

St Therese's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401022

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

24–25 September 2025

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

N/A

Compliance statement

- The school is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education (RE) laid down by the Bishop's Conference. For example, RE is a core subject in the curriculum and is accorded the same academic rigour as other core subjects.
- The school is compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop
- The expectations in relation to the previous inspection's recommendations are not applicable due to the time passed since it was conducted.

What the school does well

- St Therese's is a caring and inclusive community where the Catholic mission is clearly lived out, with Christ at the centre of school life, and where pupils feel safe, happy, and valued.
- Pupils demonstrate respect, responsibility, and pride through their thoughtful interactions with one another, charitable service to others in the community, understanding of Catholic social teaching principles, and their leadership in prayer experiences, all of which enriches the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Strong and ambitious leadership, combined with excellent pastoral care and strong parish and community partnerships, ensures that all pupils are nurtured, supported, and able to flourish.
- Leaders have strategically embraced the new *Religious Education Directory*, enhancing the curriculum through knowledge organisers, key vocabulary, and a wide range of creative approaches. Their dedication and collaborative work will ensure strong capacity for further improvement.
- Collective worship is varied, engaging, and often pupil led. Pupils plan and lead worship with thoughtfulness and reverence, contributing significantly to their strong sense of belonging within the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen curriculum planning and assessment in RE to ensure that ambitious expectations are consistently met; for example, by refining tasks to provide appropriate pace and challenge, and enhancing formative assessment to ensure pupils know how to improve their work in order to attain highly.
- Develop a rigorous and inclusive system for monitoring, evaluation, and review across Catholic life and mission, RE, and collective worship. This should actively involve all stakeholders, including pupils, and lead to accurate self-evaluation, clear action planning, and a demonstrable impact on standards in all three key judgement areas.
- Develop the quality of prayer and liturgy by providing high-quality professional learning and strengthen the role of pupils, so that a sense of awe and wonder is fostered and pupils are given regular, meaningful opportunities to encounter God more deeply in their prayer lives.

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

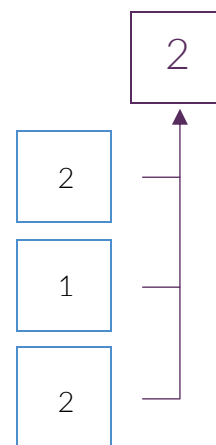
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



St Therese's Catholic Primary School is a caring, inclusive, and welcoming community where the Catholic mission is clearly lived out. The school's mission statement, "We learn, love and grow with God at the centre, to be the best that we can be," is highly visible and effectively embodied in the vibrant learning environment, high-quality displays, and dedicated prayer spaces such as 'Ein Capel'. These features create a strong sense of identity and witness that Christ is truly at the heart of the school. Pupils are happy, feel safe, and articulate a strong sense of belonging. They show respect, thoughtfulness, and care for one another, contributing to a positive and supportive climate for learning. For example, in Year 3, the 'Wall of Kindness' included examples of how the pupils could use their hands to show love and care for others. Pupils speak with pride about their involvement in charitable fundraising as part of their Pupil Action Groups. This includes fundraising for Cafod, supporting the local foodbank, an Intergenerational Board Games Club for members of the community who may be lonely, and the Macmillan coffee morning hosted by the Mini Vinnies during the week of inspection. Such initiatives enable the pupils to make tangible connections between faith and service, developing their moral awareness and sense of responsibility for the common good. Catholic social teaching, introduced using Cafod resources, is beginning to deepen pupils' understanding of how Gospel values and the Pupil Profile virtues shape their everyday lives. Pupils value the school's chaplaincy provision highly; their enthusiasm for roles such as Spiritual Leaders and Mini Vinnies demonstrates growing pupil leadership in the Catholic life of the school.

Staff and pupils demonstrate a clear commitment to the Church's mission, with active participation in community-focused activities, such as family engagement events, 'Cooking Together', and 'Stay and Play', which strengthen relationships between home, school, and parish.

Staff are exemplary role models of the Gospel values, and their strong, nurturing relationships create a culture in which pupils feel safe, valued, and able to flourish. Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school; the work of the family engagement worker has had a highly positive impact on the wellbeing and engagement of families, particularly the most vulnerable. Leaders' provision of a sensory room and nurture support further ensures that pupils with additional needs are included and well supported. A tangible spirit of hospitality permeates the school, ensuring all are welcomed and respected. The school actively promotes cultural diversity through initiatives such as Black History Month, Show Racism the Red Card, Anti-Bullying Week, Diwali, and Chinese New Year, enabling pupils to develop respect and understanding of different cultures and beliefs. The school's provision for relationships and sex education fully complies with diocesan requirements, supporting pupils to develop a secure understanding of human dignity and healthy relationships in line with Catholic teaching.

The head teacher, deputy head teacher, and RE coordinator demonstrate a strong sense of vocation and an evident passion for the school and its community. Their commitment has secured significant progress within a relatively short time, and their ambition provides clear capacity for further improvement. Leaders are firmly rooted in the Church's mission in education, and actively inspire, motivate, and guide the school community in living out this mission. They articulate the diocesan vision with clarity, responding positively to diocesan policies and training, and working collaboratively with other Catholic schools to strengthen provision. The school enjoys strong and supportive parish links, with the parish priest playing an integral and highly valued role as both vice-chair of governors and an active presence in the life of the school. The celebration of Mass during the inspection, attended by many parents, families, and parishioners, was a powerful witness to the strength of the school-parish partnership. Governors are committed and play an active role in the Catholic life and mission of the school. However, self-evaluation in this area lacks sufficient focus, and opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school's evaluation are limited.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

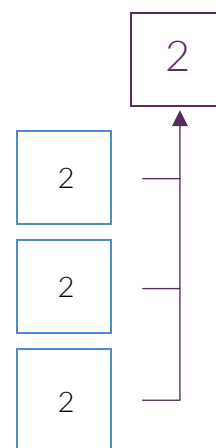
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



In RE, pupils generally make appropriate progress from their starting points as they move through the school. Their religious literacy is developing, and they have an emerging understanding of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. The school has worked purposefully to adopt the *Religious Education Directory*, and pupils are becoming more secure in the knowledge and skills outlined in the Directory. Pupil engagement in lessons is good, particularly in the youngest classes where there is effective use of indoor and outdoor space and resources. In most lessons observed, pupils were able to work independently and showed signs of emerging individuality and creativity. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of RE and how art and digital opportunities creatively support their learning. For example, older pupils spoke passionately about drama activities exploring the story of The Good Samaritan, and their weekly 'Walk through the Bible' sessions. Pupils also spoke with confidence about pieces of work they were proud of. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to explain that the rainbow was the sign of God's covenant to his people and how they can help to fulfil God's promise by being caring stewards of the world. However, most pupils could not articulate how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in their subject knowledge and are well supported by the parish priest, who helps classes explore unfamiliar concepts in the Directory. All staff demonstrate a clear commitment to RE and value its role in pupils' moral development, which is effectively communicated. High-quality resources, combined with the effective use of additional adults who optimise learning for all pupils, create a rich and engaging learning environment. During the inspection, a wide variety of learning experiences were observed, including writing, art, IT, and oracy. Questioning strategies and 'talk partners' during the introduction of lessons were used well to support and extend learning, while the celebration of pupils' effort, both

verbally and through displays, motivated learners to achieve. However, in most classes observed, carousel-style activities limited pupils' ability to achieve the intended learning outcomes and reduced opportunities for deeper understanding. In addition, plenary sessions were not consistently used to consolidate learning, connect to the expected outcomes of the lesson, or move learning forward.

Leaders and governors have worked diligently to ensure that the RE curriculum is a faithful expression of the Directory and recognise that they are on a journey of improvement. RE is rightly identified as a core subject, with timetable priority given. Leaders have trialled and reviewed resources, engaged with the cluster and wider diocese, and visited other schools to learn from good practice, reflecting their strategic approach and commitment to curriculum development. Staff are enthusiastic about trialling the Directory, and value the support and time provided to facilitate this. Leaders have a realistic understanding of the school's current position, are clear about priorities for development, and hold a strong vision for the successful implementation of the Directory. Although this work is ongoing, the leadership team have clear potential to make a significantly positive impact on pupils' standards. Governors are committed and engaged, making regular visits that include participation in monitoring activities and supporting staff in deepening their understanding of the Directory. However, while monitoring systems are in place, the analysis of findings is not always sufficiently rigorous to inform sharply focused action plans. As a result, self-evaluation remains largely descriptive and does not consistently drive improvement with maximum impact. Monitoring, evaluation, and review should more fully involve all stakeholders, including pupils, and focus more sharply on priorities, actions, and impact.

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

Outcomes in collective worship are good. Pupils are reverent, attentive, and prayerful. Collective worship is an integral part of school life, enhancing the wonderful sense of belonging in the community. One pupil commented, 'Our school helps us to care for each other and teaches us about forgiveness.' Pupils respond well to the wide range of experiences offered. This was illustrated during school worship, led by Mini Vinnies, about St Vincent de Paul, when pupils were asked to recognise and celebrate 'random acts of kindness' when sharing God's love with one another. Pupils plan and lead collective worship using a variety of resources, including *Gweddiwn*. Pupils can plan a four-part session including a gather, Word, response, and mission. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed discussing their mission of 'how they could share their gifts with others', having listened to the story of Lazarus. Pupils are familiar with a variety of ways of praying, including the use of scripture, spontaneous prayer, and traditional prayers. A very good standard of Welsh language is used in prayer; for example, the sign of the cross and school prayers. Pupils can sing hymns confidently. Pupils work collaboratively when planning acts of worship and they value the opportunity to become class spiritual leaders. However, pupil evaluation of collective worship is at an early stage of development, and high-quality professional learning for staff would strengthen the role of pupils as spiritual leaders, supporting them to encounter God more deeply in their lives.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good. Routines have been clearly established and include daily prayer, adult-led worship, and pupil-led worship. Senior leaders are models of good practice and are fully committed to the prayer life of the school. Dedicated school staff consistently support pupils to 'Be joyful, learn, and keep the faith.' Music enriches the prayer life of the school, for example, the uplifting singing in Reception to celebrate God's creation. Pupils are extremely proud of their beautiful 'Ein Capel'. Older pupils delight in

praying with younger pupils using the varied resources within the chapel, including prayer books, the Paschal candle, and The Stations of the Cross. However, pupils cannot articulate, independently, what the Paschal candle represents or the sequence for the Stations of the Cross. Pupils can write individual prayers for the school's prayer tree and for class prayer boxes. Every classroom includes a focal point for prayer, and these are well resourced. However, opportunities for pupils to interact with a chosen prayer theme as part of the prayer table are limited. The parish priest is a strong presence in the school. He leads sacramental preparation, and pupils can attend Mass weekly in the parish church. Mass was celebrated during the inspection, with pupils undertaking the readings. This positive, inclusive practice was also evident for collective worship in Year 3.

The work of leaders and governors has ensured that the quality of collective worship is good. This is evident throughout the school environment; 'Ein Capel' and displays, for example, about St Therese. Leaders have planned the school calendar, and opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist have been created to give pupils a wide range of experiences throughout the liturgical year. Leaders have ensured that budgetary resources are used to continually develop an environment that is conducive to good quality prayer and liturgy. Governors are extremely supportive and are regular visitors to the school. They can articulate the vision, ethos and strengths of the school. However, a sharper focus on high-quality professional learning for prayer and liturgy would enable staff to further enrich pupils' prayer life and spiritual development, supporting them to describe more clearly how they encounter God. While leaders and governors rightly place prayer and liturgy at the heart of the school, self-evaluation processes need to analyse more effectively the impact of monitoring activities. Clearly identified next steps within action plans will strengthen outcomes for pupils at St Therese's Catholic Primary School.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Therese's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401022
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6713314
Full postal address of the school	St Therese's Catholic Primary School, Southdown Road, Sandfields, Port Talbot, SA12 7HL
School phone number	01639882797
Headteacher	Ruth Lewis
Chair of governors	Deborah Evans
School Website	st-thereses-catholic-primary-school.j2bloggy.com
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
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	1 st & 2 nd December 2014
Previous denominational inspection grade	GG

The inspection team

Laura Taylor
Diana Pearce

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