



## DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



### Inspection Report

**Name of School:** St Teresa's Catholic Primary School  
**LEA:** Barking and Dagenham  
**Inspection Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
**Reporting Inspector:** Pamela Brannigan

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

**Type of School:** Primary  
**School Category:** Voluntary Aided  
**Age range of pupils:** 4-11  
**Gender of pupils:** Mixed  
**Number on roll:** 220  
**Appropriate Authority:** The Governing Body  
**Date of previous inspection:** October 2011

**School Address:**  
Bowes Road  
Dagenham  
Essex  
RM8 2XJ  
Tel. No. 0208 2704757

**Headteacher:** Mr M. Corcoran  
**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Lisa McDonagh and  
Mr Terry McMahon

## Information about the school

St Teresa Catholic Primary School is a one form entry with nursery school in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of St Thomas More, Dagenham. There are currently 220 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The majority of pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Almost 100% of pupils are Catholics as are 58% of teachers, five of whom have the CCRS qualification. The proportion of pupils with special needs is around the national average. At present the executive headteacher is supporting another school in the borough and the deputy headteacher is acting Head of School.

## Key grades for inspection

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

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 1**

St Teresa's is an outstanding Catholic school with many strong features. The Catholic ethos is evident in the daily life of the school with prayer and worship being central to its work. Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual and moral development through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is very good as are the standards of attainment. There is regular monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment. Many governors are of long standing who know the school well and offer an excellent level of challenge and support. Pastoral care is very good and shared with the local parish priest who is also a governor, as well as all staff. Relationships within the school and with the local parish are excellent and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents are very happy with religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2011 identified the school as outstanding with no specific areas for development. However, the school under the leadership of the executive headteacher continually reviews practice and has put in place initiatives to further enhance provision and opportunities for pupils. Together with the new subject leader for religious education and head of school the executive headteacher has produced a comprehensive action plan to sustain effectiveness and put in place further developments. A newly formed Year 5 Chaplaincy Team is giving pupils additional opportunities to plan and lead worship including at lunch times when pupils' own prayers are used as part of the reflection. An established staff are well supported through in-service sessions and moderation when work is assessed and levelled. Regular, rigorous monitoring is ensuring that teaching is constantly improving and well differentiated.

The quality of self-evaluation is excellent. The school documentation is detailed, accurate and gives a comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The curriculum which follows the 'Come and See' programme is enhanced by the 'Journey in Love' materials and enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives. Staff are encouraged to improve their skills through training and embarking on the CCRS course. There are very good links with a cluster of other diocesan primary schools through in-service sessions and staff meetings. There are also exceptionally good links with the Catholic secondary school to which many pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The executive headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by the head of school and new subject leader for religious education. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise and a very good knowledge of the everyday life of the school. They visit frequently and liaise with senior leadership and subject leaders. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which are leading to very good outcomes for all pupils.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the current action plan especially the introduction of pupil led phase Masses and the development of the pupil chaplaincy team.
- Consider developing a portfolio of assessed and moderated work to assist teachers in the levelling process.

- Consider increasing the stock of bibles so each Key Stage 2 class has a complete set.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Grade 1

Pupil achievement and progress in religious education are outstanding. All pupils spoken to said they enjoy religious education and the wide range of activities involved. This was confirmed by a recent questionnaire completed by pupils in Key Stage 2. All pupils observed during the inspection worked well together and were keen to achieve. They have a very good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. All lessons observed were well planned with a range of cross curricular activities. Pupils are given a good foundation in Early Years classes which is built upon as they progress through the school. By time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they are working at a high level. On the day of the inspection Year 6 pupils were using bible references to make links between the expectations for early Christians and their own lives today. They were able to work independently and consider how their choices would influence their lives as Christians. Carefully differentiated support enabled all groups to achieve well and make good progress. Across the school workbooks are very well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Marking is positive with many examples of developmental and 'next steps' comments. Pupils are given an insight into other faiths which are taught well with a good range of resources.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They know and understand the mission statement which is prominently displayed in every classroom. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They support Cafod and the Christmas Shoebox Appeal and have a very good understanding of the work of these charities. Pupils are able to link this with the life and teachings of Jesus. At present the school is exploring possibilities of involving pupils more fully in the local community. Pupils are given responsibilities to support the life of the school as school council members, prefects, monitors and play leaders along with the head boy and girl and their deputies. All Year 6 pupils have responsibilities which include helping in classes during wet playtimes. This year a pupil chaplaincy group has been formed to increase opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship. There are excellent links with the local parish with regular school Masses to which parents and parishioners are invited. In addition, the parish priest who provides pastoral support for staff and pupils comes in every week and acts as an extra teaching resource. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is excellent and pupils value the sense of security, friendship and community created within the school. They are aware of the support available to them and feel safe, cared for and know where to go when they need help. Parents value the care given to their children and the good level of communication with staff. Responses to a questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive with many appreciative comments including, 'Wonderful school, brilliant religious education, dedicated teachers; the school has built a trustful relationship between teaching staff, parents and pupils.'

