



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

School: St Teresa's Preparatory School

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School Unique Reference Number: 125402

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| Headteacher: | Sarah Conrad |
| Chair of Governors: | Annette Turner |
| Lead Inspector: | Hilary Blake |
| Associate Inspector: | Angela O Hara |
| Inspection date: | 04 February 2020 |

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| Overall Effectiveness | Previous Inspection: (2005) |
| | This Inspection: 1 |
| Catholic Life: | 1 |
| Collective Worship: | 1 |
| Religious Education: | 1 |

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Teresa's Preparatory school is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catholic leadership is Outstanding. Since the appointment of the new Headteacher and subsequently the Chaplain, the rate of progress and transformation has been impressive. At the same time the Headteacher has managed to bring her team alongside, so that together they are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils. The capacity to sustain and implement further improvements is secure.• Inclusive and welcoming in its ethos, the Mission Statement is at the heart of school life. It is accessible to all and inspires the lived experience of all in the school.• Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they identify inclusiveness as a strength of the school. They care for their environment and each other and they feel safe. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collective worship is a strength of the school. The Headteacher and Chaplain provide excellent role models in preparing and leading engaging liturgies. Singing enhances all acts of worship.• Pupils engage with opportunities for voluntary prayer groups, as do parents and staff.• The Chaplain has produced an excellent online prayer resource to support class teachers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Catholic life of the school is vibrant and inclusive. Outstanding Catholic leadership ensures that faith underpins everything.• In every classroom, the religious education display and prayer focus is vibrant and well cared for. Pupils are proud of their school and the breadth of opportunities it affords them in every aspect of the curriculum. They respect diversity and appreciate the inclusivity that they experience, for example in friendships and in sport.• Parents are overwhelmingly positive, referring repeatedly to the kind and compassionate environment and experience of their children.• Pupils are proud of their school and demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting those in need. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching of religious education is creative and staff use a range of strategies to engage pupils and enable them to show their knowledge in a variety of ways.• Skilful questioning is used in the best lessons to challenge pupils. Evidence of differentiation is found in most exercise books.• Marking is exemplary, challenging children and evoking relevant responses.• Academic progress is at least good, and in some cases rapid progress has been made as a result of outstanding teaching.• Important work has been undertaken by the leadership team in analysing assessment results to identify next steps to secure even better pupil progress. |

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Teresa's Prep School is part of St Teresa's, Effingham, an Independent Catholic school set in the Surrey Hills. It was founded by the Religious Order of Christian Instruction in 1928.

St Teresa's is a single sex girls' school; the Prep School takes pupils aged 3-11 years and the Senior School takes students aged 11-18 years. Both schools are run by their own Headteachers but are overseen by one Board of Governors.

There are approximately 175 pupils on roll at the Prep School with one form entry from Reception to Year 2, increasing to two form entry in Year 3 through to Year 6. St Teresa's welcomes pupils of all faiths and of no faith: around 28% of the pupil population is Catholic, the majority describe themselves as Christian and a few families who are Hindu and Muslim. The vast majority of the pupils are white British.

St Teresa's is part of the parish of Our Lady of Sorrows which covers the areas of Effingham and Fetcham. Other key feeder parishes are St Joseph's in Dorking, St Joseph's in Guildford, The Sacred Heart in Cobham and Our Lady and St Peter in Leatherhead.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to develop and extend the prayer life of the school by sharing the existing outstanding practice, modelled by the school Chaplain, to enable all teachers and pupils to begin to lead class liturgies.
- Find ways to share the outstanding practice which exists amongst teachers of religious education to ensure that all lessons are well paced and challenging; that all pupils are engaged and able to make and sustain the rapid progress observed in many lessons.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- Pupils are proud of their mission statement and can explain how the visual representation, displayed throughout the school, encapsulates the five core values and the actions that lead to or derive from the values. They were involved in the recent process of shaping a new mission statement fit for purpose and relevant to the school and the values which are at its core.
- Pupils are invariably polite and considerate to visitors and to each other. Y6 pupils are assigned to help Reception pupils settle in at the start of each day and pupils new to the school spoke insistently about the friendship and inclusive experience they enjoy at St Teresa's.
- Election to the Chaplaincy Team is something the girls aspire to and the position of Chaplaincy Prefect is highly contested. Guided by Deacon Simon the girls have an impact on the Catholic life of the school, deciding which charities to support through fundraising initiatives; contributing to liturgy planning; and designing a new prayer garden. The girls spoke with real enthusiasm about their plan to forgo desserts on Fridays during Lent and divert the funding to the local food bank. The school contributes financially to a range of charities throughout the year including, Missio and CAFOD, but also gives other resources such as time to visit a local retirement home, food to the food bank as well as gifts through the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal.
- The school community is warm and welcoming to all its members and to visitors. Parents describe a 'warm and welcoming' environment where 'kindness is key, and faith underpins everything'. Non-Catholic families too, cite the 'positive impact on the spiritual and personal development of (their) daughter'. One parent identified the 'caring ethos which emanates from the head'.
- Older pupils in particular are kind and compassionate to the younger pupils, accompanying and guiding them during voluntary prayer groups and helping Reception pupils settle in during early morning activities.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- In every aspect and in every person, inspectors experienced a warm, calm welcome and willingness to be of service. Catholic leadership is strongly embedded in the practice of the Headteacher and religious education (RE) leader, now disseminating best practice through the RE Leadership Team and all the staff.
- The five core values: faith, character, community, compassion and intellect are at the heart of the school's mission and highly visible in practice throughout the school.
- Pupils are guided through liturgies to reflect on how they are called to live out the Catholic ethos and the core values. For example, in the liturgy observed during inspection the message was to remain hopeful, to be patient, have faith and trust in God, like Simeon; to recognise Jesus in those we meet and act accordingly.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are positive and caring, accepting and welcoming. Pupils new to the school spoke with conviction about their transition to St Teresa's where they felt fully included and were encouraged to try new experiences and develop their talents; where 'everyone gets a chance' and there is 'space for everyone'.
- Standards of behaviour throughout the school were observed to be excellent. The Behaviour Policy is underpinned by three of the core values: Community, Character and Compassion, which focus on the duty of the individual to respect themselves, those around them and the environment in order to contribute to the wellbeing of the whole.
- Pastoral care is a priority for the school. Provision for pupils, staff and parents is well established so that concerns can be addressed immediately. Pupils spoke confidently about the help available to them, should they need it: 'Our teachers listen, and we can talk about our worries'.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding of the purpose of sexual love. The comprehensive PSHE scheme, complemented by outside speakers, helps the children to develop resilience and self-esteem; they are constantly affirmed by the fact that they are each special and unique and that God has "a special job" for each one of them and they should follow their dreams.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- The SLT and key governors, are deeply committed to maintaining and developing further the Catholic life of the school. The chair of governors is particularly supportive of the Headteacher's vision, working closely with her to share that vision with all members of the school community.

- Governors were closely involved in developing the new vision for the school’s mission statement expressed through the Core Values. At their most recent School Development Day, governors and leaders focused on establishing a shared understanding and ownership of the Catholic School Inspection Self Evaluation (SEF) and contributing to the School Development Plan for RE, Catholic life and Worship.
- Staff and governors worship together and governors are invited to join pupils and staff for school acts of collective worship. Governors, staff and parents pray together in the weekly prayer group.
- Staff and governors have the opportunity to attend Diocesan training events to ensure they have up to date knowledge and understand how to support school leaders in driving forward improvement. The school’s Catholic life is an integral part of the school improvement plan. As part of this year’s staff appraisal cycle, all staff have a target linked to developing assessment of religious education.
- The school responds positively to diocesan policies and initiatives, for example, Year of the Word is a current focus given a high profile through the use of display banners.
- Senior leaders are working sensitively to educate and enable all stakeholders to develop their appreciation of the importance and relevance of the school’s Catholic life and how it contributes to the overall success of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding

- Behaviour for learning is almost always outstanding. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and evidence shows that they make good, sometimes rapid progress in their learning.
- The best lessons are interactive with a good balance of teacher led and pupil led activities. Pupils are probed to progress further through the use of skilful questioning which challenges all pupils and provokes even the most able to think and respond more deeply in their learning.

- Pupils take pride in their work and their exercise books clearly evidence creative teaching strategies and ways of recording their learning. Information Technology was used very effectively to bring stories to life for the youngest pupils and to share video recording of active learning between adjacent classes.
- The effective use of talk partners helps pupils to explore their understanding and challenge themselves and each other, guided by their class teachers.
- Support staff were subtle in their interventions to assist all children to engage fully in lessons.
- Pupils from Reception to Year 6 displayed a high level of religious literacy, employing religious vocabulary confidently and appropriately in their oral and written work.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Good

- Subject leaders have devised a clear system for recording and tracking assessment, based on the diocesan approved Interim Standards. Leaders have observed increased rates of progress since the introduction of the new curriculum and increased allocation of curriculum time over the last 2 – 3 years.
- Marking is effective in moving pupils' learning forward; teachers frequently use driver words and pose 'next step' questions, giving pupils the opportunity to reflect and respond.
- Self-evaluation is encouraged through the use of the triangle symbol and pupils show good self-awareness and enjoy this opportunity to reflect on their learning.
- Regular monitoring and scrutiny of assessment records has enabled the RE leader to provide extra support promptly for teachers in one topic where less than good progress was identified.
- The system devised by the school for assessing and tracking pupil progress in RE and then using the evidence to improve teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Lessons were observed in every year group from Reception class to Year 6. In all cases teaching was good with outstanding features in many lessons. Particularly effective use of questioning to probe and advance pupils' understanding was observed in upper Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2 lessons.
- Staff have the opportunity to attend diocesan training to share good practice and they readily transfer their learning into their teaching in school.
- All lessons were carefully planned and skilfully delivered with teachers exhibiting confidence and good subject knowledge. Information Technology was a feature of all lessons and was used effectively to engage, support and promote teaching and learning.

