learning needs of the individual pupil.

The development of assessment is on-going, though some effective systems are proven and embedded. A refinement, such as the *Bristol Tracker Marksheet* designed for RE, was introduced at the beginning of this academic year. This will support setting targets in RE and will be reviewed and recorded three times a year to ensure detailed tracking of individual pupil's progress. Consistency of practice is further supported through the use of an agreed minimum standards document for RE. A clear and comprehensive marking policy encourages dialogue between pupil and teacher challenging pupils to explore their knowledge and deepen their understanding further. The school is focussing on making this developmental approach consistent, and scrutiny of work shows some good and outstanding examples. Pupils need time and opportunity to respond. In the best example, the teacher used the system to assess pupils' understanding and, where necessary, addressed the issues identified, with groups or the whole class.

The strategic placing of leaders across the Key Stages ensures that accurate assessment systems are in place and are supported by a rigorous monitoring and evaluation cycle. The excellent quality of self-evaluation procedures and their implementation promote the school's ambitions to provide the very best Catholic education for every pupil.

Grade 1