

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2TD,

Date of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016



### A. Classroom Religious Education

**What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?**

**Overall Grade 2**

Classroom Religious Education (RE) is judged to be good in this school with some outstanding aspects. It is not yet outstanding because there needs to be improvements made in the quality of teaching and also in the achievement of pupils across the school. The school has provided a comprehensive and creative RE curriculum which fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, this now needs to be implemented in every class. The RE leadership team is effective in driving up standards within the school. The head has a clear goal and vision for where she wants the school to be and her high expectations are shared by an enthusiastic RE leader who gives extensive support to staff in the school. Progress is judged to be good and pupils leave the school with standards mostly at or above the national average. Marking is good but needs to be consistently applied and the school's own policy adhered to so that pupils know how to improve their work and make it even better. The displays of pupil's work around the school are of a high standard and pupils take pride and care in their work. Teaching is judged to be at least good in all classes with some evidence of outstanding teaching also seen. The teaching and learning environment in the Early Years provides great opportunities for pupils to thrive from an early age. Pupil's engagement and enthusiasm in lessons is clearly evident and behaviour and conduct of pupils is outstanding at all times and in all settings.

### B. The Catholic life of the school

**What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?**

**Overall Grade 1**

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding in every aspect and is exemplary in key areas. The school benefits greatly from a strong and determined Chair of Governors. The work of the Catholic Life Committee, has had a major impact on the school in the last few years. The partnerships between home, school, Diocese and parish are very strong. Catholic worship and prayer is embedded in the daily life of the school and there are plentiful opportunities for pupils to be of service and flourish within this school. There is a common purpose, shared vision and ambition to celebrate the Catholic Life of the school and this is why the school is judged to be outstanding in every single area inspected.

## Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent 1 day in the school, visited 8 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 3 interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Finchley, was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

## Inspection Team

Lead Inspector	Mr Sean Flood
Associate Inspector	Ms Maureen O'Donoghue

## Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a one form entry in the Local Authority of Barnet and the locality of Finchley. The school serves the parishes of St Philip the Apostle, Finchley Church End, St Mary's, East Finchley, St Albans, North Finchley and St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 91.7%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2.9% and from other Faiths is 2.9% and 2.5% no Faith declared. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 86%.

There are 241 pupils on roll, with no pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is 70.5% well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 36.2% this is above average. There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals. Sixteen pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	302 3507
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Headteacher:	Miss Maureen Kelly
Chair of Governors:	Dr Peter Carroll

Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	2

<b>Key for inspection grades:</b>	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

## **A. Classroom Religious Education**

*How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?*

### **What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?**

The main improvements since the last inspection have been in the areas of developing a comprehensive religious education (RE) curriculum and in improving the leadership and management of classroom RE. The two key areas identified in the previous report about assessment and school self-evaluation have been fully addressed.

### **How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?**

#### **Grade 1**

The Religious Education Curriculum Directory is being met by the school using a wide and varied range of curriculum materials. Content is carefully planned for and also closely mapped to pupils' own individual needs. It is being constantly reviewed as to its effectiveness. This curriculum now needs to be implemented and applied consistently in all classes across the school. The school engages in research and seeks external support and advice to ensure that pupils receive the best curriculum entitlement. This year the school is doing extensive work around "The Year of Mercy" and also in teaching about Catholic social justice.

