



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 118760

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Quantock Drive
Ashford
TN24 8QN

Inspection date: 6 February 2014

Chair of Governors:	Mr Peter Crosby
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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Teresa's school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Canterbury Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is St Teresa of Avila, Ashford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 72%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years and the number of pupils currently on roll is 219. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who receive extra support in class is in line with the national average. Most pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is above that found nationally. This proportion is increasing year on year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

St Teresa's is a Good school. It is a happy, family orientated, caring Catholic school, committed to its Mission Statement of having Christ at its heart. This is manifested through the positive relationships, the good home, school, parish links and the good behaviour of the pupils. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are very caring towards each other and they feel safe and cherished in school. The Catholic life of the school is evident in the many displays, artefacts and artwork around the school. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team are aware of the strengths and areas to improve and are working hard to continue to raise standards. All members of the school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, take great pride in their school, and work hard to ensure that all the pupils enjoy school, and make progress and achieve well. The Governors are very proactive and are fully involved in the school and the implementation of the Improvement Plan. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the community spirit of the school. One parent said, "The school's religious character is at the heart of the children's education. We are always welcomed into church led events." The issues from the last inspection have mostly been addressed but more work needs to be done to provide extra challenge for the more able pupils. The headteacher and leadership team working in partnership with the governors has good capacity to continue to make improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure that all teachers plan a range of activities which match the abilities of all pupils and particularly challenge the more able.
- Ensure that all Prayer Corners are of a consistently high standard and are prominently displayed in each classroom.
- Continue to develop opportunities for spontaneous and child led prayer.
- All of the above to be incorporated into an updated Religious Education Action Plan.

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

Pupils are taking responsibility and participating well in the Catholic life of the school and the parish. They take an active role in the parish Mass once a term by leading the bidding prayers and readings. The school choir sings at some of the parish celebrations, for example the annual Justice and Peace Mass. They have a House system and every person in the school belongs to one of the houses. On the Feast of St Teresa, after a celebratory Mass, the school has a community day. They all work in their Houses and go and visit parts of the local community, for example the home for disabled adults. This gives them an insight into the lives of others and an opportunity to consider the needs of others. Making St Teresa's Day so special has heightened its importance and is much anticipated by the pupils. They also understand key celebrations in the liturgical year.

They are very caring and considerate of each other which is recognised by 'Care and Courtesy Count' cards which are awarded by members of staff. They are able to reflect on the needs of people beyond the school for example pupils in Year 6 were writing bidding prayers for people who have been affected by the floods in our local areas as well as those living in countries torn apart by war and hunger.

They show an understanding of other religions and cultures such as Chinese New Year and Judaism. An informative and interesting Display on Judaism was in one of the communal areas.

The pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. For example in a lesson on reconciliation, the pupils showed an understanding of the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils come into school with below average ability and attain above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is at least good across all Key Stages. Work in pupils' books is well presented. There is some evidence of differentiation but more work needs to be done to challenge the more able pupils.

Although many of the pupils are now coming into school with a limited knowledge of the Catholic Faith, they acquire a great deal of Religious Knowledge and Understanding by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are keen to do well, focus on the task in hand, are confident and work at a good pace. They are enthusiastic and eager to participate and answer questions.

Behaviour is excellent and any poor behaviour is generally well managed.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

The school meets the statutory requirements for Collective Worship. In the assembly observed, which was led by the Headteacher and used the poem 'Footprints' as a focus, the pupils were reverent, listened with interest and answered questions well. They

reflected in silence and joined in the community prayers appropriately. The pupils entered and exited quietly while music was playing. A lovely link with their everyday lives was made as they had to remember the focus of the assembly while they were putting on their socks the next day.

The pupils know the traditional prayers of the church and the prayer to St Teresa is displayed prominently throughout the school.

A focus this year is for the pupils to develop spontaneous and personal prayers. Each class has created their own prayer book where the pupils' prayers are beautifully presented.

Pupils own prayers are on display in the classroom and around the school. For example in a Year 3 class a 'Living' prayer tree is displayed on the wall and during the year more prayers will be added so that the tree can grow. One of the displays entitled 'Have we made The Hail Mary easier to understand, by using today's language' depicted the pupils' own version of the Hail Mary showing their growing understanding of the prayer.

