



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Teresa's Catholic Primary school
Local Authority: Essex
Inspection Date: 04th July 2019
Reporting Inspector: Mr Stephen Beck

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School:	Primary	School Address:	
School Category:	Academy	Elsenham Crescent,	
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11	Basildon	
Gender of pupils:	Mixed	SS14 1UE	
Number on roll:	202	Tel. No.	01268 553502
Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body	Headteacher:	Mrs Nuala Cashell
Date of previous inspection:	July 2014	Chair of Governors:	Mrs Carmel Jones

Information about the school

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School is an academy and part of the Christus Catholic Trust in Basildon in the county of Essex and the Diocese of Brentwood. The school enjoys close links with its Catholic Deanery primary schools and has played an integral part in growing the MAT.

The school serves the parish of Our Lady and All Saints Basildon. There are currently 202 pupils aged 4 -11 on an increasing roll which is near capacity. It is planned to establish a nursery class for 3 to 4 year olds for the next academic year. 41% of pupils are Catholics, a percentage that is steadily increasing. The Governors currently however accept applications from committed families of other Christian traditions and other faith backgrounds, who support and desire a Catholic education forming an inclusive, cohesive and positive community.

There is an above average number of pupils at 36% from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average at 12% with 7 having an EHC plan and 2 more pending. The number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding is 24%.

The school has been on a significant journey since its previous Section 48 Inspection. This has included acadamisation, the establishment of a new senior leadership team and move from being categorised in 'Special Measures' by Ofsted to its current grading as 'Good' in all areas.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Teresa's is a very good school with a growing number of outstanding features particularly in relation to its 'Catholic Life'. This reflects the secure capacity for improvement created by the highly effective senior leadership team. The school is led by a dynamic and visionary headteacher. She has developed and strengthened the school's strong Catholic identity, whilst maintaining a necessary culture of change over a significant period of time that has engendered a drive for sustained and ongoing improvement.

The 'Catholic Life of the School' is given the highest possible priority. There is a tangible sense of family and community in all aspects of school life, which is evident in the quality of the excellent relationships that exist between all members of the school community. Pastoral care is outstanding and is given high priority by all members of staff.

Parents speak very highly of the school and value the commitment of staff and the very good standard of teaching and learning. One parent summed up saying, "*I went to this school and chose it for my child as home and school are like one big family. They support each other and teach my child how to be kind and caring in a difficult world*".

The Governing Body works closely with the Headteacher to ensure there is a shared vision of Catholic education and life and that this is shared by the whole school community. Members of the Governing Body fully understand their roles and responsibilities and are well placed to be both supporting and challenging. They do this by keeping abreast of initiatives in Religious Education.

The Headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models who lead by example. They ensure that all staff participate fully in the religious life of the school, which includes Masses, assemblies, religious events and class visits.

Pupils strive to do their best and school data shows increasing levels of attainment and progress over time. They have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family' and they all strive to promote the strong ethos within their school family and in the wider community. Pupils have a real sense of personal worth. They express their own views and feelings with confidence and show that they understand their responsibility as Christians to be fair, just and forgiving of others.

The school has a strong capacity to build successfully on its progress to date due to its excellent leadership and management and an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, as expressed in its self-evaluation document. In addition, the school leadership team, well supported by the Governing Body, has ensured that effective systems are in place to ensure that their high standards are achieved and sustained and that good practice that has been established is shared throughout the school.

