



# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Long Elmes, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 6LE

Date of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

## A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy is very good. The curriculum is based on the delivery of the Curriculum Directory supported by 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme of work. Pupils make very good progress in their subject knowledge of the Catholic faith through the high expectations of their teachers. They have very positive attitudes to learning and appreciate the wide range of teaching strategies used by staff. Teaching is very good and meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Attainment is also very good and in line with diocesan expectations. Self-evaluation is up to date, accurate and illustrates a very good awareness of development areas for religious education. Very good leadership of religious education supports the setting of challenging targets for pupils and provides very good support for new staff in planning and delivery of the curriculum. There are very good systems in place for monitoring all aspects of teaching and learning as well as regular participation in deanery and diocesan moderation.

## 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 I\***

The school is outstanding in its effectiveness in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The vision of the headteacher, subject leader and governors, supported by local clergy are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are very well planned and resourced. The celebration of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are offered at key times of the year with pupils' participation in the preparation. Religious education is valued and recognised as the core of the curriculum and is given a very good range of resources which are under constant review. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the social teaching of the Church. They have very many opportunities to develop personal responsibility and engage in action to support those in need locally and in the wider world. There is an appreciation of being part of the local deanery and diocese of Westminster. Governors are experienced and well-informed. They play a major role in 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 thirteen lessons, one assembly, one prayer group and carried out seven interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with the pastoral assistant, 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 Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Harrow 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

Mrs Pamela Brannigan  
Mrs Catherine McMahon

Lead Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

The school is two form entry in the LA of Harrow and the locality of outer north west London. The school serves the parishes of St Theresa's Headstone Lane, St Joseph's Wealdstone and St Luke's Pinner. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 94%. The proportion of pupils from other Christian denominations is 3% and from other faiths 3%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 90%.

There are 476 pupils on roll. There are 4 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is also well above average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. Fifty four pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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Headteacher: Mrs J Faint  
Chair of Governors: Mrs M Watson

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup>. October 2008

## Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</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?**

There was one area for development identified in the last inspection. This was to implement levels of attainment in religious education to ensure assessments were accurate. This has been addressed. In recent years the school has put in place a thorough review of assessment in the light of the agreed understanding of the levels of attainment and the new Curriculum Directory. A programme of internal and deanery moderation has been put in place to support staff as they plan and assess pupils' work. In addition, the marking policy has been reviewed and updated to enable pupils to easily identify next steps in their learning. New resources have been purchased to support teaching and learning including those for other faiths.

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

**Grade I**

The content of curriculum religious education meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. It is creative, engaging and meets learning needs for all groups. The programmes of study which incorporate 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme provide a systematic study of the life and teachings of Jesus and the relationship between life and faith. Resources are used creatively to ensure the provision of an interesting and challenging curriculum. Medium term planning and lesson plans illustrate how the content of the Curriculum Directory is studied across the key stages. There is much evidence to show progression and depth of provision.

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

**Grade I**

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are very good. Pupils' attainment is recorded and progress tracked in line with other core subjects. This process has been in place for two years and has enabled the school to identify pupils who are not making expected progress so that supportive remedial action can quickly be put in place. In all classes observed, pupils were interested, engaged and keen to make good progress. Older pupils have a very good understanding of the levels of attainment and respond well to suggestions made by teachers on how to improve their work. The school makes very good provision for all groups of pupils and has identified the need to ensure that higher order questioning is a feature of lessons to enable pupils to reach their potential in regard to levels of attainment. Pupils spoken to said they enjoyed the variety of activities engaged in during religious education lessons and the opportunities given to self-assess. Workbooks are very well presented and give evidence of a very good understanding and knowledge of religion and an ability to reflect on meaning. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach diocesan expectations.

## **The quality of teaching**

**Grade I**

The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result pupils achieve well. No teaching seen during the inspection was less than good and some lessons had outstanding features. Teaching strategies match the needs of pupils and give them the chance to learn in different ways. For example, role play was used in some lessons to help pupils understand stories from the scriptures. Lessons included songs and prayers including those written by the pupils. Religious vocabulary is familiar to pupils and introduced from Early Years. For example 'sanctuary' and 'tabernacle' were used in Reception classes as children were learning about their local church. Good questioning helped pupils to understand new concepts as they were introduced. Marking in workbooks is regular and thorough. Older pupils are able to talk about their levels and how the green 'prompts to improve' help them to move forward in their learning. Homework is often set and pupils were particularly enthusiastic about longer projects about 'The Church' and 'Inspirational People' which they had recently completed. Assessments are accurate although the school has recognised that additional opportunities are needed for pupils working at level 5.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

**Grade I**

The leadership and management of religious education are very good. The experienced subject leader and headteacher share their vision for excellence with all staff and are well supported by the whole school community, including the well-informed governing body. The good systems in place to regularly monitor, track and ensure pupil progress have enabled leaders to support new staff and ensure high standards are maintained. The subject leader has participated in a series of moderation sessions at deanery level providing examples of pupils' work to support colleagues. This is helping to develop teachers' confidence in accurately assessing pupils' work. She has also participated in diocesan moderation and has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in religious education. The school improvement plan clearly identifies issues for action and evaluates current provision. The link governor for religious education is active in the life of the school and familiar with current developments in religious education. This enables her to support the school effectively.

## **What should the school do to improve further in classroom religious education?**

- Provide more challenging assessment opportunities for higher ability pupils to ensure soundness of judgement at Level 5.
- Provide additional training to ensure all teachers are confident in assessing levels of attainment accurately.

## **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?**

Since the last inspection there has been a focus on Collective Worship in order to enhance the Catholic life of the school. The theology underpinning Catholic social teaching has been emphasised to enable pupils to reflect on the significance of the Common Good. All staff have been well supported as they implement the new Diocesan Framework and the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Links with parents have been strengthened by sending home the 'Wednesday Word' which has enabled a greater understanding of the Catholic life of the school. Parish links have been developed recently with the involvement of the Pastoral Assistant from St Joseph's parish. All three parishes served by the school have link governors on the governing body.

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

**Grade I\***

Religious education receives at least 10% curriculum time and has a similar budget to other core subjects. Resources are very good and are constantly reviewed and replaced when necessary. A very high proportion of teachers are Catholics and many have the CCRS or equivalent qualification. The learning environment is outstanding with inspirational posters, attractive classroom displays and prayer tables which reflect the Church's year, and are used as a focus during classroom liturgies. School leadership, including experienced governors, offers very good support in developing and reviewing the quality of religious education. All staff receive regular in-service support and training related to the Catholic life of the school. Governors play a major role in the life of the school and are involved in self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. Priests from the local parishes liaise with the school for a planned programme of masses and liturgies. They also act as additional teaching resources on visits to classes.

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

**Grade I\***

The school's provision for prayer and worship is outstanding and at the heart of the life of the school. Prayer and worship are central to daily life through class prayer times, liturgies and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers and books are compiled for use on specific occasions. In addition, pupils are given frequent opportunities for spiritual development through lunchtime prayer groups, meditation and reflection. Pupils are often engaged in the planning and preparation of worship particularly for the regular class Masses. The pupil prayer group has begun to plan and prepare celebrations for the whole school. Mass is celebrated in school when possible. Restricted space has led to St Theresa's parish church being used more frequently. There are class Masses for Key Stage 2 pupils to which parents are invited. Pupils also visit the churches to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions and practice. The priests and pastoral assistant visit frequently to talk to pupils and prepare liturgies. The sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated in school during Lent; this is appreciated by many parents. Families are invited to celebrations when space allows and are grateful for the opportunity this gives them to become involved in the prayer

life of their children and the school. Families also receive the 'Wednesday Word' which is often used as the basis for class worship.

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

**Grade I\***

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good is outstanding. The school is a most welcoming community which promotes respect for all faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. The gifts and uniqueness of each individual is recognised and celebrated through achievement assemblies, newsletters and the school calendar. The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular activities to support the interests and gifts of pupils, as well as a breakfast club to help parents. Pupils are given many and varied opportunities to develop as members of the school community. They are encouraged to share their gifts with others in acts of service to the school through well established systems including the School council, Young leaders, Playground ambassadors and recycling groups. A wide range of charities include support for a partner school in Ghana, a village school in Tanzania, the Catholic Children's Society and Cafod. Year 6 pupils have an annual Lenten fundraising focus when they give talks to the school about their chosen charity and how they plan to raise money. The school is also involved with the local community. Visits are made to a care home for elderly people, joint carol singing with other local schools and participation in the annual Remembrance Day parade by the choir. Conversations with pupils indicate that they have an exceptionally good understanding of the theology underpinning their support for people in need. Older pupils also have an excellent grasp of moral issues in society. Currently the school is seeking 'Rights Respecting' status which is enhancing pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities in school and the wider world. The school ensures that pupils understand the call to justice and a sense of service are essential parts of their Catholic identity.

### **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\***

Partnership between parents, school and parish is very effective and seen by governors and leadership as an essential part of the being a diocesan school. Parish links are very good with all three parishes having representatives on the governing body and actively engaged in the life of the school. Class masses and visits to St Theresa's, help pupils and parents to see the Church as a vital part of school life as does the involvement of the link governor for religious education. School premises are used for sacramental preparation for pupils from St Joseph's parish. The school works closely with parents and families and keeps them well informed through newsletters, questionnaires, curriculum meetings and consultations. The school welcomes parental participation as classroom volunteers and actively seeks to communicate a shared understanding of the mission of the school. There are plans to invite parents and grandparents into school to lead a Rosary group and share their faith with pupils. There is a high level of attendance at assemblies and liturgies. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision offered by the school. Many thoughtful and appreciative comments were made on the diocesan questionnaires including, 'St Teresa's does a wonderful job in supporting children's Catholic faith in partnership with families. As our children have progressed through the school we have seen many examples of the religious ethos in all aspects of school life' The parents and friends association are currently supporting the school as it establishes a prayer garden for the whole community. Links with the diocese are very good. Senior leaders and governors attend diocesan conferences, in-service and courses offered by Westminster Education

Service. Pupils attend the Good Shepherd and Advent mass at Westminster Cathedral every year. The subject leader has participated in a series of deanery meetings to share expertise with other diocesan schools.

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

**Grade I\***

Leadership is outstanding. Headteacher, subject leader and governors are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. 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. The headteacher ensures that all staff have the skills and opportunities to contribute to the Catholic life of the school and there are excellent systems in place to induct and support new teachers. Pupils are given every opportunity to know the life and teachings of Jesus and the traditions of the Catholic Church as well as an understanding of their own uniqueness as children of God. Governors make a highly 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?**

- Implement plans to invite parents and parishioners into school to talk about their faith and set up a Rosary group.
- Continue to work to become a 'Rights Respecting' school.
- Continue to develop the prayer/memorial garden.