



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 144420

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Quantock Drive

Ashford

Kent

TN24 8QN

Inspection date: 12 March 2020

Chair of Governors: Mr Jeremy Moon

Headteacher: Mrs Bernadette Brown

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Mrs Angela Pitcher

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Teresa's school is an academy and part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, which it joined in 2017. It is situated in the Canterbury deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark in the Kent local authority area. Since 1899 the principal parish the school serves is St Teresa of Avila, Ashford, although a varying number of pupils attend the school from the parish of St Simon Stock, Ashford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 73.3%, although the total Christian intake is 89%. The average weekly percentage of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school is a one form entry primary school taking pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 215. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average; 14% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium. The proportion of pupils who receive extra support in class at 13.9% is below the national average. The school serves a more diverse population than is normally found.. The largest pupil groups are White British 39%, Any Other White background 16%, Mixed (Any Other Mixed background) 5%, Asian or Asian British - Indian 11%, Black or Black British - African 13%.

The past 12 months have been challenging for St Teresa's as the school has had 3 out of 7 teachers on maternity leave, in addition to some teaching assistant staff members also absent on maternity leave or for medical reasons. The school has struggled to recruit for the maternity positions and found that those who committed to stay for the year have failed to do so for a variety of personal reasons. This has led to several staff changes mid-year for Year 3 and 5 classes, both of which now have their 3rd and 4th teachers. Inducting and supporting the changing teachers during the year, many of whom do not have a religious background, has put a strain on the school's leadership capacity as those staff on short term contracts have needed a significant amount of mentoring. Currently, there are temporary staffing arrangements in Years 3, 4 and 5. It is to the credit of the school's leadership that in spite of these changes they have managed to make the new staff members feel part of the team and provision for the teaching of Religious Education has been maintained.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Teresa's is a good Catholic school because:

- It is evident that the whole community benefits from belonging to the school, due to its strong and supportive Catholic ethos underpinned by its mission statement and dearly held Christian values. School leadership is ambitious that everyone has the opportunity to live its mission statement, both in and beyond school, and believes in driving actions based on the school's motto, '*Christ be our light*'. It is a school where the Catholic identity is visible in its child-friendly, thought-provoking displays and in its warm and supportive relationships.
- It is a welcoming, inclusive community which puts its partnership with parents, who it rightly recognises as the first teachers of their children, as a high priority. Its mission is upheld by staff and pupils. Pupils are generally caring, thoughtful and respectful of each other, which is reflected in their behaviour around the school. The driving force behind the desire to continue to improve is underpinned by the passion and commitment of governors and senior staff to build leadership capacity and move forward.
- The provision for the Catholic life of the school is given the highest priority; the learning environment is attractive, well-resourced and clearly of a Catholic nature. The school places the unique nature of each child at the heart of its mission. There is evidence of good progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to the end of key stage Two.
- Leaders, managers and governors are committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. Bringing Christ to the pupils is a high priority. The unique nature of each pupil is central to all aspects of school life.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Build leadership capacity going forward to establish greater consistency of provision in the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. This should include utilising robust monitoring and assessment to identify best practice and share this across the school, with particular reference to enhancing provision for more able pupils.
- Review the school's programme of collective worship to ensure it has a clear purpose, message and direction. Further develop the role of pupils, for example, the Avilites, in the delivery of collective worship to enable them to confidently plan, prepare and lead such celebrations.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	2
Catholic Life	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	2
Religious Education	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	2
Collective Worship	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	2

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CATHOLIC LIFE

2

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

- Most pupils have a strong sense of belonging to their school family and are happy to promote the school ethos within their own families and the local and broader communities.
- The majority of pupils are extremely polite and well mannered, demonstrating good social awareness through their treatment of others.
- A year six pupil explained, *'Christ is our Light which means that Jesus loves us and he wants us to learn and follow his path and always do the right thing.'*
- The School's mission statement, which was developed by the pupils and has been well established for several years, is currently undergoing a revision involving pupil input to make it more meaningful to them.
- Pupils embrace activities which promote the Catholic life of the school, such as school council and the Avilites, who are members of an active religious group within the school that helps to lead its spiritual life. They are involved in the preparation of Mass, collective worship and at this time of the year, Lenten reflections, to enhance the deepening of religious understanding.
- The school celebrates other faiths and cultures in both the Year 5 curriculum and the annual Religious Education days focused on different faiths. Pupils talked about their enjoyment of the Hindu festival of Holi (Feb 2018) in which they took part in a whole school colour run and the Diwali festival (March 2019) where they made clay divas and designed Rangoli patterns using a variety of media. They celebrated Yom Kippur (Judaism) as a whole school in October 2019.
- Pupils take part in regular fundraising activities in order to be involved in the wider community, both locally and nationally, including the Catholic Children's Society, NSPCC, the British Legion, the Samaritan's Purse, the Pilgrims' Hospice and the Shoe Box appeal for essential items for those less fortunate than themselves.

