

# St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2TD

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors responded swiftly to a drop in standards in 2018, and their decisive actions are ensuring that pupils are now back on track to make good progress.
- Pupils' individual needs are known and understood well by teachers. Teachers plan for learning while taking account of these needs so that an increasing proportion of pupils make the progress of which they are capable. There is potential for even more pupils to make stronger progress.
- A few teachers do not regularly check that pupils understand what they are learning.
- Much work has been done on improving the quality of teaching of mathematics, particularly of arithmetic. This remains a focus for the school.
- Assessment systems are well established to monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are at various stages of development for the foundation subjects.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is high. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have positive relationships with their teachers and with each other.
- The curriculum is creative and builds on pupils' previously acquired knowledge and skills. It is carefully thought out and is regularly reviewed for its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Parents and carers, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school, although some parents rightly feel that communication with them could be improved.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values, which tie in closely with the school's own values.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet.
- The early years provision is good. Children settle in quickly and make good progress in readiness for Year 1. The quality of the outdoor provision does not yet match the resources on offer in the indoor classroom.
- Governors visit the school regularly to test out for themselves what is reported to them by the headteacher. They are committed to ensuring that pupils receive a good-quality education.
- The local authority and the diocese provide effective support and challenge to leaders at all levels when required to do so. This support is welcomed by the school.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan learning activities that consistently provide pupils with higher levels of challenge so that more pupils work at greater depth
  - making sure that, in lessons, teachers check regularly that pupils understand what they are learning
  - maintaining the focus on the teaching of mathematics, particularly arithmetic
  - establishing secure systems to measure pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.
- Improve communications with parents.
- Improve the quality of the early years outdoor provision.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders responded quickly and appropriately to the drop in standards in 2018. Together with the governing body, they produced a suitably sharp and concise improvement plan which rightly prioritises the key areas of concern. This plan is monitored and reviewed for impact at regular intervals. The impact of leaders' actions is reaping rewards, and standards have clearly improved.
- The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is supported through helpful examples to support the school's judgements. Leaders have not shied away from identifying what needs to be developed or improved. Leaders told inspectors, 'We are a leadership team that doesn't sit still.' Inspectors found sufficient evidence to support the vast majority of leaders' judgements.
- Due to the small size of the school, most teachers have a middle leadership role and willingly take on board the responsibility this involves. As subject leaders, they are very much aware of the priorities for their subjects and feel well supported and challenged by their line managers.
- Leaders' shift of emphasis from attainment to progress when looking at pupils' outcomes has raised teachers' awareness of the importance of looking at the range of groups of pupils and how well they progress from their different starting points.
- Regular pupil progress meetings that involve senior and subject leaders and the class teacher ensure that pupils who are at risk of underachieving are quickly identified. This triggers bespoke or whole-class interventions.
- Additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is spent well to ensure that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Pupil premium funding for those pupils who are disadvantaged is judiciously allocated, and its impact on diminishing the differences between these pupils and others nationally is regularly evaluated.
- The physical education and sport premium is used well to ensure that pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through participation in sport. Much of the funding is used to pay for sports coaching and additional sport equipment. The school football teams have additional training and are able to access more tournaments than before. Pupils also attend after-school sports clubs, and their attendance is monitored by leaders.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very supportive of what the school aims to achieve for the pupils. One parent wrote: 'My sons are extremely happy at this school. The teachers and teaching assistants are very caring and always go the extra mile.' This comment is typical of the many free-text responses received by Ofsted. However, some parents rightly expressed concern about the way the school communicated with them and feel that this aspect could be improved.
- The carefully considered curriculum is monitored for impact and modified when necessary. Leaders say that the topic-based approach aims to enthuse pupils and draw on their curiosity. The curriculum builds on pupils' knowledge and skills as they move

up the school.

- Teaching is managed well. Teachers are observed as part of the appraisal process, as well as to inform the strengths of teaching in the school and areas for development. Teachers have welcomed the opportunity to work alongside other local similar schools. This enables them to identify and share good practice. Recent training in aspects of assessment, the use of data, improving pupils' writing and skills progression has been helpful in improving standards across the school.
- The school's values permeate every aspect of school life and inspectors witnessed pupils modelling these through their actions and attitudes. These values replicate fundamental British values. Pupils celebrate and acknowledge people's differences. One pupil told inspectors, 'We are all different, but we are also all human.'
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils work well together in lessons and care about their school and their local community. They celebrate different cultures and know right from wrong.
- The school has worked well with the local authority, which has supported and coached new leaders. The diocese brokered the services of an executive headteacher, who worked productively with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher two days a week over two terms.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has recently undergone a restructuring to reduce the number of committees and meetings. This now gives them more time to come into school in order to monitor the quality of the provision. These visits are followed up by notes and points for action.
- Governors have linked themselves to subject areas. This enables them to focus on key aspects of the provision and involves meetings with subject leaders, observations of learning and looking at the quality of work in pupils' books. They are developing a better understanding of how to identify what progress over time looks like.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are thorough and that the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of recruitment checks of the suitability of staff meets current requirements. The governing body regularly checks for compliance at various times during the year.
- Staff in the school have a strong understanding of matters relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Systems and procedures for raising concerns about pupils are known and understood.
- The school site is safe and secure and pupils say they feel safe. Systems to sign visitors in to the school are thorough, and any external speakers or organisations are checked for their suitability and with due diligence and care.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan for learning which maintains pupils' interest and encourages them to learn. Time is used well in lessons. Teachers typically enjoy positive relationships with the pupils in their classes.
- The teaching of writing has improved over time. Teachers present pupils with opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing which draw on their imagination and creative skills. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were asked to write a narrative based on one of the characters in 'Rapunzel' by the Brothers Grimm.
- The teaching of mathematics is also improving but this rightly remains a focus for the school, particularly the teaching of arithmetic.
- Teachers encourage pupils to actively use subject-specific vocabulary, which helps them to deepen their understanding of the subject in question. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were routinely using the terms 'denominators' and 'numerators' when converting mixed fractions into improper fractions. In a Year 3 English lesson based on 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes, pupils were using the terms 'personification' and 'simile'.
- Teaching requires pupils to recall previously acquired knowledge and skills covered in the previous lesson or, often, in earlier years. This helps pupils to put their learning over time into context.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress through questioning, looking at the work in pupils' books and through peer and self-assessment. Occasionally, some teachers do not check early enough that all pupils understand what they are being taught before moving on to the follow-up tasks. This means that some teachers have to repeat what they are teaching pupils so that all pupils can start the task presented to them.
- Teachers use their assessments to plan for learning which aims to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in their class. Pupils usually choose a task from 'mild', 'spicy' or 'hot', which provides an appropriate degree of challenge. However, sometimes, teaching does not present the degree of challenge which stretches the most able pupils. There is potential for more pupils to work at greater depth and to work above age-related expectations.
- While assessment systems are fully embedded for the core subjects, they are at various stages of development in the foundation subjects.
- Teachers have started to use whole-class feedback sheets, which provide an overview of what pupils can do well and what could be improved. The use of personal feedback sheets has been effective as well, particularly for pupils with low and middle prior attainment.
- Teachers diligently implement the school's marking policy. Pupils told inspectors they appreciate the opportunity to go back over their work and respond to their teachers' written or verbal feedback.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively by class teachers. They work well with targeted pupils to help them understand what they are learning. They also move around the class without being asked to do so to check that other pupils remain on-

task.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and they say the school keeps them safe.
- Pupils learn about safety during their personal, social, health and economic education lessons and also through assemblies. They are taught about the dangers associated with the use of the internet and also when using social networks. The older pupils who spoke to inspectors are aware of the importance of privacy settings, and the risks associated with posting photographs on social networking sites.
- Bullying is unusual in the school and pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that there is an adult they can talk to if it does occur and that it will be dealt with.
- Two recorded racist incidents last year were dealt with sensitively and quickly, involving working closely with parents and their children to address the matter. Records show that there were no incidents of homophobic bullying.
- Pupils are offered a range of roles and responsibilities to develop their leadership skills and self-esteem. These include being prefects and members of the school council. The school council regularly contributes to the development of the school's policies and practice.
- Pupils are encouraged to be healthy. For example, all pupils take part in the 'daily mile', and pupils who come to school on bicycles or scooters are offered a 'bikers' breakfast'. Some pupils return to their bicycle or scooter to find the 'golden padlock', which is a reward and is exchangeable for a prize.
- Pupils who attend the school's breakfast club enjoy a healthy meal and routinely participate in activities which develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Although not all pupils were fully prepared academically for their secondary school last year, the picture now is a more positive one, with improved standards of attainment. Pupils in Year 6 spoke to inspectors with great enthusiasm about the secondary school placements they have been offered from September 2019.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. They hold open doors for each other and for visitors and are exceptionally polite. There is very little litter around the school. The school council has helped to formulate the school's behaviour policy and pupils are keen to see that the policy is having an impact. They are clear about how teachers implement the policy and say it is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and take great pride in the way they present their work. They are proud to be members of the school community. There is no graffiti

around the school and displays in classrooms and corridors are maintained in tip-top condition.

- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and low-level disruption is typically rare. Any such incidences are dealt with swiftly by teachers to ensure that pupils meet their high expectations for behaviour.
- There have been no permanent or fixed-period exclusions since the previous inspection. This is testament to the high standards of behaviour leaders expect pupils to meet.
- Pupils' attendance at school is high and only a very few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders take decisive action when necessary to address persistent absence and convey clear messages that this is unacceptable.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 uncharacteristically dipped in 2018 and the proportion of pupils working at greater depth was not high enough. Too few pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of Year 6. The combined measure was pulled down by a weaker performance in mathematics.
- Leaders responded very quickly to this dip and took decisive action through strategic improvement planning to redress this shortfall. Consequently, progress made by pupils in mathematics has improved and leaders anticipate much better outcomes for the current Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books, not only in Year 6, but in other year groups shows that pupils are making much better progress in these three areas.
- Inspectors' review of pupils' books in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 shows that progress is good across a wide range of subjects. Presentation is generally neat and pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar have significantly improved.
- An increasing proportion of pupils in key stage 2 are working at greater depth, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, there is potential for more pupils to be stretched and challenged so that the proportion working at greater depth increases further.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium typically work at age-related expectations, and a few are working at greater depth, more so in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND make progress similar to that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Pupils in key stage 1 typically work at age-related expectations but, similarly to key stage 2, there is potential for an increased proportion to work at greater depth.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics mean that an above-average proportion of pupils are on track to meet the required standard in the phonics screening check. Nearly every pupil in Year 2 is successful in meeting the required standard if they were unsuccessful in Year 1.

- Pupils enjoy reading. Those listened to by inspectors read fluently and were able to pronounce unfamiliar words and work out their meaning. A pupil in Year 6 has started a book club which is attended by both boys and girls.
- Effective transition arrangements mean that pupils are well prepared both academically and personally for when they move on to secondary school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children start Reception Year with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of effective early assessment, leaders ensure that children's individual needs are identified quickly and that learning activities support their progress. Consequently, children make good overall progress across early years and are prepared for Year 1 effectively.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above the national average in 2018. Leaders' assessments, evidence in children's workbooks and observations of teaching all demonstrate that children this year are maintaining this good overall progress.
- The early years leader, who currently teaches an older cohort of pupils, has a clear vision for the future development of the provision and supports the Reception Year teacher well. Together, they work closely with families and pre-school providers to ensure that children make a smooth start at St Theresa's.
- The leaders work well with parents to encourage them to play a key role in supporting their child at home. A new online assessment system has recently been introduced which allows parents to access information about their child's progress. Some, but not all, parents have already used this opportunity to become more involved in their child's learning and progress. Regular in-class assessments take place that enable teachers and other adults to identify when a child is at risk of falling behind.
- The early years curriculum provides children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their academic, social and emotional skills. Children's learning opportunities are enhanced by an attractive indoor learning environment, where they benefit from individual, small-group and whole-class support. The outdoor space is in need of improved resources so that it matches the quality of the indoor provision.
- Adults ensure that children behave well and that they are kept safe. Children work well with one another and they support each other. They are also encouraged to be independent. The environment is safe, and adults are well trained to care for and protect the children. Safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Teaching in early years is effective. Children benefit from a range of well-planned activities that interest them and allow them to develop their skills across the different areas of learning. Inspectors observed children excitedly planning a trip to the moon in a rocket, for which they were preparing their passports. They were able to imagine what life would be like on the moon and what they would do once they arrived.



## School details

Unique reference number	101335
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10088828

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Cronin
Headteacher	Linda O'Melia
Telephone number	020 8346 8826
Website	<a href="http://www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk/">www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net">office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 June–1 July 2015

## Information about this school

- St Theresa's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school is part of the Diocese of Westminster. It is situated in a residential area of North London.
- The school has one class in every year group, apart from Year 6, which has two classes. Hence, the number on roll is set to decrease from September 2019.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed to their posts in April 2017.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well below average.
- No pupils attend any alternative provision.
- The school provides full-time provision for children in one Reception class.
- The school organises and manages a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with senior leaders and subject leaders, the chair and four other members of the governing body and the school improvement partner. They also met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including: the self-evaluation summary and improvement plan; records relating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; behaviour logs; school policies; and information on pupils' progress over time. They also checked the school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff.
- Inspectors observed learning in every class, often accompanied by senior leaders, across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' books in every year group across a wide range of subjects. Inspectors listened to four pupils read from Years 1 and 6.
- Inspectors took account of 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 36 free-text comments. They also considered 21 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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