



# Diocese of Westminster

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### **St Theresa's Catholic Primary School**

East End Road, Finchley, London. N3 2TD

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DCSF Number: 302 3507

URN: 101335

Headteacher: Mr M. Lyons

Chair of Governors: Mr D. Grant

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

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Date of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

## Description of School

St Theresa's School is a one form entry primary school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 205 pupils on roll, 94% of whom are Catholic. The majority of pupils are from the local parish of St Philip the Apostle. The school also serves the parishes of St Mary, East Finchley, St Alban, North Finchley and St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green. There are eleven teachers in the school of which ten (91%) are Catholic. Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. Almost two thirds of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost a fifth of pupils speak an additional language to English which is an above average proportion when compared nationally. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on unexpected sick leave. The deputy was acting head with another senior teacher taking the role of acting deputy.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding;      Grade 2: Good;      Grade 3: Satisfactory;      Grade 4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Theresa's Primary School is a good school with several outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos with committed leadership from all the staff who are instrumental in effectively promoting the school's Catholic identity. Prayer and worship have a very strong central role in the school's life. Relationships within the school are very good and based on Christian care and concern for others. Particularly commendable is the team spirit among the staff who all act as excellent role models for pupils. Staff create an environment where pupils are respected, listened to and encouraged in their learning. One pupil explained "Everyone here has a strong Catholic spirit". The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. The staff and pupils are committed to the high profile given to religious education in the school. High standards are reached by the pupils in religious education.

**Grade 2**

### Improvement since the last inspection

The last inspection report described the school as "a good and successful school". Areas for development were related to updating documents and sharing these with parents; building up religious education resources; monitoring the quality of teaching and providing teaching support. Good responses have been made in all areas. The relevant documents have been updated. Parents views are sought regularly but the questionnaires do not as yet ask questions about the school's Catholic life. Many new resources have been purchased particularly those linked to other faiths teaching and to the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The religious education co-ordinator is now allocated time both to monitor teaching and learning, and to support her colleagues.

**Grade 2**

### The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has a good capacity to continue to improve due to a clear knowledge of its strengths and development needs, identified through self evaluation. The religious education action plan forms part of the whole school improvement plan which is reviewed regularly by staff and governors. All staff are committed to the success of the school and to further their skills through

collaborative training. The school seeks and acts on the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils.

**Grade 2**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop assessment procedures further and use the information gained to inform future planning, assist developmental marking and ensure pupil progress.
  - Implement plans to develop use of a variety of prayer styles for worship sessions.
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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher, senior leadership team and religious education co-ordinator form an effective partnership for maintaining and improving the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement "We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God" is known and understood by pupils and staff and influences all aspects of the school's daily life. The governors are very supportive, are actively involved in monitoring and regularly informed about the school's religious life. The school is effectively managed in a way that ensures regular reviewing and evaluating of its work. High quality displays emphasise the Catholic ethos. The pupils display respect towards each other and adults. They value the friendly, caring attitude of the staff who they describe as "understanding, fun and fair". Pupils' views are taken into consideration and acted upon by an effective School Council. Leadership promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development very well. Pupils undertake many responsibilities such as befriending younger pupils and organising their own fund-raising for a charity of their choice. Pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. Parents are very supportive of the school. The priest is well known by the school community and links with the local parish are strong.

**Grade 1**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school community. Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Pupils write their own prayers and use these within worship. They are given opportunities to reflect on the worship theme and its application to their own life and experiences. Pupils enjoy being involved in worship planning and delivery and being part of class-led assemblies. Visual presentations, poems, religious artefacts, dance, music and challenging questioning are used very well to engage learner's interest and develop their thinking. Pupils are respectful and attentive during prayer. Pupils' singing enhances the worship. There are attractive prayer tables within each classroom. Worship and prayer are monitored well by staff and governors. The parish priest makes a valuable contribution to the school's sacramental life. Whole school Masses occur regularly throughout the year and older children participate in Reconciliation. Parents and parishioners are invited to school services. The prayer area set up during Lent and Advent was welcomed and used by pupils. The outdoor quiet areas provide further places for reflection and prayer.

**Grade 1**

## **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are valued. Religious education includes study of other world religions and effective links have been made to the adjoining Jewish school. Exchanges of pupils have taken place to share together in celebration events. Pupils have opportunities to work with others from different backgrounds through sporting and curriculum events. Links with European schools has been fostered through the Comenius project. Visitors from the local community share their expertise with pupils. Pupils raise money regularly for local and national charities. Harvest gifts are distributed within the local area. Pupils sing at venues around the district and participate in local events. Links with the Catholic secondary schools are good. Worship provides reflection opportunities for all to link the theme with their own experiences.

**Grade 2**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a good rate across the school. Most achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and many exceed these. Pupils are beginning to understand the life and teaching of the Catholic Church and to be able to apply this to their own experience. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils' books are very well presented. The high standard of illustrations led a pupil to describe them as "very colourful". They evidence a full coverage of the curriculum with a good variety of written work. 'Rejoice' assemblies led by pupils effectively share and celebrate work achieved. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when doing practical activities such as drama and when given the opportunities to express their own opinions and ideas. Pupils behave well and appreciate the many opportunities religious education gives them to work collaboratively together.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

The quality of religious education lessons is good and some outstanding aspects were observed. Teachers adapt the programmes' plans imaginatively and use visual material and story to motivate pupils in their learning. The teaching styles are age appropriate and encourage active pupil participation. Open questioning is used well to stimulate and interest the pupils. Pupils of all abilities make progress with their learning. The activities planned were enthusiastically undertaken by the pupils and consolidated and developed pupils' thinking. Assessments are made at the end of each topic and compared with national expectations. Teachers mark to the learning objective and affirm pupils positively with their praise and comments. Some marking suggests improvement strategies and there was evidence that these improvements had been made. Parents receive information about religious education topics and how they can support this learning at home.

**Grade 2**

**Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following "Here I Am" programme. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Religious education is linked well to other curriculum areas such as drama, art, speaking and listening, and to information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils devise Powerpoint presentations to illustrate the religious education theme or to use during prayer sessions. Occasionally a parish sister and visitors from other faiths are used as extra resources for learning. Visits to the adjoining Jewish school enhance effectively pupils' knowledge of this religion. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Attractive religious education displays throughout the school give added value to this core subject.

**Grade 2****Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The religious education co-ordinator in conjunction with the senior leadership team give a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. The religious education co-ordinator leads and manages the religious education curriculum well. She is very knowledgeable and extremely conscientious. Religious education is effectively managed and monitored in a way to ensure quality assurance. Clear and appropriate action plans have been devised. The co-ordinator supports teachers well and leads regular staff training. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. The budget for religious education and worship is at present below that allocated to other core subjects but a review is planned in the Autumn term. Religious education is well resourced.

**Grade 2**