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

- Staff are committed to the implementation of the school's mission across the curriculum and participation in school activities which reflect the Catholic life and mission of the school, including taking part in worship and continued professional development (CPD) sessions.
- The Religious Education leader attends Diocesan meetings and subject leader meetings. Commendably, two staff members have completed the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) course, further improving the knowledge of Catholic teaching in the school.
- There is a clear sense of community at all levels. This is evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character.



- Displays, classroom focal areas and prayer spaces support St. Teresa's Catholicity and ethos.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside the classroom.
- Pastoral support is highly effective for staff and pupils. School leaders have invested in a pastoral manager, who is very dedicated to her role and supports staff and families on a daily basis.
- The school has a strong curriculum to promote Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC), including delivery of Mind Fitness, an embedded Religious Education curriculum and a restorative justice approach to relationship management. This also assists in developing the mental health of pupils. The school is an exemplar in this area and pupils were able to explain the principles of these initiatives.
- Pupils develop a sense of their local community through a community day celebrated each year which highlights their role as global citizens.
- The school has made a commitment to support Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) alongside Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and all the relevant current documentation is in place. This is an area which the school recognises needs further development in order to embed it fully into the curriculum across the school year and to take account of new Diocesan guidance and statutory requirements when they become available.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and presides at the celebration of Mass throughout the school year. He is fulsome in his praise of the school community. They, in turn, value his time and commitment along with his contributions to the school's Catholic life, for example, by providing a resource to support teachers in the teaching of the Mass.

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

- Leadership underpins the success of St Teresa's and it ensures that the Catholic ethos is reflected in all aspects of school life. It is highly commendable how the headteacher has maintained the strength of the school's Catholic ethos whilst managing a high level of staff changes and securing the retention of the school's good inspection rating.
- The dedicated and passionate headteacher is building on existing talents, encouraging new teachers and creating a committed and cohesive staff team, within which she is developing leadership capacity. Governors, staff and parents recognise her significant commitment to the success of St Teresa's, describing her as highly effective, dedicated, sensitive and hardworking. She leads by example, taking people with her. She is currently leading Religious Education, but usually works closely with the motivated Religious Education leader, who is currently on maternity leave. Together with the governing body, there is a passion, clear vision and love of Catholic education; all are committed to the ongoing growth, success and well-being of the school community.
- The headteacher and subject leader are well supported by a very active Religious Education governor who is ambitious for the Catholic life of the school. This governor meets frequently with the coordinator and has been involved in evaluating the school against the new Kent Catholic Schools Partnership (KCSP), Catholicity Strategy document. This governor attends a large percentage of religious events in the church



and the school and has written formal reports, presented at the local governing body meeting.

- The knowledgeable governing body has a good understanding of St Teresa's strengths and its areas for development, to which they give priority. They are updated about the religious life of the school, attend training and receive a summary of the year's outcomes at the end of the academic year. Learning walks help them to review provision.
- St Teresa's successfully engages parents and helps them integrate into school life. The school supports them and keeps them well-informed about events that are happening in school and the community through, for example, a personal morning greeting, newsletters and the website.
- Parents said that their views were listened to and that any issues are resolved promptly. Of the questionnaire returns, the majority were overwhelmingly positive. As one parent wrote, *'The school has been extremely kind to my children in recent months, demonstrating strong Catholic morals'*, with another writing, *'Fr Peter and Fr Joe have been good at building better relationships with the school'*. The home, school, parish partnership is developing well.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- Pupils are keen to do well and report that they enjoy their Religious Education lessons; they claim they like the variety of experiences they are offered and that their lessons are engaging. During lesson time, most pupils are on task and engaged in their learning. They answer questions thoughtfully and demonstrate their knowledge well.
- Pupils understand how well they are achieving in Religious Education but are not always clear about the skills they have to focus on to improve their work. They can talk clearly about religious ideas and explain how these affect their everyday life and the way they treat people. The use of scripture in lessons and assemblies is developing well and pupils are increasingly able to make links to Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus which they are able to link to their daily lives.
- Teachers' annotations in pupils' books show that there is good progress across the school for most pupils. Opportunities to use self and peer assessment in order to increase pupil progress are developing but are not yet used consistently across the school.
- Pupils identified as having a particular educational need or disability make good progress because of the additional targeted support they receive from skilled staff.
- In spite of pupils' variable starting points, standards of attainment at the end of each key stage are generally in line with age-related expectations. Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school show no noticeable differences between groups of learners.
- Behaviour for learning is developing well in key stage 1 and by key stage 2 it is strong. Pupils are respectful and listen well to their peers. Through good questioning, teachers are developing pupils' skills to think more profoundly and undertake analysis of texts.
- A pupil commented, *'I like my Religious Education lessons because I get closer to God each time I do Religious Education'*.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- School leaders at St Teresa's have chosen 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' Religious Education scheme of work and use it to significant effect. During a period of staffing uncertainty, it has served the school well as a teaching resource. As the school secures its staffing, it will be opportune to develop greater teacher independence and initiative in this area through opportunities to supplement resources and allow greater creativity and a variety of teaching strategies.
- Teaching is mainly good with some examples of outstanding practice. As a result, most pupils and groups of pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress over time.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education, and communicate this effectively to pupils. Pupils have an awareness of Religious Education lessons as a subject that is different from others. A good example was observed in upper key stage 2 that demonstrated some very reflective work by pupils on spiritual hunger and physical hunger.
- Teachers generally have a confident level of subject knowledge, which they use well in planning and teaching. The best lessons observed saw teachers building on previous



