CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111388

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

30 September 2026 – 01 October 2026

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 diocesan directives	No
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Compliance Statement

- Directive 12. The school does not have an appropriate induction programme for all new members of staff.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- Gospel values permeate everyday life at St Theresa's.
- There is a welcoming inclusive environment for pupils and their families.
- Behaviour is outstanding so pupils enjoy learning and are happy at school.
- In religious education, good teaching strategies and effective support systems established throughout the school enable pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- The passionate headteacher is supported by a dedicated staff to ensure every pupil is nurtured and feels valued within this compassionate and caring environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish an appropriate induction programme for all new members of staff which emphasises the distinctive nature of Catholic education and complements the ongoing formation for all staff.
- Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation programme for religious education and prayer and liturgy that identifies strengths, areas for development, curriculum professional development and formation, and impact.
- Develop and embed an effective assessment system that accurately tracks pupils' attainment and progress in religious education, identifies gaps in learning at the earliest opportunity and informs teaching and learning.

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

2

Pupil outcomes

2

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

Provision

2

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

Leadership

2

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

Pupils understand Gospel values and confidently talk about forgiveness, kindness, compassion and patience as ways that help them to feel valued by each other. They know about St Theresa, who is their school saint. 'We follow in her footsteps and she gives us blessings'. They know they are loved by God and explain that being made in the image and likeness of God means 'God made us to be like him and care for each other'. Pupils are proud that behaviour is good in school because 'we respect each other'. They also know that when things go wrong they 'can solve it', sometimes with 'help from a trusted adult'. The topic of Creation is giving them the opportunity to learn more about everyone's responsibility to look after our world, however pupils do not have many opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities. They enjoy fundraising during Lent and at Harvest time, and links with the school in Uganda help them to understand that their actions can make a positive difference. Engaging with the local community also reinforces this, for example visiting residential homes with a local music group shares the joy of music between generations.

Staff understand that the mission statement and Gospel values guide their daily activities. To ensure this understanding is nourished, there are opportunities during the year for staff and pupils to grow spiritually and morally through a range of prayer, liturgies and invitations to respond in action. Because of this there is a genuine welcome for all and caring relationships permeate through the school day creating a calm, safe place where pupils are nurtured. Staff are excellent role models for pupils, and parents acknowledge how sensitively support is offered to them and their children when facing difficult times. The pastoral team are supported by all staff who readily fulfil their role in nurturing all pupils. Therefore pastoral

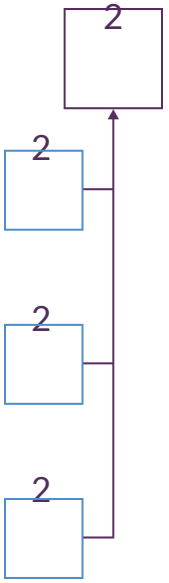
care is a strength at St Theresa's and is valued by parents and the local community. The displays and artefacts in the main entrance clearly identify that this is a Catholic school, however this is not apparent in communal areas or in classrooms. Although teachers give time for pupils to reflect on the mission statement at the start of each academic year, other stakeholders do not reflect on this regularly. The school uses *LIfe to the Full*, to fulfil diocesan requirements for teaching relationship and health education.

Leaders and governors ensure all policies and procedures clearly underpin the Catholic identity of St Theresa's and they do their best to establish links with the parish community, particularly attending Mass in church throughout the year and with a carol service at Christmas. This is appreciated by the parishioners, who often comment on the respectful way pupils participate and engage in prayer and singing. Leaders and governors understand the importance of building a meaningful partnership with parents and the majority of responses indicate full support for all the school does for their children. The response from parents and carers is good when they are invited to attend Christmas services, class celebrations and workshops. However there are not as many times for families to engage in the prayer life of their children. Leaders and governors are dedicated to supporting and developing the Catholic life and mission of St Theresa's, however there is no regular or formal approach to evaluating this important aspect of the school to inform planned improvements. New staff are well supported by the senior leaders and colleagues, so they understand how they can contribute to the Catholic mission of St Theresa's, however there is no planned induction programme in place.

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

Provision

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

Leadership

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

Pupils are developing an understanding of the *Religious Education Directory* as they progress through the *Vine and Branches* scheme. Pupils use some specific religious vocabulary to reflect on what they learn and most can articulate how this influences their lives. For example, when linking the 'dignity of human beings' to the Creation story, Lower Key Stage 2 pupils explain this as showing 'compassion and forgiveness' to others to help them 'feel respected'. Teachers offer many opportunities for pupils to express their own views about what they are learning, and from the earliest years pupils respond with enthusiasm. Pupils work independently, with partners or as a class group, demonstrating their ability to concentrate well which leads to good progress from their starting points and outstanding behaviour in all year groups. Pupils in Early Years learn about God's love for them through practical activities and by Upper Key Stage 2 they confidently express opinions about which is the most important of the Ten Commandments and the 'power of choice given to us' by God. Pupils enjoy their lessons and engage in activities with enthusiasm. They are given time to respond to teachers' marking, but this does not clearly help them to understand how they can improve their work. Although the pupils are challenged with questions during whole class learning, the individual and group tasks are not challenging some groups of pupils.

