



# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

URN: 139917

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

04–05 June 2026

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- The pupils feel extremely safe, cared for and loved at St Teresa's School.
- School leaders are exceptional role models for the pupils and the community.
- Prayer is central to daily life and routines at St Teresa's, leading pupils to spiritual growth.
- Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education and understand the impact it has on pupils.
- St Teresa's goes the extra mile to be exceptionally supportive and joyful, valuing all without exception, especially those who are most vulnerable.

## What the school needs to improve

- To explicitly teach Catholic Social Teaching principles and the theology that underpins them.
- To ensure that written feedback is given to support progression and learning within religious education.
- Leaders to implement a systematic approach to monitoring so that the governing body can develop a secure oversight of standards.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

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

1

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

1

Pupils at St Teresa's are fully aware of the school's charism and the role St Thérèse of Lisieux, their patron saint, plays. They understand that 'little acts of kindness' have great significance on those around them. Respect, reflection and acceptance are interwoven with love, giving pupils a strong sense of feeling valued and unique. In a school assembly, when the headteacher asked if they felt like God's children, they responded with a resounding yes! The response was, 'you absolutely are!' Pupils know the school's mission and can apply Gospel values to their everyday lives. This results in pupils taking responsibility to support causes such as Cafod and the local foodbank, Aid for the Church in Need, and the King's Trust. They also entertain the residents of the local care home with their singing and dancing. Pupils are growing in their understanding that these works link back to scripture and are a call to action and a response to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Understanding of the theology underpinning these principles now needs to be developed further. Pupils spoke about their work and recognised that doing good for others brought them a reciprocal outcome of joy. Pupil interactions are happy and supportive, and they are welcoming, helpful and mannerly to visitors. They undertake roles with commitment and diligence and carry out little acts of kindness as a matter of course.

The mission statement underpins every facet of school life. It is deeply embedded and adopted by all staff. It is evident in the way they interact with each other and the relationships forged with the pupils and wider community. Staff shared that 'strong relationships and behaviour are not accidental but the result of strategic decisions.' Staff bear witness to the Gospel values by going the extra mile, whether through fundraising or through their compassionate, emotional and practical pastoral assistance. Parents value the care and love given to their children, with a parent sharing: 'I couldn't recommend the school more to parents who are looking to have their

children's lives enriched'. Love definitely shines through in the work that is undertaken and witnessed in the adaptive care for the most vulnerable. The school environment is attractive and distinctly Catholic. The beautiful, well-cared-for and liturgically-themed displays and outside prayer spaces have been thoughtfully considered. Each classroom has appropriate prayer focus tables displaying correct liturgical colours, placed alongside meaningful and relevant displays. These remind the community of their purpose and that formation is central to school life. Care is taken to meet the requirements for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) in a well-sequenced programme. Planning demonstrates that it is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church and aims for explicit Christ-centred formation of the pupils.

Senior leaders view Catholic life and mission as a core responsibility and make sure that it is lived, known and spoken about. They are a strong, supportive unit whose actions create a calm and joyful place and allow all to thrive. School newsletters are evangelical in sharing the school's strong Catholic ethos. All stakeholders are very clear regarding the purpose of St Teresa's as a Catholic school. A teacher shared that 'the exceptional ethos and leadership team determine that the school is a place of joy and support with love as an expectation for all.' Policies demonstrate and articulate the school's mission. It is lived in the way that the wellbeing and care for staff are addressed. Parents are very positive regarding the love and kindness shown by staff, with one sharing that 'children embrace their identity as children of God and are inspired to live out their faith with joy and confidence'. The school works hard alongside parents, acknowledging their importance as the first educators of their children. They communicate transparently, and their open-door policy works to support this. Parents told us: 'We are deeply involved and well informed about the vibrant Catholic life and mission.' School leaders actively take up development opportunities provided by the Diocese to develop their skills, whilst many are active members within their own parishes supporting sacramental programmes as catechists and eucharistic ministers. These positive role models allow the children to see their Catholic faith in action. Governors are visitors to the school, meeting with pupils and staff.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

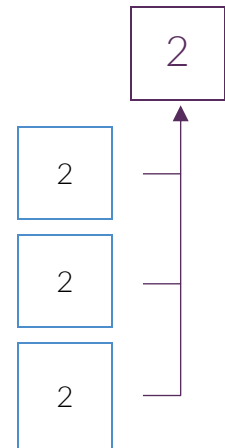
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils make good progress in religious education. They say that they enjoy their lessons but now need further challenge. They feel secure answering questions, and teachers are very good at correcting misconceptions and driving key vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate that they are remembering their teaching and can refer to prior learning. They are beginning to have a greater awareness that being able to reflect is part of the learning journey and requires skill and development. This will allow them to understand the link theology plays in religious commitment to daily life in action. Pupils can share what they have learned, and well-modelled questions used in teaching allow them to develop questioning skills themselves, resulting in deeper learning and understanding. They are engaged in their learning and especially enjoy the wide variety of tasks the *Religious Education Directory* offers. However, they do need to be offered opportunities to undertake more extended pieces of writing to ensure parity with other core subjects. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning is positive and they engage with tasks set and show a willingness to learn. They fully understand the marking they receive, but written feedback needs to be consistent and targeted to support progression.

Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in their subject knowledge and share their expertise and faith experiences with their pupils. This brings religious education to life and encourages pupils' engagement. The introduction of the *Religious Education Directory* to the whole school has been embraced by all. This enthusiasm is seen in the positive uptake of additional training by staff to enhance their understanding and learning because they understand the impact religious education has on their pupils. This is also supported by the introduction of a staff Catholic library, which sits alongside good quality resources. Teachers skilfully question pupils to aid learning and embed understanding. They are swift to correct misconceptions and reframe answers so that learning is accurate. The specific teaching of

religious vocabulary is a strength and is supporting the pupils' growing and developing religious vocabulary. Careful planning, supported by the subject lead, ensures that pupils benefit from modelled, scaffolded and adaptive teaching methods. Teachers work hard to make the lessons creative by, for example, hot seating, tableaux, and crime-scene reconstruction regarding the Crucifixion. Support staff are extremely well deployed, ensuring that all pupils are supported and make progress. Religious education books are regarded as special by all and staff understand that good quality work is expected. However, rigorous monitoring and written feedback to support progress will allow this to be consistently achieved.

School leaders have worked extremely hard to make sure that the *Religious Education Directory* is taught in a manner that evangelises both staff and pupils. A staff member shared that 'the leadership team are incredibly supportive and consequently I'm really enjoying learning and teaching religious education'. Teaching is reliably good due to the excellent subject leader and her commitment to establish the new curriculum in a systematic and positive way. The programme is taught with fidelity across the school so that learning builds appropriately. Pupils' voice is heard resulting in further ways to make religious education creative and engaging. It is seen as a core subject and is given parity alongside the others. School leaders clearly recognise the importance and impact of staff training and development and consequently plan and timetable opportunities for this, whilst taking into account staff workload and wellbeing. Staff appreciate this and, as a result, they actively seek opportunities to grow professionally. This is evidenced in their very good subject knowledge. School leaders have positive links with the diocese and the Christus Trust and actively engage with opportunities to monitor and share ideas and learning successes. As a result, pupils benefit from greater expertise. Moving forward, leaders and governors need to develop a more rigorous framework for monitoring, with targeted proformas in place to ensure robust self-evaluation and to facilitate informed challenge.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

**Provision**

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

1

Pupils exhibit strong engagement in prayer and liturgy, taking an active role in shaping prayer across the school. They help design in-class worship, contribute to whole-school times of prayer, and confidently lead prayer as class worship monitors. Their enjoyment is evident. They participate reverently, holding prayer stones to offer intentions, joining in communal prayer, and singing with conviction and joy. The prayer garden and playground shrine are well used, reflecting a deep personal commitment to prayer. The peer-elected Faith Council plays a significant leadership role, guiding whole-school worship and co-ordinating charitable initiatives. Pupils attend Mass regularly and take part in key Catholic traditions, including the May procession and Stations of the Cross. Opportunities through the Faith and Student Councils nurture both spiritual maturity and leadership skills. Pupils experience a wide range of prayer rooted in Catholic tradition: use of scripture, silence, symbolic actions, liturgical music, and spontaneous prayer. They can explain the liturgical seasons and are increasingly able to reflect on and evaluate the quality of worship, showing a growing spiritual awareness. The impact of worship extends beyond prayer times, influencing daily behaviour and curriculum links, and encouraging pupils to live out Catholic values. Collective worship fosters deep spiritual formation and strong moral development.

Collective worship is at the heart of school life, with prayer and liturgy thoughtfully woven into the rhythm of each day. Timetables reflect a steady pattern of prayer led by both pupils and staff. The school's strong Catholic tradition is evident: pupils know core prayers by heart, engage confidently in spontaneous prayer, and benefit from adapted resources that ensure the inclusion of SEND pupils. Materials are sensitively adapted to reflect the school's charism and diversity, encouraging active participation and deeper engagement with the Word of God. Staff demonstrate strong commitment and skill in leading worship. Creativity enriches worship

through music, visual arts, and reflective activities. Prayerful spaces, including the prayer garden and classroom areas, are carefully maintained to support quiet reflection. The school enjoys a strong partnership with families and the parish, demonstrated through shared attendance at Mass and participation in school worship events. Communication via newsletters and invitations helps make the Catholic life of the school visible and strengthens community bonds. Parents speak positively about their children's spiritual development, noting that their children's faith and inner life are flourishing.

School leaders show a deep dedication to collective worship, ensuring that it remains a central and inclusive part of school life. The Prayer and Liturgy Policy and school Prayer Book offer clear, up-to-date guidance, including adaptations that support all pupils, particularly those with SEND. The religious education lead works closely with staff and pupils to drive ongoing improvement. Regular professional development enhances staff expertise in planning and leading worship. Spiritual formation is embedded within the staff culture. As a result, staff feel supported, well-equipped and confident in delivering high-quality worship. Pupils are developing confidence and independence in leading worship, with older pupils taking on more responsibility. Parents are happy to report that their child has led prayer sessions in class. The school calendar places strong emphasis on key sacraments and holy days. Close partnership with the parish strengthens sacramental preparation, including a new school-based programme of catechesis for First Holy Communion. The impact of school leadership is evident in the quality, consistency, and accessibility of worship across the school. School leaders ensure that worship is well-resourced, maintaining high-quality materials and prayerful spaces. All leaders, especially governors, must establish a routine programme of monitoring and self-evaluation that will further strengthen and sustain this strong practice.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139917
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8812091
Full postal address of the school	Elsenham Crescent, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1UE
School phone number	01268553502
Headteacher	Jacques Bottjer
Chair of governors	Melita Benoy
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-teresasrc.essex.sch.uk">www.st-teresasrc.essex.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Christus Catholic Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	4 July 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Sheila Birtles

Philippa Mathews

Lead

Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement