



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School**

Luckington Rd. Monks Park, Filton, Bristol

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DfES Number: 8033438

URN: 109269

Head teacher: Mrs Samantha Land

Chair of Governors: Mrs Alexandra Flaherty-Weeks

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**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

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Date of inspection: 1-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017  
Date of previous inspection: December 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington  
Additional Inspector: Mrs B McLaughlin

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## Description of the school

St. Teresa's is a single form entry Catholic primary school with 211 pupils on roll, 90% of whom are Catholic. The school serves the parishes of St. Teresa's, Filton, and St. Vincent's, Southmead. Ethnic minority groups, including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) make up 53% of the total and SEN pupils 6.2%. The level of prior attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectation.

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

**Grade 1**

This is an outstanding school because:

- The school has outstanding governance and leadership, which sustains and nurtures its vibrant Catholic life and ethos. It is an inclusive and welcoming school where pupils and their families, from all faiths and none, are warmly invited into the school community.
- The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They demonstrate real care and respect for each other and have an open, positive attitude to learning.
- The pupils, particularly in the chaplaincy team, make an excellent contribution towards Catholic life and the pupils' response to the prayer life of the school is outstanding.
- The achievement of pupils is outstanding due to good and outstanding teaching.

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good**

- The governors and senior leadership are fully committed to the continual improvement and enhancement of the Catholic life of the school, evident in the positive impact of well- embedded structures of monitoring and support.
- The school works with the local Newman partnership of Catholic schools, with its mutual support and sharing of best practice, and this contributes towards ongoing improvement
- The areas for improvement noted in the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The school has built on its secure processes for assessment to include pupil self-assessment, as well as ongoing feedback to pupils on next steps for improvement. The God Matters scheme has been successfully mapped and translated into the whole ethos and practice of the school.

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

- Develop the role of RE coordinator, as distinct from that of headteacher, to support teachers more closely, especially in deepening their specialist RE subject knowledge.
- Encourage further all pupils' ownership of, and response to, their learning and worship.

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## How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 1

### a) The extent to which pupils understand, contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Catholic life, and the pupils' contribution to it, is a real strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the distinctive nature of the school and express fluently what it means for them. One pupil said: 'We try to follow St. Teresa's Little Way. We do it because we love God. God is the Father and our school is God's family – not like other schools'. Another said: 'Not many children have the chance to express their faith... we work together to understand our faith'. Their understanding is articulated clearly in their conversation and in the beautifully presented class Reflection Books, which record their insightful responses to the school's values. They have regular opportunities to interpret and comment on the school's mission – 'Inspiring each other to excellence, in the Light of Christ'.
- The chaplaincy team, comprising a significant number of pupils, take the lead in promoting the Catholic life of the school and have drawn up an action plan based on the Bishop's theme of Mission and Communion. They have set up reflection stations in the classrooms and school communal areas, and are developing the skills of planning and organising their own liturgies, class and whole school assemblies. Prayer sessions for parents have been organised and the use of reflection and prayer bags has strengthened family spiritual life.
- The pupils can talk easily about the impact that the prayer life of the school has on their view of life and their relationship with others, understanding the links between faith and action, reflected also in British values. 'We try to set an example like the Good Samaritan...it doesn't matter what religion people are, we should show respect and mercy' said one pupil. Their behaviour makes an outstanding contribution to the ethos of the school, for not only is it positive and caring, but it generates a quite remarkable sense of joyfulness and goodness in living out the values promoted by the school.
- As they move up the school, pupils increasingly take on a range of responsibilities for the younger children. They are alert to the needs of others and exercise their generosity by reaching out to others in the local and global community, such as CAFOD, Syrian Refugees charity, Epilepsy UK, Fair Trade, and the Samaritan's Purse. The school choir has sung for Children in Need, and joined with St. Bede's and other schools in the Newman Partnership.
- Pupils have a genuine respect for those from different backgrounds. This is due to a growing understanding of different faiths, which they have touched on in

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RE. There is a real sense of belonging and respect for others, regardless of faith or none, and this is an outstanding aspect of this warm, inclusive school. The wide cultural diversity allows for a fruitful interchange of cultural traditions and values.

- The links with the parish are strong. Pupils are involved in parish liturgies as servers or readers and the sacramental preparation programme is led from the parish with the support of the school. A significant number of parishioners and parents join the pupils in their assemblies and liturgies.

#### **b) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- The quality of pupils' learning and achievement is consistently good, with a significant number exceeding expectation. Most enter the school with expected levels of knowledge and understanding. The initial literacy barrier for EAL pupils is rapidly removed so that all can access the curriculum, especially in the Early Years, and have an excellent introduction to RE through story, prayer and reflection. By the end of Key Stage 1, achievement is good and often better than good.
- Progress through Key Stage 2 is sustained at the same level and a growing depth of understanding is evident in the thoughtful and extended writing particularly in Year 5 and Year 6 books. Where on occasion teachers' own specialist subject knowledge and understanding is not yet secure enough to lead their pupils to a deeper understanding, this is made up for by the outstanding contribution of the teaching assistants who are proactive partners in the lessons. Other groups such as SEND and disadvantaged pupils, make the same good and better progress because of planned interventions and teaching assistant support.
- The pupils' ability to learn independently, and with others is being encouraged with more research type tasks, so that they will develop the skills to actively seek to improve their own knowledge. Feedback from pupils on what would help them learn better is to be encouraged. One pupil suggested that the teachers could perhaps spend more time reinforcing key words so that they could move forward more securely in their understanding of a topic.
- The pupils' ability to think spiritually and morally is remarkably cogent and secure, so obviously part of their lives, and so evident in their facility in expressing the connection between what one believes and how one acts. Visiting speakers remark on the children's demeanour and engagement. Year 5 pupils were chosen, because of their evident spirituality, to partner a visiting Maltese De La Salle school group on a retreat at Kintbury.
- Their growing ability to understand and critically reflect on our faith story, and that of others, is evident in discussion. Their understanding of multi faith Britain is covered in their learning about other faiths in God Matters, but the school

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acknowledges there needs to be more depth and focus on the main world religions, perhaps by timetabling a World Faiths week.

**c) How well pupils lead, respond to and participate in the Prayer Life of the School**

- All pupils irrespective of faith background participate fully, and feel included, in the prayer life of the school. They show reverence, attentiveness, and willingness to play their part. They are ready and eager to be more involved in the initiation, organising, and presentation of their liturgies and assemblies, not just being willing participants in adult- led collective worship. The class reflection books in Key Stage 2 are beautifully presented with many examples, in writing, art, and photographs of pupil involvement in planning class liturgies, their prayers, and reflections.
- The whole school (and parish) Mass for All Saints, falling during the inspection, was well prepared and beautifully presented, with clear readings, immediate confident Mass responses, joyful enthusiastic singing, and dance. All the children even the youngest were attentive and reverent and one felt their whole hearts were in this uplifting and grace- giving celebration.
- Pupils have the example and role modelling of the chaplaincy team, with their high profile around the school. They are role models in leadership and taking on the preparation for worship. All pupils have the opportunity to lead class reflections. Last year each class took parts of the Stations of the Cross, while Year 4 and 5 class families led the Service in Honour of Mary. The pupils value many prayer opportunities during the school day.
- They have a good, progressive knowledge of the traditional prayers and have some understanding of the ritual and prayer different from their own through their study of the other major faiths. They compose their own heartfelt prayers and reflections, displayed on the prayer tables. They react with the prayer stations and can sometimes be found quietly praying.
- The sacramental and liturgical life of the school is reflected in the assemblies, the class and whole school Masses, and the celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year of the life of Jesus, and the saints. Through these, the pupils have developed a good understanding of the sacramental life of the Church.

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## How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 1

a) **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- The governing body is a knowledgeable and practical influence in the Catholic life of the school. They meet all the statutory, canonical, and diocesan requirements fully. They are acquainted with and have reflected on the diocesan plan, how it can influence the school and this has been successfully carried through. Leaders and governors very effectively promote, nurture and sustain the Catholic ethos of the school as their primary concern and care, and are able to articulate it and share this with the staff and parents.
- The impact of this promotion was expressed by a visiting French Carmelite nun: 'I was very impressed by the quality of the atmosphere that the children breathe and especially by the love of God that you shine forth through all the activities'. The headteacher is an inspiring role model for both governors and staff, and she is the key driver in sustaining the outstanding quality of Catholic education in this school.
- Leaders and governors take advantage of diocesan training for themselves and the staff, for example, leadership training. A course in Theology for Teachers has been a supportive and inspiring experience. Regular Inset is also an opportunity to evaluate aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Although not all Catholic, the staff are totally committed and eager to learn more about the values of the Faith. They pray frequently together and go on an annual retreat.
- Robust and reliable processes ensure that the evaluation of Catholic life is accurate. There is frequent detailed monitoring by the Mission and Ethos Committee, as well as the Catholicity group, who together with the head teacher, report to the full governing body. The school also asks parents, staff and pupils, through discussions and questionnaires, their views and suggestions for improvement. Governors are taken on learning walks specifically to assess the Catholic environment of the school corridors and classrooms.
- Provision for staff induction and in-service training in order to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission is excellent. Staff spirituality is well supported with staff taking time to pray together regularly. Links with the parish are strong and the newly arrived parish priest, is a supportive and welcome presence in the school. There is at least one Inset day annually devoted specifically to Catholic life and spirituality.

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- Leaders are open to advice from outside agencies, including the diocese, and share a real determination to move the school forward in close and fruitful collaboration with the other Catholic schools in the Newman partnership.

**b) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the curriculum for Religious Education and relationship education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- Leaders and governors use the existing data and monitoring information fully and effectively to evaluate the school's performance in order to plan future improvements. This is an area which has real focus and has measurable objectives. Governors receive regular RE reports through the headteacher, and are a supportive but challenging voice. Learning walks around the school, lesson observations, and book scrutinies take place frequently, with any weaknesses and obstacles to learning noted and followed up.
- The RE subject development plan is rightly focussed on improving pupils' learning, and making sure that curriculum planning and design contributes to more effective teaching and learning. Staff training is seen as a priority in the teaching of RE.
- Teachers appreciate this practical guidance, through planning advice, but also through the modelling of good practice, and the presence in their lessons of Catholic teaching assistants and the modelling and experience of the head teacher who is also the RE coordinator. The school is aware that these two roles need to become discrete, with a dedicated RE coordinator post created as soon as possible.
- The school has initiated joint RE moderation with other schools in the Newman partnership, as well as joint teaching assistant training. Two other Catholic schools have visited to receive support in sharing effective practice in assessment.

### a) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- Teaching is consistently good with outstanding features, and is effective in enthusing pupils so that they learn extremely well. Where teachers are new to Catholic education and RE, lessons are still very effective because of the tremendous support from Catholic teaching assistants, and the inquiring interest and exemplary behaviour for learning of the pupils. Added to this is the high quality professional development the teachers receive and their own eagerness and determination to deepen their subject knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have a good rapport with the pupils and there are many examples of skilful questioning which checks understanding and challenges appropriately, especially the more able pupils. The structure of learning, employing trigger words, enhances learning and reinforces religious literacy.
- There is a growing, successful focus on learning styles which encourages independent learning, and a good range of resources and activities. Where teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and intellectual effort, the pupils rise to the challenge and are able to contribute their own arguments and opinions both in discussion and reflective writing.
- The marking of pupils' work is helpful in showing them how to improve, and pointing towards next steps. The impact on progress over time is most effective when the teachers' comments are challenging and elicit a more extended, thoughtful response from the pupils, which requires real intellectual effort. The pupils are given time to respond to these comments and self-assessment sheets have been introduced to encourage pupils to take more ownership of their own learning. The impact on progress over time is becoming evident.
- RE data accurately measures and tracks progress, and is used successfully to enable less able pupils to make smaller steps, and used effectively in lesson planning to meet all pupils' learning needs.

### b) The extent to which the Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The curriculum provides continuity and progression between key stages to ensure that pupils, whatever their starting points, are able to make consistent progress. The syllabus is now fully mapped and is reflected in the daily life and ethos of the school. The schemes of work are being interpreted with more creativity and imagination in order to increase the pupils' enjoyment of learning, and to meet learning objectives which are relevant and challenging for every pupil.

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- The RE curriculum meets all Bishops' Conference requirements. It is broad and balanced so that pupils can explore and develop their own values and beliefs. They explore themes such as fairness, compassion and injustice, which they then link to the objects of their charity fundraising, and outreach to others in society who are more needy.
  - The study of other world faiths could be given more importance in this inclusive school, not because tolerance and respect for others' cultural and religious differences is lacking, but to provide a more secure factual base to enrich their understanding of these belief systems.
  - Provision for sex and relationship education is in place and approved by the Governing Body adhering to diocesan guidelines. The 'In the Beginning' programme is followed up to Year 5, and then the 'This is my body' series in Year 6.
  - The curriculum design promotes spiritual, moral and vocational development and is taught through the lens of the Faith. Pupils have the opportunity to go on retreats, and to join other pupils from the other Catholic schools in the Newman partnership. The sacramental preparation programme for First Holy Communion is run in the parish with support from the school.
  - There are many opportunities for pupils to exercise their care and concern for others through charities which they organise themselves, such as singing carols in Southmead Hospital and Ash Lea Court Care Home.

**c) The quality of the Prayer life provided by the School**

- The prayer life provided by the school is outstanding. It is fully inclusive and joyful, as well as being monitored and evaluated for its quality and impact. Prayer punctuates the school day and is part of every celebration. The prayer stations around the school are attractive and well used by many children. The church is some distance from the school, but many pupils serve, read or contribute to music at Masses on Sundays.
- Pupils experience the regular Masses and the celebration of the feasts in the Church's calendar, as well as the special seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. The annual class Masses are attended by the parents and carers. There are also opportunities to learn the traditional Catholic devotions such as the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. The prayer methods and styles used by the school are age appropriate.
- There are colourful and thought provoking displays around the school which remind the whole community of the liturgical cycle, the topics the pupils are currently studying, and are supportive of the school's vibrant Catholic life. They are attractive, and reinforce the mission and values of the school encapsulated in the Values for Life scheme.

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- Parents and carers attend Mass and assemblies when they can, and the provision for the engagement of parents, local parishes and other faith communities is excellent. The school sends home Prayer Bags with the children to encourage and develop the spirituality of the whole family. These have been very successful especially during Advent and Lent, and a number of parents report their children leading the whole family in reflection and prayer.

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## Summary of Parental Questionnaires

All 77 returned parental questionnaires were unanimous in their very positive opinions about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

*'It is the best Catholic school and we instantly felt like family. It wasn't the easier option for us work-wise, but we are so happy with the school. My daughter thoroughly enjoys school – she could not wait to return after half term!'*

*A school that treats each pupil as an individual with different needs, but focuses on a common goal'.*

*'The school is a family where every child matters and is important. There is a strong Catholic ethos of love and care. The school is about the whole child ensuring high expectations for education but also in building a relationship with God, so all flourish in learning and faith'.*

*'Teachers... developing the child's sense of values, respect, love, and passing knowledge to them about Jesus and making them sensitive to other people's pain'.*

*'The Catholic ethos is lived and breathed by every adult and child'.*

*'The school always emphasises the importance of families, children learn to look after each other, value and encourage everybody'.*

*'The inclusivity that the school creates is very special and important... part of a wider school family and church family'.*

*'St. Teresa's educates the children well and the school recognises the responsibility to encourage the children to grow in the Faith'.*