Teachers have worked hard to understand the *Religious Education Directory* and are skilled at asking appropriate questions to help pupils to develop their knowledge. However, teachers do not always follow up answers with further explanations or expand the answer to deepen pupils' understanding or make links with previous learning. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and of the pupils, therefore they not only convey the importance of religious

education as a subject, but also as a guide for daily life. They also make explicit links to the Gospel through times of prayer as well as during lessons, which means spiritual and moral development is a strength. Teachers' lessons are carefully planned to ensure pupils progress through the *Vine and Branches* curriculum and opportunities for discerning questions are regularly given. However, there is not always enough coverage of the topic to make links and deepen understanding. Because of the teachers' commitment to provide the best teaching and learning opportunities for pupils, they have the confidence and a firm foundation on which to further their good knowledge.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is treated as a core subject and is timetabled accordingly during the week. All school policies reflect this and staff recognise the importance of the subject. Leaders know and understand the needs of teachers when planning curriculum professional development. The subject leader attends diocesan courses and leads training in school. Teachers also meet with local Catholic schools to plan and moderate the pupils' work. Training includes peer coaching, modelling and moderating books in staff meetings. As a result teachers are confident about teaching religious education and respond enthusiastically to training provided. There is a trusting relationship between leaders and staff so individual needs can be supported to deliver quality religious education lessons throughout the school. However the monitoring and evaluation programme does not highlight in sufficient detail how to improve attainment for all pupils. The subject leader is supported by a dedicated staff. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning and successfully guides teachers to deepen their understanding and embed the *Vine and Branches* curriculum. However, governors' self-evaluation of religious education is not sufficiently planned to consider the strategic development of this subject and well-being of all staff.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

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

3

All pupils participate well in celebrations of the word and in a variety of planned liturgies throughout the year, and in some year groups pupils engage prayerfully in these experiences. They confidently join in community prayer and praying in song is particularly joyful, for example during the Mass to celebrate St Theresa's feast day and at the popular Christmas carol concert. They can talk about some parts of the liturgical year but do not have a thorough understanding of the shape or significance of associated prayers. Pupils experience a variety of ways of praying, which includes reflecting on scripture, silent reflection and writing their own spontaneous prayers. The class prayer book records the meaningful prayers written by the pupils and highlights the experiences pupils enjoy with staff in their own class. Pupils willingly undertake specific ministries, and are guided closely by the teachers in all age groups. A number of pupils are starting to evaluate whole school celebrations of the word. Pupils enjoy the different times for prayer during the day and because of this they understand how prayer can help them in their daily lives. These times of prayer contribute to the calm and respectful atmosphere experienced in St Theresa's.

Significant moments and feast days are celebrated in school or in the parish church throughout the year. Staff provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to pray during the day and because of this prayer is central to school life. Scripture is chosen carefully by staff and is appropriate for the age of pupils. For example the same scripture may be used in different age groups, but the focus and meaning is explored at an appropriate level for each year group. Staff are committed to providing quality times of prayer for pupils, however some staff need support when planning celebrations of the word to ensure there is a progression of

skills and creativity to engage all pupils as they move through the school. Staff make every effort to provide a welcoming space for prayer which is different from class lessons. This may mean moving to a different room to create a reflective atmosphere for pupils and staff. The grounds around the school provide a rich opportunity to experience prayer in nature and this is identified on the school's action plan. The school continues to look for ways to involve parents in the prayer life of their children.

There is a policy for prayer and liturgy in place, however it does not include expectations for St Theresa's school. Therefore it is not a useful reference document for staff to use when preparing celebrations of the word in their classes. The prayer and liturgy coordinator knows how to progressively build up skills of participation and engagement in prayer and liturgy, but there is not a clear strategy in place to fully address differentiation by age or capacity. There is an annual plan of provision which ensures all feasts and significant moments in the liturgical year are celebrated. The subject leader attends diocesan courses and provides training and individual support for teachers, who work hard to ensure pupils experience quality times of prayer. However, allocated resources for prayer and liturgy are limited. This means the focus is on training, modelling and support for staff, who are committed to furthering their understanding of the *Prayer and liturgy Directory.* Leaders and governors carry out some evaluations of prayer and liturgy, but they do not have effective and regular systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of training on the quality of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Theresa's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111388
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8963646
Full postal address of the school	Kipling Road, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5UU
School phone number	01244 470860
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Lisa Holland
Chair of Governors	Mr Bernard Larkin
School Website	www.st-theresas.cheshire.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 March 2020
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Susan Lyonette	Lead
Jean O'Keeffe	

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