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and participate readily in daily worship in class and assemblies. The cycle of celebrations reflects the Church's liturgical year and enables pupils to understand how faith links to everyday experiences. They respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey through reflective prayer. Pupils are involved in the preparation for Masses and have a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. Each year there is a joint leavers' deanery mass which Year 6 pupils help to prepare. Pupils learn the traditional prayers of the Church as well as writing their own, many of which were seen during the inspection. There is a Rosary group in May and October as well as lunchtime prayer and reflection led by the Chaplaincy team three times a week. There are plans to give pupils further responsibility in planning and leading class assemblies and phase Masses. Preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation in Year 3 are parish based with support from the school.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations and tracking indicates that all groups make very good progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. School leadership gives religious education the same importance as other core subjects and uses staff meeting time and in-service sessions to promote the continual development of the subject.

The executive headteacher and head of school demonstrate excellent leadership through the way they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic life. They communicate a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and are supported in this by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The Catholicity of the school is evident in banners and displays around the school as well as in the classroom prayer areas. During the inspection a moving assembly led by the headteacher introduced Advent and the way to prepare for Christmas. He explored the school's links with the Shoebox Appeal and how pupils' support enabled children with very little to have Christmas gifts. He linked this with Jesus' command to 'love one another as I have loved you.' Pupils were attentive throughout and keen to contribute. Singing was excellent and all pupils participated with enthusiasm. A senior leader leads a gospel assembly at the beginning of each week which supports pupils' moral and spiritual development. Leaders ensure there are good links with Brentwood diocese through attendance at conference and deanery meetings, as well as staff training for the 'Journey in Love' programme.

Governors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the Catholic life of the school. In recent years they have attended a School Mission Day along with staff and a mission statement 'away day' Many governors are of long standing and have a wide knowledge and understanding of the school. They are well informed about its life through the headteacher's report and visits to school events as well as meetings with senior leaders. Along with the headteacher they monitor the school's provision for prayer and worship as well as religious education. They participate fully in the compilation of the school development plan which is reviewed regularly at governors' meetings. Governors have accessed training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The new subject leader has worked with the executive headteacher to produce a targeted action plan for religious education and is well placed to support colleagues. Senior leaders monitor religious education through workbook scrutiny, observing teaching and evaluating outcomes. Feedback after lesson observations is resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. A new system for recording data to enable progress in religious education across the school to be tracked accurately is in place. Assessment is enabling pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the relevant concepts. A portfolio of assessed and levelled work would assist teachers as they make judgements about pupil attainment.

School leaders ensure that St Teresa School is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities and participates in local community events. There are excellent links with other diocesan schools including a partner school to share diversity. Year 6 pupils correspond with their sister school St Therese de Lisieux ecole in France. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings. They also receive information about religious education through curriculum information newsletters and the 'Wednesday Word.' There are currently plans to invite parents to participate in some religious education lessons.

**Provision****Grade 1**

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is outstanding. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or better. Pupils are given an excellent start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a wide range of engaging activities. All groups of pupils make very good progress and behaviour for learning is excellent. Teachers respond very well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. In all year groups well differentiated tasks enable pupils to work with enthusiasm and interest. Good support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive with 'next steps' comments giving pupils suggestions of ways to improve. There is every indication that current very good standards are likely to be maintained.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is very good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is now embedded. It is enhanced by 'Journey in Love' materials and very good parish links. There

are good quality resources although class sets of Bibles in Key stage 2 would give pupils immediate access to scripture. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to the work of the school. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Teresa is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They include visual presentations, Bible readings, drama, singing and music. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and a display board which includes children's work. Feast day Masses are celebrated throughout the year and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. A quiet garden gives additional opportunities for prayer and worship. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations and pupils visit the local church to lead a Carol Service at Christmas. The parish priest supports the school through Masses and classroom visits. Pupils also have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation at Advent and Easter.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. The subject leader is currently seeking to strengthen the assessment and moderation process by initiating whole staff sessions with the local cluster group of Catholic primary schools. Tracking of pupils is providing a clear picture of progress in both key stages. There is evidence that very good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current excellent practice in all areas.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.