As part of their planned development of their outside area a beautiful prayer garden has been created, and includes a story teller's chair. The pupils are very appreciative of this and often use it at break times for their own personal prayer. Although high quality prayer corners were seen in some classrooms, this practice was not consistent throughout the school. Prayer corners need to be more prominent and of a good standard in all classrooms.

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How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are very committed to the school. Governors and leaders work in partnership together. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for development. They have a well-structured subcommittee system which focuses on areas for improvement and statutory requirements. They provide a good balance of challenge and support, and all work together to ensure the ethos of a Catholic family is maintained and celebrated.

The Headteacher, previously the deputy Headteacher, has been in post since the beginning of the academic year. She has developed a leadership structure to suit the needs of the school, and further developing the Catholic life of the school is a priority. The Headteacher gives clear direction to the school and is ably supported by the Focus (Leadership) team.

The Parish Priest, who is also a governor, is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. Home/School/Parish links are very strong and are continuing to develop. One of the aims for this year is to encourage church attendance by the pupils and families, by involving them in the preparation and delivery of regular children's Masses.

There is a high uptake of the First Holy Communion programme and school staff are involved with both this programme and the Confirmation programme.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

The Religious Education Coordinator has only just been appointed this term. In a short space of time she has started to collate her subject leader file and undertaken the new coordinator course. She has been well supported by the Headteacher and is just beginning her monitoring role. She is very enthusiastic, willing to learn and committed to raising standards across the school.

There are good systems in place for tracking pupil progress and assessment is used well to inform planning and analyse the progress of all groups of pupils.

Pupils with special needs are well supported and all groups make good progress. However the more able pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge to enable them to progress further. The most recent book scrutiny identified lack of differentiation in pupil tasks. The issue surrounding challenge and differentiation now needs to be incorporated into an updated Religious Education Action Plan.

Governors are kept well informed of pupil progress and the coordinator meets on a planned basis with the Religious Education Link Governor.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Overall the quality of teaching is Good and some teaching and learning is Outstanding.

Where teaching is Good or better, several elements are in place. Pace is brisk, activities are varied and interesting and a cross curricular approach is employed. For example drama was used to tell the story of The Prodigal Son. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding which enables the pupils to make good progress as learners. Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and focus on the task in hand.

Technology is used throughout the curriculum and contributes to pupils' enjoyment and progress. For example in a Key Stage 2 class a group of pupils were writing different types of Bidding Prayers. They were able to use a program of their own choice and had to devise the best way of presenting to and engaging their audience. Whiteboards are consistently used as a teaching aid.

Teaching Assistants are well deployed. They provide good support and have an excellent rapport with pupils. They were very clear about their role, supported well and intervened when necessary.

Interactive marking, which has been an area of development, is very good. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback and are given opportunities in class to respond. For example in a Key Stage 2 class the pupils were given time at the beginning of their lesson to look at their previous marked work and to respond. The pupils were clearly used to this practice.

A variety of teaching strategies are used to good effect. For example, 'thinking pauses' which is time given to develop thinking skills. Talk partners and open ended questions enable the pupils to develop their thinking skills.

On the whole the learning environment is attractive and stimulating with several examples of good quality and relevant Religious Education displays.

Management of behaviour was good and the behaviour of the pupils in all lessons observed was good.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference and 10% of the timetable is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education.

The school now uses 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' This is supplemented by material to support the teaching of other faiths. The school has put in place a programme for the pupils to study other faiths and evidence of this was seen around the school.

There are strong links with the PSHE curriculum which provide good opportunities for personal, spiritual and moral development.

The curriculum is enriched by the use of technology and a variety of activities which links the curriculum together For example Artwork, making booklets, making stick puppets and pop ups, to name but a few.

The budget for Religious Education has ensured that there are sufficient artefacts and materials to support the curriculum.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The school meets its statutory obligations for Collective Worship. There is a well-planned programme of Masses and assemblies and other liturgies in place, and pupils are given ample opportunity to participate.

Mass is said at the beginning and end of each term and each Key Stage 2 class celebrates Mass in their classrooms each term. Parents, families and the Parish Community are invited to attend and there is always a good uptake.

Plans are in place for pupils to take on an even more active role in leading the Sunday parish Mass.

The school choir sometimes sings at parish Masses and there is a dedicated slot each week in school for hymn practice.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated in Advent and Lent. Each class leads a whole assembly at some point in the year, based on their Religious Education topic and well attended by the parents.

The Headteacher led assembly linked the 'Footprints' poem with the prayer of St Teresa and gave the pupils opportunities to reflect.

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