### **Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education**

#### **Grade 2**

Pupil achievement is variable across the school and at all Key Stages. It ranges from outstanding achievement to good. Pupils enter in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at broadly average levels of attainment and leave with attainment and understanding above national averages therefore progress is deemed to be good. Planning is thorough and detailed plans are provided to help teachers who need support in delivering quality RE lessons. The RE leader plays a key role in this area. Pupils are highly articulate in discussing and recounting their learning in RE at all ages. In the Early Years pupils are quickly introduced to a wide and appropriate range of religious language and activities which help them to make rapid improvements in their learning. Pupils are able to talk about the Bible and events in the life of Jesus such as the Wedding Feast at Cana from an early age. Recording of written work needs to be reviewed as it is mostly not differentiated and does not contain enough pupil led activities or work or examples of their own emerging writing and drawings. In Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to use scripture to help their learning and progress is evident in pupils' books. In Years 3 and 4 there are good examples of work relating to the life and works of Jesus and some very good developing work using scripture to enhance understanding of parables and Bible narratives. The best work seen in Years 5 and 6 showed good aspects of cross curricular links such as the work around CAFOD, Native American Art and work on "Inspirational People" such as St Damien and Maximilian Kolbe. Some of this work was of a very high standard and showed what pupils are capable of achieving in Upper Key Stage 2. There were also however significant gaps in coverage and RE content of the curriculum in both classes and this needs to be addressed. The quality of work on display in classrooms and around the school was noteworthy and showed the

potential and high ability that pupils are capable of. This work ranged from writing, to artwork and to work on Catholic social justice.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

The quality of teaching is at least good in all classes seen with some outstanding aspects also in evidence. This judgement is based on the typicality of teaching over time. Pupil behaviour is consistently outstanding in every class seen and is major strength of the school. This is true in classrooms and indeed all around the school and also at playtimes. Behaviour for learning and during lessons is equally outstanding. Most pupils are enthusiastic and well engaged in lessons and love talking about their work and learning to each other and equally to other adults in the rooms including inspectors. Mutual respect is evident in every class seen and teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of all their pupils. Teaching assistants are also effective and give good support to a wide range of pupils. Teaching in the EYFS stage is of a high standard as the children are provided with a very rich and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Questioning is very good and greatly aids the understanding and development of these young children.

Teachers do mostly have high expectations of pupils and try to ask appropriate questions to further learning for all abilities. This higher order questioning is a work in progress and needs further embedding and development in the culture of the school. Teachers use a wide variety of resources very well such as ICT, iPads, art from other cultures and visualisers, these can clearly be seen to be having a positive impact on pupils learning.

Homework or Home Learning as the school calls it, derived from its Mindset culture, is in evidence and mostly used to good effect. This is especially true for older pupils who have time to do more in depth research into areas that interest them such as the history and lives of inspirational people.

Marking is developing well in the school and some good examples were seen in scrutiny of work. In some classes pupils are given clear help and guidance in how to improve their work by teachers' use of green pen marking and responses. In other key classes however this application of marking and aiding pupils' further understanding is not so clear and needs to be applied consistently right across the school.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 1**

Leadership and management of religious education are judged to be outstanding because of the drive, commitment and determination of the RE leadership team to raise standards of teaching and learning in RE within the school over the last few years. The head has the vision for where she wants the school to be and is ably assisted by an enthusiastic RE leader and an acting deputy head. The Chair and other governors of the school also play a very strong and key role in raising standards and holding leaders to account. The governors and school community have exciting plans for the future in forming a Multi Academy Trust with two other Catholic primary schools in the borough.

The systems and structures for securing even higher standards are all coming into place and the path for development has been well mapped out. The head and her senior leadership team have researched best practice and innovation in improving the teaching and learning of pupils and have sought help from outside partners. Areas adopted by the school have included 'Growth Mindset' and diagnostic 'green pen' marking. This work now needs to be further embedded, understood and implemented by all members of the teaching and support staff.

Monitoring and self-assessment procedures are in place and are very positive and encouraging for staff in the school. Teachers are being well supported in the school especially by the RE leader.

The school has produced a revised, thorough and relatively accurate self-assessment document. The judgements contained within this document do need to be more objective however and rigorously

checked to secure the necessary required improvements in teaching and learning and achievement. Continuous professional development (CPD) is wide ranging and effective and is offered to all teachers in the school at an appropriate level.

**What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Review how RE work is recorded and covered across the school to ensure comprehensive coverage and depth of the curriculum on offer
- Ensure marking is consistently applied in all classes to help pupils develop further and also to improve their work
- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning to ensure more outstanding typicality of teaching over time.

## **B. The Catholic life of the school**

*How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?*

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

There were no areas for improvement outlined in the previous inspection. The main area of development in the school has been in the work of the Catholic Life Committee which has been exemplary and clearly had a major impact on school life. The school has been through some challenging times and governors have provided the proper balance of accountability and support required to drive school improvement and thereby enhance the Catholic life of the school.

### **The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget**

#### **Grade I**

This is one of those schools that celebrates its identity as a Catholic school from the very moment one enters. Catholicity is at the core of all the school does. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE at all key stages. Staff are being well supported in developing teaching and Catholic acts of worship and the school also has two members of staff with Masters qualifications in RE. The school is a vibrant and well maintained learning environment with displays of Catholic Life everywhere from the new “Door of Mercy” to Year of Mercy banners to a wide range of prayers proudly on display. The school also has a small prayer room and a meditative garden. Displays are of the highest standard in this school. An appropriate budget is allocated to RE and the school despite budget constraints ensures that money is well spent and that RE is well resourced.

### **The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community**

#### **Grade I**

This is an outstanding area for the school. Prayer and worship are at the heart of all the school does and during this inspection it was evident that all pupils knew the Year of Mercy prayer. Assemblies are used to celebrate achievement and to enhance pupils understanding of for example Catholic social justice teaching, caring for the earth and others and the message of Pope Francis in Laudato Si. Pupils sing with gusto in assemblies and during times of worship. The pupils also show dedication to the spiritual and corporal acts and are being well led by the new Apostles of Mercy group. Mass is celebrated regularly across the year and parents are invited to join class Masses in the school. The parish priests are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. The pupils also often visit the nearby St Philip’s Church. Examples of pupils planning their own liturgies, acts of worship and prayer session were also in evidence during this inspection.

## **The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice**

### **Grade I**

Pupils are highly aware of the Gospel call to justice and service. Some of the spoken work and discussions seen and heard during the inspection were of the highest order one could wish to see. The school has really taken on board the Year of Mercy and integrated this very well into its school life. Pupils can discuss a wide range of contemporary topics from refugees to international development in an appropriate and intelligent way. The pupils engage in a very wide range of charitable activities both at home and overseas such as CAFOD, the Catholic Children's Society and Operation Christmas Child. Mutual respect at all levels is very evident within the school and this clearly also comes through in the good relationships within class and the high standards of behaviour. Opportunities to be of service are plentiful and pupils can serve as House Captains, Sports Leaders, School Council, Prefects, Reading Prefects, Apostles of Mercy and many more. In a discussion with inspectors the pupils expressed great pride in their school and were equally grateful for all the opportunities provided to be of service to others in and around the school.

## **Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

### **Grade I**

Partnerships at all levels are quite clearly outstanding. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise the improvements made over the last few years in so many key areas. Parents feel very secure in supporting the school and its core purpose and think that their children receive a very good start in life. Parents are welcomed in to the school for assemblies, Masses and liturgies. Links are very good and the questionnaire provided was very supportive also. The parish priest chairs the Catholic Life committee and plays a key and integral role in all the school does. The school participates fully in all Diocesan activities and regularly attends both Deanery and Diocesan moderation of pupils work. The school is closely involved with Caritas and is doing some pioneering work in this area soon. The school also avails itself of opportunities for CPD provided by the Westminster Education Service and is also actively involved in setting up a Multi Academy Trust Lumen Christi with two other Catholic primary schools in Barnet. This will further strengthen the work of the Diocese and enhance all communities concerned.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school**

### **Grade I**

The Mission Statement of the school is on display all around the school and impacts on all policies and procedures and daily life of the school. This work is being driven forward by the outstanding contribution of the Catholic Life committee whose work has been exemplary. The impact of this committee is clearly evident in all the school does. All staff are made welcome and participate fully in the religious life of the school. The governors and RE leadership team of the school have a shared vision of where they want the school to be in future and are united in common purpose. The Chair of Governors is very well informed, knowledgeable and is determined to ensure that the school thrives in the years to come.

**What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- Develop even further its link with CAFOD and Caritas and ensure that the projects undertaken are sustainable for pupils and the school in the future