

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	St Theresa's Roman Catholic Primary School
School Address:	East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2TD
Hub School:	The Compton School

Telephone Number:	0208 3468826
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Unique Reference Number:	101335
Local Authority:	Barnet
Type of School:	Voluntary Aided
School Category:	Primary
Age range of students:	4 - 11
Number on roll:	240
Head teacher/Principal:	Maureen Kelly

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	June 2015
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	2

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	16 -18 November 2015
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Students is:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Outstanding
Area of Excellent Practice: Growth mindset culture	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Primary School appears to have moved beyond the Good grade as judged in the school's Ofsted report (June 2015).

Information about the school

- This is an average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well-above average.
- The proportion speaking English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is relatively low.
- The proportion with special educational needs is below average.

School Improvement

Strategies What went well

- There is a strong drive to improve continuously, ensuring children make rapid progress. The senior leadership improve teaching and learning. The model of distributed leadership engages all adults to develop professionally within a collegiate framework. An almost palpable ethos of mutual respect and endeavour pervades the school and positively influences children's learning.
- The self-evaluation document (SED) is thorough. The school improvement plan emerges from the SED, selecting highly relevant priorities to make the school even better. A very thorough three-stage monitoring procedure is clearly founded on measures of success at timely intervals.
- Performance management secures accountability, tightly linked to development priorities.
- Senior leaders research innovative approaches, for example the work of Hattie on types of learners, growth mindset and Heppell's 'shoeless' approach. They reinterpret formal academic research and personalise it in age-appropriate ways to make it meaningful for pupils.
- Middle leaders are contributing to improvement at an exceptional level of expertise. They monitor, coach and sustain whole school planning.
- Outstanding teaching is promoted through team teaching, coaching and mentoring and is led by an interesting range of providers including Challenge Partners.
- The opportunities for continuing professional development are well supported by a range of partnerships
- Pupil progress meetings focus on what the team can do for every individual child. Support and interventions are timely, specific and measured for impact every six weeks. Planning always shows what strategies are being applied which makes effectiveness in the classroom easy to monitor.
- Out-of-class intervention programmes are tracked rigorously for impact and contribute to disadvantaged children performing very well across the school.
- 'Parent voice' is heard through questionnaires and termly meetings

Even better if...

...the school were to believe more deeply in the abundant evidence presented that it has moved on from the time of its Ofsted inspection and can be self-confident now about its status as an outstanding school.

...more able pupils were to reach the same standard in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 as they do in reading.

Pupil Outcomes

- Pupils at St Theresa's Catholic Primary School make excellent progress, significantly higher than the national average.
- Starting points suggest that most children in reception make very good progress leading to GLD (Good Level of Development).
- Progress continues throughout KS1, with 96% passing the Phonics screening test compared to 77% nationally.
- Pupils continue to progress extremely well throughout Year 2 with KS1 results in line or above national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of more-able pupils reaching Level 3 in reading is above the national benchmark. Writing and mathematics are broadly in line with national figures.
- Attainment of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with their peers, especially in reading and mathematics. The average point score of disadvantaged pupils for reading, writing and maths (combined) is broadly in line with other pupils; both groups are above national averages. This means that disadvantaged pupils at St. Theresa's have very little gap from non-disadvantaged nationally. For pupils with English as an additional language or special educational needs, attainment is broadly in line with national figures.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 (KS2) is impressive. Over time, pupils have demonstrated sustained attainment at KS2, above national average at L4, and significantly above at L5. They achieved above national benchmarks at L6 in reading, writing, mathematics and EGPS. In terms of pupil groups, attainment at KS2 is at least inline, and in many cases significantly above, national figures in reading, writing, mathematics and EGPS. Internal differences between groups are not significant and attributable to a special needs factor when they do occur.
- Proportions of pupils making expected and those exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are higher than national figures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Questioning is used consistently well across the school to enable teachers and assistants to build upon, consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Pupils also ask questions of one another to support peer to peer learning and this forms a valuable part of the learning process.
- Consistently effective marking techniques across the school ensure that pupils are clear about their next steps in learning – they are given dedicated time to respond to questions which are linked directly back to the learning foci – these questions are aptly differentiated, thus challenging pupils
- There is great consistency across the classes: the environment, the curriculum provided and in the 'non-negotiables' which are driven by the senior leaders. However, teachers are encouraged to put their 'personal stamp' on their teaching to allow for creativity.
- Focused formative assessment within the classroom leads to teachers identifying gaps in learning. They then use home learning to address these aspects. The two approaches ensure consistent expectations including the use of a 'menu' of mild, spicy and hot challenges at home.
- Pupils are enthused by their learning and become quickly engaged in exciting tasks that are well matched to their needs. They talk about learning positively and are keen to develop their understanding, recognising that we are all learners.
- Using talk partners effectively supports peer-to-peer learning; mixed ability pairings allow pupils to work together to develop ideas and explore concepts further, often providing their own challenge. Peer-to-peer modelling as the 'expert' raises self-esteem of pupils. Strategies to use when 'stuck' are shared clearly with pupils and a whole range of possibilities explored. As a result, very little time is wasted by pupils wondering what to do.
- Teachers use a range of approaches in the development of success criteria. For example, pupils being given written success criteria, or developing their own. Exciting strategies are used within class to reject 'red herrings' for success to help the children identify those aspects of learning that will help them progress.
- The learning culture is clearly embedded in the school. The significant impact this has had is largely due to the fact that it is not simply an 'off the shelf' solution, but has been developed to suit the particular needs of learners and fitting in well with the overwhelming ethos. Still individual teacher characteristics shine through the non-negotiables, which again make this culture so creative, personal and effective.
- Teachers celebrate 'learning noise', valuing discussion and team working. Pupils who choose to work alone in silence are also valued and this does not deter from their engagement, or the progress they make in learning.

- Learning journeys and work books show that pupils make good progress over time. The challenge within the books reflects the level of challenge seen within lessons and during discussion with pupils. Pupils are highly resilient.
- Pupils have time to respond to helpful marking during 'soft starts' to the day.

Even better if...

...in a few remaining lessons, the pace during lessons was adjusted to the needs of all learners to ensure that no learners are left behind, or with gaps in their understanding because things happen too fast for them.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Growth mindset culture

From Reception to Year 6, pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' and show resilience in their learning. Pupils of all abilities embrace challenge in almost every lesson. The learning culture nourishes pupils' independence. The rate of progress accelerates because they are used to knowing what to do next to improve.

The learning environment - annotated displays of work, posters, photographs, slogans - takes every opportunity to convey key messages about attitudes and desirable outcomes. A wonderful example is the display of "shelfies": photographs of children standing beside their bookcases at home, beside which children write about their love of reading. The layers of significance for pupil, peers and parents are considerable.

Staff's insight into academic research has been adapted into non-negotiables in language pupils understand. This can be seen in action during learning walks. Teachers' and pupils' individual creativity is fostered by them, not crushed by uniformity. It is clear from talking to the school council that the pupils feel empowered about their learning. They have things to say and they are confident that the adults in school will listen to them. This results in pupils who have high self-esteem that impacts upon the rapid progress they are making. The religious education syllabus, linking with British values contributes well to pupils' personal development and mind-set.

The school has already begun to share this learning culture amongst 15 schools across three boroughs as part of the Challenge Partner Hub development. The feedback from this training has been 100% positive and as a result, other schools have begun to develop their own 'learning culture'. St Theresa's is very well placed to disseminate this area of excellence with highly skilled staff who are knowledgeable and passionate about it.

Partnerships.

How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?

Leaders report that the “Even Better Ifs” provided the clarity and impetus they needed at exactly the right time. There were a considerable number of EBIs, enabling leaders to create an action plan, which focused the leadership team and staff to devise clear school improvement strategies, improve the quality of teaching and raise outcomes. As a result, the school now has embedded systems and procedures including a robust termly monitoring and review programme so that the school continues to build on the progress made.

How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?

The school has worked actively within the Challenge Partners Compton Hub. They have made great use of the Outstanding Teaching Programme and the Improving Teaching Programme. Leaders have attended breakfast meetings and briefing updates. They have participated in book scrutinies and book moderation with other schools within the Hub. Staff were part of the Level 6 Writing Project last year, facilitating training for all the schools within the hub. Staff and children from St Theresa’s attended three separate writing workshop days at three secondary schools in the Hub. This work had a positive impact on the standards of writing in the school and was really informative for the Year 6 class teacher.

St Theresa’s frequently welcome staff from other schools to see their learning culture in action. Last term, the school held a training day led by the assistant headteacher, with teachers from 15 schools across several boroughs within the Challenge Partner hubs attending. This resulted in 100% positive feedback. Staff from other schools regularly visit leaders at St Theresa’s. Last month, the inclusion leader supported two deputy heads from different schools by providing strategies on how to raise standards in achievement amongst SEND and FSM children.

The school is an active member of the London Schools Excellence Fund. They participated in lesson studies, which was a successful form of professional development and had a significant impact on the teaching and learning. Staff also took part in the peer enquiry, which enabled teachers from both primary and secondary schools to visit each other and share good practice. St Theresa’s is also part of a local school alliance called Partnership 9. This is in addition to the work within Challenge Partners. The school is also part of the Wroxham School Alliance. Staff carry out reciprocal visits and share new initiatives and ideas. Dame Alison Peacock invited St Theresa’s to participate in the seven day Pie Corbett course which started in July of this year and will continue this academic year.

This review will support the school’s continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school’s hub in order that it can inform future activities.

What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Following discussion with the headteacher, the **school would like to work with a secondary school** that **is** interested in making the most of children's learning styles in primary education so that a constructive transition is **achieved**.