What the school should do to improve further:

St Teresa's is a very well run school that has built up strong capacity to move forward. It is commendable that having needed to focus on progress for Ofsted, it has never lost sight of its prime purpose as a Catholic school and has maintained this at the forefront of all it does. Having demonstrated an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development the school should;

- Embed the tracking of individual pupil progress and procedures already in place. This should be targeted at ensuring all pupils, particularly the more able, are given challenging goals and are provided with a wider range of activities through increasing opportunities for independent learning, thereby raising attainment further.
- Ensure that a programme of support is established for new staff in readiness for the Autumn Term and for the future, in order to maintain and build on the current strength of teaching in Religious Education.
- Provide pupils with further opportunities to develop pupil leadership roles that have been established, to enable them to become more involved in taking the initiative in planning and leading the community's Collective Worship life, appropriate to age and ability.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Grade 1

The 'Catholic Life' of St Teresa's is outstanding because the wellbeing and personal and spiritual development of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's vision and mission and pupils are nurtured in a safe, caring and supportive, strongly faith based environment.

The school has met the actions recommended from the previous inspection and has a systemic approach by using the 'Come and See' scheme to deliver the Catholic Religious Education syllabus with at least 10% of weekly curriculum time being spent on this aspect of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, planned improvements have included the development of Chaplaincy provision, a pupil prayer team and the development of the Prayer Garden including an after school prayer garden club, where pupils give up their own time each week to plant flowers and generally maintain the Prayer Garden. The part time chaplain has moved to another post. It is creditable that this role has been recognised and valued by all and that plans are already in hand for the MAT to employ a chaplain to work across the Trust. INSET is allocated each year including regular updates and input as part of the CPD programme throughout the year.

Pupils at St Teresa's are proud of their religious identity and make an outstanding contribution to the 'Catholic Life' and mission of the school which has a very high priority across the school. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them and are happy to take leading roles in those activities which promote the school's ethos. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice, responding willingly to the needs of those beyond the school. They articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for the various charities recently supported e.g. Basildon Homeless Project, Basildon Food Bank, CAFOD, Care4Calais, food and clothing collections for Flood Crisis in Zimbabwe, Juvenile Diabetes and a sponsored blindfold walk to raise money for a Guide Dog. Pupils and their families give generously to the school's charity events even though they may financially struggle themselves, demonstrating their understanding of a living faith.

Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and its key celebrations. They speak confidently of their Catholic identity and what this means. Pupils have a voice in the decision making process although this could be refined through greater clarity in regard to the roles of their different groups such as the School Council and 'Young Disciples'. They say they are always listened to, are valued and can therefore confidently express their views and feelings. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth, demonstrating excellent behaviour towards adults and each other. They are confident regarding the role of adults in the school, on the rare occasions, when dealing with inappropriate behaviour. They are reflective and are able to consider and discuss moral and spiritual issues including aspects of other faiths and cultures.

Pupils are learning to know and understand a loving God and can demonstrate many qualities including empathy, a willingness to listen, celebration and forgiveness. Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility. There is a powerful sense of belonging and involvement from the pupils and some take responsibility for key roles such as Young Disciples, School Council, assemblies, pupil voice, Mass organisation, looking after the 'Prayer Garden' and leading prayer. There is also a high attendance at Rosary and Prayer Club, which now makes provision for Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 due to high demand. Evidence shows pupils are keen and happy to take on 'monitor' roles. Year 3 pupils give up 1 hour per week after school to care for the 'Prayer Garden' with the help of one of the pupil's grandparents.

The school's Mission Statement is at the heart of the school and it offers a central reference for the 'Catholic Life' of the school: 'To Live, Love and Learn with Jesus'. The school environment in turn demonstrates that the Mission Statement is a living testament to a shared vision and staff and pupils are able to articulate its meaning, in terms of individual development, community cohesion and the call to reach beyond to the wider world through charitable giving.

Pastoral support and the school's pastoral team are a strength of the school. It is supported by the high levels of provision made which are seen as a priority and provide the ability for quick intervention. This undoubtedly serves well the mental wellbeing of the community and pupil progress. In addition to the BCCS counsellor in school once a week, there is a dedicated full time Pupil Support Manager who works with pupils with issues surrounding mental health and well-being. She actively deals with problems as they arise and has a 'Worry Box' for children to use to voice concerns. She also supports parents and runs a parent partnership workshop on a weekly basis. The care of pupils is enhanced through the close working relationship and communication between the Pupil Support Manager and the BCCS Counselling Team. The school's Sports Coach is also timetabled to mentor some of the older boys who lack male role models at home. This is well linked to the school's use of the 'Journey in Love' sex and relationships programme which forms part of discussions which deal sensitively with these topics.

Leaders have developed successful strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the very obvious benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. Once established, this relationship is nurtured through information evenings for pupil progress, pastoral, and SEND pupils which extend throughout their school journey. Frequent intervention meetings pertaining to health, safeguarding, emotional well-being, behaviour, attendance and academic progress take place for the benefit of the pupils. As a result, parents/carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.

As leaders, the Governing Body is highly ambitious for the 'Catholic Life of the School' and leads by example in its consistent emphasising of 'Catholic Life' as a school development priority. Governors make a significant contribution to the 'Catholic Life of the School' through formal and informal school visits and attendance at liturgical and social events. They are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 2

The quality of Religious Education is consistently good with developing outstanding elements that currently need time to embed themselves and for a consistency to be established across the school particularly taking account of further impending staff changes for the Autumn Term.

The school's monitoring and self-evaluation indicate that teaching is consistently good or better. The school follows 'The Come and See' Religious Education curriculum. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different groups and individuals. Non-Catholic staff are well supported by the Religious Education Subject Leader.

In all lessons observed, pupils were attentive, responsive and demonstrated good behaviour for learning. Pupils are rarely off task so lessons proceed without any interruptions. Teachers use their subject knowledge well. Teaching observed was generally good and was effective. Work is age appropriate and there is an emphasis on the use of religious vocabulary within the content. Good use of scripture is consistently made in lessons and pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the Bible and an ability to navigate it. Pupils say that teachers make an effort to provide them with interesting lessons.

Pupils demonstrate good religious literacy appropriate for their age and development and responded thoughtfully to teachers' questioning. One of St Teresa's School's strengths is the good standard of literacy within Religious Education. Opportunities are well used to ensure that the two subjects enhance each other. Pupils are given opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in writing within Religious Education lessons. It would be an opportune time to expand these cross curricular links to support new national curriculum requirements whilst also broadening the opportunities for Religious Education. In whole class discussions, pupils are happy to contribute and to answer questions. They are reassured in this by their understanding that "there are no wrong answers." Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. The Religious Education curriculum provides clear opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Work in pupils' books is beautifully presented and reflects good coverage, high expectations of teachers and the care and pride taken by pupils. This is further encouraged through the implementation of the school's 'Presentation Creed' and use of a weekly 'Presentation Pete' award. Marking is regular, affirmative and linked to the learning intention. Good progress is made by all groups. Pupils are becoming involved in evaluating how well they achieve. They appreciate collaborative work when they share their ideas with each other. Self-assessment and developmental marking strategies have been introduced and the impact of these should be analysed in order to refine them, as pupils are not yet clear regarding their next steps to improve. Additional adults are well planned for and very effectively deployed to support pupils. They have a significant impact on pupil progress and the pupils clearly enjoy working with them. Pupil progress over time has been on an upward trend and this reflects pupils' attitudes to Religious Education which are very good. They particularly enjoy lessons when a variety of activities are provided to maintain their interest and encourage them to learn. Learners are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. Almost all pupils make strong progress in their knowledge and understanding of their faith. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. On entry, their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education is usually low compared to most other skills and concepts expected at this stage of their development. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and take great pleasure in the stories, prayers, religious imagery, the themes of the liturgical seasons and the many celebrations of faith.

Observations and interviews show pupils are keen to learn, can work collaboratively or independently, and enjoy debating and discussing key messages within their lessons. Teaching in Religious Education brings clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture. Pupils are morally aware of the requirements of living out their faith in their everyday life. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, which is used to challenge pupils. Pupils reflect and have a good awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities and as a result have a good understanding and respect for other cultures and faiths.

Leaders and Governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to the subject in each key stage. Leaders and Governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The 'Come and See' programme is fully implemented across the school and relevant documentation e.g. policies, planning, monitoring and tracking are in place and known.

The Parish Priest is Link Governor for Religious Education and actively supports the Subject Leader in her role and disseminates that back to the full Governing Body. He supports teachers' in class during 'Come and See' lessons e.g. Ordination and Baptism. His contributions are appreciated by staff and loved by the pupils. Parents also commented that his contributions made him very approachable.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 2

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is very good. It is central to the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. They respond and participate in Collective Worship well and with staff they are encouraged to submit prayers to be shared on the school website. Pupils who are not Catholic enthusiastically and reverently participate in the school's provision for prayer and Collective Worship; they are encouraged to receive a blessing during Mass, to join in recital of the Rosary etc.

On the day of inspection, during the Act of Worship observed on the topic of conservation, good links were made between the school's core values, 'Love, Respect, Reflect and Accept' and the Pope's message in Laudate Si and in turn with the messages of Jesus. CAFOD resources were also well used and highlighted these values in the day to day life of the pupils. They gathered respectfully and joyfully to music and hymns. The messages expounded are constantly reinforced through displays and text around the school which are of a very high order, providing a celebration of pupils work as well as reinforcing learning. The pupils listened reverently to the Word of God in Scripture and responded appropriately by reflecting quietly, and sharing their reflections in a dignified manner. They listened to one another attentively and went forth happily with the message they had received from the Scripture, singing suitable hymns with enthusiasm. Music is an integral part of the school's prayer and worship and pupils enjoy worshipping God through the power of song.

The school has a Liturgical Choir led by the Headteacher which meets weekly to prepare both traditional and modern pieces to enhance school worship. The Liturgical Choir leads the school community when it assembles together and is a great asset to the liturgical life of the school. As a parent wrote '*It was lovely to be part of the Collective Worship today. The singing was beautiful. I would like to attend similar services in the future*' and another wrote '*It was lovely worship. I believe it will help us all to know more about the ways of Jesus. Thank you for inviting us.*'

At interview, pupils spoke about how they enjoyed their times of worship, particularly the times they were actively involved in it and also when they could be 'silent and calm'. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in preparing and leading worship with enthusiasm and a degree of independence and the school is working to embed these opportunities.

The Parish Priest is generous with the time and commitment he gives to the school. This includes involving the pupils in the preparation of Masses under his guidance. His strategy has usefully been employed over the current academic year to develop opportunities for pupils to take a greater lead in decision making in the planning of Collective Worship. This has included selecting: readings, scripture, prayers, hymns, and music and designing liturgical dances. Year 4 planned and led the May procession and Year 5 planned the dramatisation of The Stations of the Cross. It is proposed for Year 6 this year to plan the Leavers' Mass. As pupils' planning skills develop there will be opportunities to further extend the role of pupils taking a lead in the school's broad range of worship and this could provide for further development of the role of the Young Disciples. A variety of approaches to prayer are used which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. Pupils have an understanding of the liturgical structure of worship and of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts, and of appropriate worship opportunities these bring. Pupils of all faiths participate respectfully in prayer and liturgy and hold positions of responsibility such as Prayer Leaders. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer are built into the weekly celebration assembly where pupils take the opportunity to say a prayer for someone who has helped them in the week. Examples of this was seen in classes observed and pupils were clearly comfortable sharing spontaneous 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 faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy. Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction.

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. 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.

Governors monitor and evaluate provision of Catholic education through regular attendance at Collective Worship with the school community and through Governor Focus Day visits. The Governors are keen to promote further improvements and collaboration. The SLT monitor the school's Collective Worship through their processes of planning and review. Collective Worship is held as a central and important feature of school life and as such is a priority within the school development processes of evaluation and review.