learning, linking the learning to the pupils' daily lives, the development of religious vocabulary through regular checks on pupil understanding and good cross-curricular links which are developing. Care needs to be taken in some lessons to balance better time allocation between teacher input and pupils' tasks which on occasions need clarity to secure the pace of lessons.

- In the better lessons, teachers are systematically and effectively checking pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, skilfully intervening where necessary and thereby maximising pupils' learning.
- Where teachers make use of the school's good assessment procedures, both they and teaching assistants have a better awareness of pupils' needs and can plan to meet them. This should now be extended, in particular to enhance provision for more able pupils.
- Marking and constructive feedback across the school tells pupils how to improve and they are given time to respond. They are developing their ability to self-evaluate.

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

- Leadership of Religious Education is developing well and showing a significant impact on provision. The Religious Education leader has a clear child-friendly vision for the school and a tenacity for ongoing improvement that demonstrates a growing capacity to move Religious Education forward and better secure its role as a core subject.
- The school is guided by the KCSP Catholicity Strategy and Education Commission documentation.
- High standards of delivery are expected and are exemplified through the personal examples of the headteacher and subject leader. They conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes.
- Analysis of monitoring gives an accurate judgement of progress and outcomes. Any concerns are identified and remedial action is then put in place.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning also identifies key areas for teachers' professional development. As a result, targeted guidance for individual teachers when needed, is put in place.
- Training and support for staff is provided by the school through the Diocese, outside providers, or in collaboration with staff in other schools.
- Self-evaluation at all levels within the school is informed by monitoring and analysis of provision and outcomes, seeking to improve on past performance. This is beginning to provide a firm basis for the diagnosis of strengths and areas for development in order to move forward.
- Leaders and governors promote Religious Education with determination and consistency of purpose.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements in full of the Bishops' Conference, and that the required curriculum time is allocated to all groups and stages.
- The headteacher sees the governors as a real support in the current challenging circumstances, particularly concerning recruitment. Governors reflected likewise, evidencing a robust professional partnership between governors and St Teresa's leadership team and staff.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good.
- They use a variety of approaches to prayer, which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer, both traditional and contemporary. When the opportunities are offered, pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or background.
- The school produces a school calendar at the start of the school year which is widely shared with governors, staff and parents. It details a range of celebrations to which all are invited. These currently include a weekly invitation to a pre-school Lenten reflection. The programme is well supported by the parish priest.
- Pupils were reverent and respectful when gathered for moments of prayer and Year 6 pupils demonstrated confidence in using spontaneous prayer.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Whole school worship uses traditional and contemporary music to engage and inspire pupils. Pupils listen and pray with reverence and respect. One pupil, when discussing collective worship, said, 'It enables me to take my faith with me wherever I go'.
- The school follows the Church's liturgical seasons and these are central to themes of prayer and worship. Pupils and all adults know these. Leaders plan to create a programme of worship and experiences throughout the year. This planning involves pupils, parents, the parish and when possible, the wider community.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are born from trust. The pupils look up to adults with respect and they greatly enjoy their time in collective worship. Pupils see worth in their worship and prayer and the older pupils felt it enabled them to reflect on their friendship with God.
- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life. Staff members have a good appreciation of the purpose of collective worship and use a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Timings are suitable and age-appropriate. Focus areas, music and modern artefacts are used actively to engage and support pupils. A voluntary early morning Lenten reflection group was attended as part of this inspection. This saw a small group of pupils come together before the start of the school day. The session concluded with pupils being asked to reflect on an Oscar Romero quote, 'Aspire not to have more but to be more'. The session was a valuable opportunity for prayer and reflection and has the potential to develop, going forward, to provide a more leading role for pupils in worship.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and the level of response to these invitations is good.



- Good use is made of 'The Sanctuary', which is the school's outdoor prayer area, for both group activities and quiet reflection.

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

- Leaders are good at promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for collective worship. They sustain and nurture the prayer life of the school community well and ensure provision and opportunities for collective worship are in place.
- The spirituality of staff is well supported through training and reflection.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of collective worship within the school are very good models of practice for members of staff and pupils. They offer support to those less experienced or less confident teachers and provide quality continuing professional development.
- Leaders and governors review collective worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.
- Collective worship is actively promoted around the school through the involvement of the Avilite group. Discussion with this group demonstrated their keenness to be more involved and the school could usefully develop this group to maximise their service to the school.

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