

St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

East End Road, Finchley, London, N3 2TD

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 3 March 2022



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- Pupils are offered a good curriculum that engages them effectively.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and enjoy peer and whole class discussion. This has a positive impact on progress.
- Teaching is effective and leaders ensure good progress is made by benchmarking against other schools.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and can identify their next steps in learning.
- The leader of religious education ensures staff are well supported and her team-teaching work ensures good staff development.
- Leaders know their school well; self-evaluation is accurate and there is clear evidence of steps already being taken to monitor current practice and further develop religious education.
- Governors are actively involved in the support of religious education.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The religious education curriculum is not yet fully developed to ensure it is rich, relevant, and inspiring.
- Effective challenge that enables pupils to explore religious education themes at a deeper level is not yet embedded.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- It is evident to all that religious education is at the heart of the school. This is a dynamic and engaging Catholic community.
- This is a vibrant and dynamic school offering pupils a wide range of experiences of what it means to live according to Catholic teaching and traditions.
- Pupils' talents and achievements are celebrated, enabling them to develop as individuals and helping them recognise that they are part of a Catholic community.
- Pupils are actively involved in fundraising; they choose charities and understand the theology underpinning this work.
- St. Theresa's demonstrates in an outstanding way its key relationships with parents, parishes, and other Catholic schools.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, it reflects the school's commitment to excellence.
- Staff are extremely well supported by leaders; excellent systems support staff development.
- The leadership team including governors is the driving force in the school's commitment to the education of young people with a vision of discipleship for life. Governors make a highly significant contribution to this work and the overall Catholic dimension of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in the planning, design and assessment of its religious education curriculum. The impact of this work is evident in the good progress made by pupils. Leaders have developed good systems for assessment and pupils know what to do to improve their work.

The content of classroom religious education is good

There is a new leadership team in place and they have been focused on providing effective leadership of religious education, implementing a new curriculum structure and providing a range of resources to facilitate its delivery. This curriculum is based on the units of work 'In God's Name' which the school has mapped against the curriculum directory. Further curriculum design incorporating more Catholic social teaching and creativity would further enhance learning. Leaders have planned for progression, however this is not yet fully embedded. There is a good range of resources to support the curriculum. Teachers receive half termly training from the 'In God's Name' provider which has secured subject knowledge for units being taught. New Bibles have been purchased for every classroom.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School uses levels of attainment to assess pupils' work and moderates work with other local schools in the deanery to benchmark progress. Pupils achieve as well in religious education as they do in other core subjects. In an Early Years lesson observed, pupils had a variety of interesting activities set up to support their learning about Lent. One pupil was very excited to finish his purple 'sorry heart' and explained in detail and with a very good Lenten understanding, why he had to make it for his father. In a Year 1 lesson pupils were excited to work in groups to examine objects that represented the Easter story. This activity built on previous learning. Pupils with additional needs were very well supported with their learning; this lesson facilitated good opportunity for discussion which deepened pupils' understanding. Pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work, however there needs to be a greater understanding of key vocabulary to improve religious literacy. Pupils' attitude to learning is consistently positive and this contributes to their good progress in class. They are adept at peer discussion which supports their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were engaged in their learning about the stations of the cross, they were able to talk about what was happening in each station and demonstrated a sound understanding of previous learning about Lent.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good, and most pupils make good progress; teachers have high expectations of pupils, and this was evident in lessons observed. Leaders have ensured that half termly in-service training has impact by providing time for teachers to plan lessons together. This has enabled a positive climate for learning. Further team-teaching support by the RE leader has led to professional discussion in religious education ensuring that all teachers have strong subject knowledge. Inspectors observed that pupils were engaged and interested, peer discussion was a particular strength. Pupils in this school are interested in religious education and engaged in their own learning. Good assessment procedures support pupils to improve their work. In a Year 6 lesson observed, pupils explained to inspectors what they had to do to improve their work, they referred to their targets and were engaged in the learning. In this lesson, challenging questioning was used to stretch pupils' knowledge

and understanding. Scripture was used effectively to explore St. John Paul II's Scriptural Stations of the Cross in addition to the traditional stations.

Homework is set using technology that many parents commented upon as being clear and helpful. Religious education homework is set regularly and contributes well to pupils' learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

Leadership of religious education is good. The newly appointed leader of religious education has identified areas for development and has high aspirations for her subject. Leaders have begun to redesign the RE curriculum to promote challenge and they have worked hard to establish assessment systems and structures. It is evident that there is a clear vision and commitment to the school's key role in the educational mission of the Church. Religious education influences all aspects of the school. Leaders, including governors recognise that in the redesign of the religious education curriculum there needs to be a shared understanding and focus. To achieve their aims, a significantly healthy budget has been assigned to religious education to ensure training needs are met and time is allocated to further improve teaching and learning. In a Year 3 lesson observed pupils were engaged in learning about the stations of the cross using "freeze frames" to explore individual stations. A video clip was also used effectively to look at the role of onlookers as Jesus carried His cross. In Year 4 and year 5 lessons, art was used to explore the stations of the cross. These varied teaching strategies provided opportunities for pupils to respond enthusiastically to their learning. Leaders' encouragement of creativity and the recent training from the diocesan adviser is clearly having an impact on learning in class. However, inspectors observed that in some year groups pupils are not effectively challenged. Self-evaluation is accurate, the newly established leadership team recognises its starting points and is working strategically in a robust and vigorous way to achieve its vision for religious education.

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

- Further develop the religious education curriculum to inspire pupils and meet their needs.
- Promote effective challenge that enables pupils to explore religious education themes at a deeper level.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School has made significant progress since its previous inspection. Pupils are actively engaged in choosing charities for their fundraising efforts and there is evidence that the whole school community is collectively engaged in ensuring the success of this work.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education receives the 10% curriculum coverage required by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education is at the core of the curriculum. It is clear on entering the school that this is a vibrant Catholic community with religious education at its heart. Visitors are given a warm welcome at the school office, pupils proudly and expertly guide visitors around, and the high-quality display is evidence of the extent to which religious education influences the quality of education offered. Leaders place value and importance on religious education; this is evident in the budget allocated by governors. The budget for religious education is significantly greater than in other core subjects in 2021-2022 as leaders acknowledge training implications in delivering a challenging religious education curriculum.

Governors and the leadership team offer outstanding support to leaders. They monitor carefully to ensure that the school's recent work enhancing the religious education curriculum leads to good outcomes for pupils. The newly appointed subject leader is extremely well supported and in turn ensures staff receive high quality professional development. The result of her work is that staff have strong subject knowledge.

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

is good

Prayer and worship are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic institution. St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School meets its commitment to ensure that worship and prayer are a daily part of pupils' experience. However, pupils do not yet take an active part in planning and leading worship. It is evident that the celebration of the liturgical year is at the heart of the school's provision. The parish priest regularly celebrates the Eucharist with year groups, in key stages and as a whole school. He also offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. The Ash Wednesday Mass was well attended by parents who have not been able to come into school since before the pandemic. Parents expressed their delight at being able to attend, as did the school to welcome them back. Pupils from other faiths experience an understanding and respect for their traditions. In a Year 6 class, the teacher expertly included pupils of other faiths in the class discussion about pilgrimage, offering them opportunities to contribute meaningfully by providing their own faith examples. Pupils are provided with ample opportunities for quiet reflection and traditional prayer as well as time to discuss and reflect. Leaders are aware that pupil leadership in this area is an area for development and have begun to address this in their strategic planning for RE and in the adoption of the 'Minnie Vinnies' initiative.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

is outstanding

Pupils enjoy celebrating the talents and achievements of others and regularly do this in celebration assemblies. In St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School pupils understand fully the Church's call to action for justice. Pupils actively support those in need, locally, nationally and globally. Pupils told inspectors how they chose the Catholic Children's Society for their Lenten appeal, held fundraisers for CAFOD and enjoyed organising the Macmillan coffee morning. Locally, pupils support the Finchley food bank. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. They spoke very passionately about their charity work; it is clear it is having a great impact on how they see themselves as carrying out their Christian duties. Pupils were proud to be 'Young Interpreters' to help pupils for whom English is not the first language. They acknowledged the need

to help others settle into a new environment. Pupils clearly enjoy learning about other faiths and spoke knowledgeably about their visit to a synagogue. They also enjoyed learning about Islam and Hinduism. Moral issues in society are discussed in RE lessons and pupils clearly enjoyed their lessons about Windrush Day, Go Green Day and Black History month.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

St. Theresa's has an outstanding relationship with its parents and wider community. Parents are encouraged to participate in school events, there is parent group for each year group, and a parent expressed that 'in this school, we are close and friendly like a family.' One parent commented on how her children who have a mixed faith heritage are inspired by their learning in religious education. She told inspectors how her family greatly appreciates the work the school does on other faiths and how learning in religious education has inspired the family to progress to Catholic High School. Parents of pupils with additional needs commented to inspectors that their families are very well supported at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School. A parent commented that 'this is a caring, nurturing school where all the teachers know the pupils and their families.' Parents value the good communication from school, its organisation and how the school involves them in charity work to make it a meaningful whole family experience. The school recognises the parish as the main experience of the Church for Catholics and is working with the parish priest to explore ways of enticing families back to Mass after the recent pandemic.

The school actively participates in the services offered by Westminster Education Service and works closely with their linked diocesan adviser who has delivered training to secure improvements in their new curriculum. The head regularly attends diocesan training and deanery meetings to keep abreast of current developments.

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

is outstanding

St. Theresa's new leadership team is fully committed to the Church's mission in education and has demonstrated this by robustly improving their religious education offer. Their mission statement, 'We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God' is shared and understood by all in the school community. The leadership team is reflective, self-evaluation is coherent, accurate and honest. This team, including governors is a strong force, rigorous in its monitoring and committed to excellence. The recently developed prayer room is used regularly by pupils; they enjoy its peacefulness and the opportunity it offers for prayer. Pupils enjoy volunteering to work in the prayer room at lunchtime. In a short period of time this leadership team has found engaging ways to offer staff and pupils a variety of opportunities to experience the richness of a Catholic way of living. As a post Covid response, a Sister provides counselling on two mornings a week, and also provides spiritual support for pupils. This is an outstanding response from this Catholic community which is committed to the education of young people with a vision for discipleship for life. Staff are fully engaged in supporting the values and ethos of the school. It is evident that they are fully committed to supporting each other and the leadership to develop this truly vibrant and engaging Catholic community. The pupils' relationships with each other are very positive as are those between members of staff.

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

- Promote pupil leadership in planning, preparation and celebration of liturgy and worship.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Finchley.
- The school serves the parishes of St. Philip the Apostle (Finchley Central), St. Albans (North Finchley), St. Mary's (East Finchley) and St. Edward the Confessor (Golders Green).
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 80%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 9% and from other faiths is 7%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith (8%).
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 83%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 18 pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 10 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. (National average 33.9% July 2021).
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average – 90 pupils; 51%. (National average 20.9% July 2021).
- There are 25 pupils claiming free school meals (14%); this is below average. (National average July 2021 21.6%).
- 30 pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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| Department for Education Number | 3023507 |
| Unique Reference Number | 101335 |
| Local Authority | Barnet |

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 -11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 117 |
| The appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Fiona Kerin |
| Headteacher | Miss Barbara Costa |
| Telephone number | 0208 346 8826 |
| Website | www.sttheresas.barnetmail.net |
| Email address | office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 February 2016 |
| Grades from previous inspection: | |
| Classroom religious education | Good |
| The Catholic life of the school | Outstanding |

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one act of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Ms Evelyn Ward

Lead Inspector

Miss Jade Cahill

Associate Inspector

Miss Susan Grace

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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