- A feature of all lessons was the use of a variety of hands on resources to further engage children in active learning, for example, the processional cross, a thurible, bread and 'wine'.
- Attractive displays were prominent in every classroom, often including examples of pupils' work and supporting the teaching through the inclusion of word banks relevant to the topic.
- The start of all religious education lessons was signalled by music which was the prompt for children to gather calmly and prepare for the lesson to begin.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding

- The RE leader is also the school Chaplain and an ordained deacon. He is highly skilled and works tirelessly to devise creative and engaging learning opportunities in his own teaching and support his colleagues to do the same. He attends diocesan training and has delivered training in diocesan schools introducing the Come and See scheme.
- In order to ensure sustainability of current innovation and progress, a Leadership Team for religious education has been established comprising the Headteacher, RE leader and two further experienced members of the teaching staff.
- Regular monitoring and work scrutiny contribute to the schedule for driving forward attainment in religious education and maintaining high standards. All staff have a religious education target as part of performance management this year.
- In discussions with the leadership team it was clear that they had insight into the strengths of religious education teaching and learning across the age range and had already planned interventions to secure specific improvements.
- Systems devised by the school in this aspect are robust and an example of excellent practice.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding

- The school plans appropriately for acts of collective worship throughout the week. Worship is led and modelled effectively by the Headteacher and by the school Chaplain; the Chaplaincy Prefect and head girls lead the Friday assembly. The Chaplaincy Prefect role is highly valued, and she plays a part in whole school liturgies.
- All pupils were engaged in the liturgy observed on the day of inspection, responsive to the message of the Gospel; joining in the prayers of the church and praising God through joyful singing. Behaviour was appropriately reverent as required.
- The Chaplaincy Team contributes to the planning and preparation of specific assemblies and liturgies during the year including the St Francis' Assembly (Pets Blessing) and the River of Hope (Remembrance) liturgy about which they spoke enthusiastically. They are now ready to be supported to plan and lead class liturgies themselves.
- In parent interviews and responses to parent questionnaires, positive responses included reference to 'opportunities for the girls to pray for others'; another said, 'kindness is key at St Teresa's Prep school; faith underpins everything. My daughter is happy and has a stronger commitment to her faith since joining the school'.
- Many parents showed appreciation of the inclusive nature of religious education and worship, not just for Catholics.
- Some parents expressed the wish for their daughters to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation within school time. This could be facilitated with the help of the parish priest during one of the voluntary lunchtime prayer group sessions or after school, to allow for inclusion of parents and carers.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding

- Both the Headteacher and the RE leader are particularly skilled at planning and leading thoughtful and engaging liturgies. The RE leader is an ordained Deacon and both are very involved in liturgical formation in the diocese of Brentwood. They provide and model a rich liturgical experience for all members of the school community.
- The RE leader has created an online prayer resource accessible to all teachers to support them in planning and leading acts of worship. He is pro-active in supporting staff and providing useful resources.
- There are many opportunities for prayer and worship for staff and pupils planned for in the school's liturgical calendar. These include a staff commissioning Mass at the start of the academic year; staff/parent prayer group (also attended by governors); starting staff meeting with prayer and reflection; and a voluntary pupil prayer group each week, which is well attended.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding

- Positive feedback from staff confirms the passion of the Headteacher and Chaplain for leading inspiring acts of collective worship. They are effective in their joyful ministry, enabling and empowering pupils and staff to begin to take the lead themselves.
- The pattern and seasons of the church's liturgical year are reflected in the school's liturgical programme.
- The Headteacher, Chaplain and Senior Leadership Team have the opportunity to attend diocesan training courses.
- All liturgies are planned with the intention of being engaging and inclusive for pupils and staff of all faiths and none; this is noted and commented upon favourably by parents.
- Regular review and self-evaluation ensure that collective worship is relevant and inclusive, and leaders constantly seek ways to build upon and share their outstanding practice.
- Plans to develop a Prayer Garden this year will enhance the variety of opportunities for informal personal prayer. Pupils are engaged in the planning process and have identified features which will be conducive to creating a prayerful atmosphere and facilitate further opportunities for personal prayer.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

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How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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