



# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

URN: 145997

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

18–19 September 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

2

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement since the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- The Catholic life and mission of the school is clearly evident in the highly positive relationships and the good manners demonstrated by all members of the school community.
- The school's physical environment fully reflects its Catholic identity; beautiful displays ensure a warm welcoming environment in which to grow and learn.
- The passion of the headteacher and colleagues for the success and well-being of all at St Teresa's is evident in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education, and in many cases better than they do in other core subjects.
- Beautiful prayer spaces provide opportunities for pupils and staff to enjoy quiet time to sit and reflect or to talk to God.

## What the school needs to improve

- To design and implement a robust, rigorous and systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation which will lead to a positive impact across all areas of Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.
- To ensure that pupils have a full understanding of the theology underpinning Catholic Social Teaching.
- To support pupils in their planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy leading to them being able to take on tasks independently.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Pupils at St Teresa's are happy and confident. They know they are part of a very special community with a mission to follow the example of their patron saint, St Teresa. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of helping to develop the Catholic life and mission of the school in their roles as school councillors or liturgy leaders. They speak confidently about their fund-raising events such as pyjama days, cake sales and the Big Lent Walk to support local, national and international charities, such as Harp, Cancer Research and Cafod. School councillors were proud of their efforts to avoid food waste by distributing the left-over healthy snacks provided in Key Stage 1 to pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils know that everyone is unique and special and created equally; this is clearly evidenced in the relationships across the whole school community. The high levels of care and respect shown to everyone are seen in many ways throughout the school, especially at break times and lunch times when older pupils can be seen supporting their younger peers. Pupils appreciate that they have responsibilities not just to their own community but to the global community and they were very keen to talk about their Catholic Social Teaching assembly from a member of Cafod and what they themselves were doing to promote and support Cafod's work. However, they do not as yet have a full understanding of the theology behind the principles. Behaviour around the school is good.

The school mission statement, 'By following in the footsteps of St Teresa, we share Gospel values' is fully understood by the whole school community. It is widely displayed around the school site and is a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church. Everyone in school fully lives the principles of the mission and Christ is truly present in the school where everyone is welcomed in a genuine spirit of hospitality. Excellent pastoral care means that pupils feel safe and secure in an extremely positive and loving community. A counsellor from

the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society supports both children and families, and a member of staff is currently undertaking training to become an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant to further support pupils and families. School leaders ensure that the positive inclusive welcome displayed means that all are well cared for with dignity and compassion, especially those in need. The physical environment is a true reflection of the school's Catholic character. Beautiful displays contribute to providing an atmosphere conducive to Catholic life and mission. A striking image - the Year of Mercy Key - displaying the names of staff, pupils and governors is added testimony to the charisma of St Teresa's. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is well planned and meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. It is faithful to the teachings of the Church and presents a holistic vision of the human person.

School leaders ensure that Christ and Gospel values are at the heart of this family-orientated school, demonstrating a deep commitment to the people they serve. They recognise fully that the continuing development of Catholic life and mission is a core leadership responsibility. The school has a flourishing relationship with the local parish community and the parish priest speaks highly of the school's leadership and the way the Catholic faith is lived throughout the school. Parents are kept well informed of school life and mission through regular newsletters and social media posts; parental views are valued and welcomed. Parents who responded to the survey and those who met the inspection team were overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent commented, 'It is a wonderful, inclusive school in which the nurturing and supportive learning environment is underpinned by faith and Catholic principles. We feel that by joining St Teresa's we have gained an extended family.' Governors visit the school to undertake a number of duties : visiting lessons, joining classes for worship, looking at books and talking to pupils. They are kept informed of what is happening in school during full governing body meetings. The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission is happening but as yet is not as robust and rigorous as it could be.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

2

#### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and their journey through school enables them to grow in knowledge, understanding and skill. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make progress and achieve well. Pupils are developing their confidence when talking about their learning and are beginning to use subject specific vocabulary in both their writing and discussions. During a lesson on the Nicene Creed younger pupils were able to discuss, in an age-appropriate way and with great confidence, the concept of God creating all things visible and invisible. They supported one another when fellow pupils became confused as to whether dinosaurs were visible or invisible saying they were visible because you could touch them, invisible things were things like love and kindness which you could not touch but knew they were there. Most pupils produce work of a good standard, and take pride in the presentation of their work, but this is not yet consistent. Pupils take account of what adults say to improve the quality of their work. They enjoy religious education lessons and know how well they are doing through positive teacher comments and being awarded house points for their efforts. Attainment in religious education is in line with, and in many cases, better than that in other core subjects.

As a result of good subject knowledge and practice, teachers demonstrate high levels of confidence when delivering the religious education curriculum. They fully appreciate that religious education has a huge impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and this appreciation is clearly communicated to pupils. Teachers plan together and deliver well-constructed lessons which build on pupils' prior knowledge and learning. Teachers provide a wide variety of learning activities for pupils to enjoy, and which allow them to showcase their understanding, these include role play, responding to art as well as writing. In one lesson pupils rose to the challenge of playing King Solomon in a 'hot seating' task, and read their own

wise words inspired by one of his proverbs. Questioning is purposeful and helps staff to assess pupil understanding. Any misconceptions are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' efforts are celebrated widely, with pupils talking excitedly about the Friday celebration assembly, and shared with parents via the weekly newsletters. Additional adults are for the most part deployed well. Careful collaboration with class teachers and training ensures that they know how best to support pupils' individual needs and so provide them with positive learning experiences.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. They also ensure that it has full parity with other core subjects in terms of funding, resources and time allocation. Online resources are used effectively to enhance its delivery. The headteacher, who is also the subject coordinator, and her senior colleagues share a clear vision and passion for the subject which is shared with and by other staff in school. As a result, staff feel well supported and confident in seeking out advice when necessary, and in providing lessons which enable pupils to progress sequentially through the curriculum. Staff new to the school spoke of the invaluable support they received from senior leaders and colleagues when planning lessons. School leaders, governors and members of the trust ensure that professional development opportunities are readily available for staff both from within the trust and from the diocese. This ensures that staff continue to develop their expertise and practice. School leaders recognise that whilst monitoring and evaluation does take place, it is not as yet as systematically established and embedded as they would like.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

**Provision**

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Pupils enjoy and participate fully in opportunities for prayer and liturgy. These opportunities are frequent and allow the children to experience a variety of ways of praying. Pupils clearly understand that praying is speaking to God. During the inspection, pupils were observed praying using traditional prayers such as the Our Father, spontaneous prayers such as, 'I hope God is with us every single day. Amen.' 'Thank you for the hippos in the zoo'. Pupils equally know different ways to pray and shared that, 'just sitting outside on a bench and being thankful' is a prayer. Singing is clearly a strength of the school and forms part of all prayer and liturgy. This is something the pupils clearly value and feel uplifted by. On one occasion, 'I love the hymns!' was spontaneously exclaimed by pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with scripture passages and can link them to the liturgical year. Understanding, and being able to share key aspects of the liturgical year, is a developing and improving area. Pupils enjoy undertaking roles to support prayer and liturgy and are becoming more confident and adept at doing this. Pupils serve at Mass and are supported well by the parish priest. Reading at both whole school and class assemblies, gives pupils the opportunity to contribute. They now need to become more skilled and involved in preparing these events independently and, then evaluating how they have gone. Currently the head teacher supports pupils with this and has some lovely resources to guide them. The pupils know the daily norms of prayer within St Teresa's and take this pattern home, which enhances and spreads the good work undertaken by the school. The parish priest recognises and appreciates the important role the school carries out regarding prayer and liturgy. Prayer and liturgy at St Teresa's has a daily pattern and follows with fidelity the liturgical seasons of Catholic tradition. All staff are good role models, and endeavour to choose scripture which is appropriate and allows pupils to participate fully and actively. Both pupils and staff use their talents and gifts to make prayer and liturgy experiences meaningful. This can be seen in a number of ways, in particular the

beautifully ordered and well-kept school, the attention to detail given to the sacred prayer space, the orderly and organised classrooms with appropriate prayer focal areas, and the delightfully illustrated and adorned walls - all of which are clearly given time, care and love. The school is also fortunate to be located next door to St Teresa's Church which allows for weekly attendance at a morning Mass. The school also works very well with families in terms of prayer and liturgy. Parents told the inspectors that 'the school is very inclusive'; 'teachers are kind, supportive and very good listeners'; 'we feel very welcome at everything'; and that 'the school is like a family that we belong to, it's lovely and we would recommend it to anyone.'

All leaders are committed to working towards achieving the best outcomes for St Teresa's. They take time to consider the needs and capacity of the pupils and for the school's prayer and liturgy policy to be accessible, building on the skills required for pupils to advance their learning year on year. St Teresa's ensures that the school calendar is timetabled to allow opportunity for all liturgical celebrations, including holy days, St Teresa's feast day and Family Day. School leaders work hard to make sure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is regularly offered with a governor leading the 'I am Sorry Service' for the younger years. All leaders review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. However, this now needs to be more systematic. Pupil views need to be sought alongside other stakeholders' so that thorough and more meaningful evaluation occurs.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Click or tap here to enter text.
School unique reference number (URN)	145997
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8813467
Full postal address of the school	St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Ashingdon Road, Rochford, SS4 1RF
School phone number	001702547918
Headteacher	Joanna Hickey
Chair of governors	Natasha Morrison
School Website	www.strcs.net
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Assisi Catholic Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Angela Podmore  
Sheila Birtles

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement