



St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

URN: 100357

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

03 July 2026 – 03 July 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

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

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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

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Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- The chaplaincy team and pupil leadership group are good ambassadors for the school and great role models for younger pupils.
- School leaders and governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, which are addressed through appropriate training opportunities.
- Pupils enjoy religious education and this is reflected in their behaviour towards each other and staff in their lessons and around the school.
- Staff provide high levels of pastoral care, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable.
- The high standard of displays and iconography all around the buildings effectively witness to the school's Catholic identity and positively impact pupils' spiritual and moral development.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide more opportunities for enrichment activities to enhance learning and engagement in religious education lessons.
- Enable pupils to recall and explain the scripture underpinning the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- Offer a wider variety of approaches to prayer so that pupils can experience the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition.

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

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The school mission, 'Jesus is at the heart of everything we think, do and say', is reflected in the care and love shown by pupils towards each other. Young people are loved and valued at St Thomas of Canterbury school. They feel their voice matters and their views and suggestions are listened to and acted upon; the school prayer began as a whole school homework task and was then distilled into a prayer by the pupil chaplaincy team, with the guidance of the Trust lay chaplain. The school follows the Caritas programme for Catholic social teaching; pupils are aware of how they can positively impact the lives of others who are less fortunate than them through their regular donations to foodbanks. Older pupils have led on a project linked to the care of creation and raised awareness throughout the school of environmental issues. A staff member expressed her support for their work saying, 'I enjoy guiding the children to recognise that even the smallest acts of kindness and service can make a real difference and are a living experience of their faith'. Pupils were able to explain the theology underpinning some of the principles of Catholic social teaching and now have the opportunity to explore the scripture supporting all of this teaching.

The school's patron saint, St Thomas of Canterbury, inspires the pupils to be resilient and courageous. Staff live out the school mission through their actions, interactions and commitment towards the pupils and each other. As Christ is at the centre of the school, there is a sense of togetherness which was confirmed by a member of staff saying, 'The beauty of this community is how we look after each other'. Parents appreciate the daily interaction with staff at the school gate to welcome families in the morning as they arrive and, in the evening, as they depart. The iconography on display throughout the school accentuates the richness of

the Catholic tradition and is a link to the long history of St Thomas' in Fulham. The past and present combine to celebrate the creativity of pupils work on the old corridor walls as well as the modern interactive screens in reception. The school's relationships and sex education curriculum is carefully planned and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person and is rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to the Catholic life of the school and are fastidious in exercising their duty as guardians. A parent governor, along with his son, gave a presentation on Mary's Meals to Year 5/6 and encouraged the pupils to raise a considerable sum for the charity. There is a good relationship with the diocese. The school takes full advantage of training opportunities at both diocesan and trust level. Visits from the advisor have led to significant improvements to staff skills and knowledge. The commitment of parents is demonstrated through their participation in educational visits, donations to charitable activities and attendance at school events. The school lives out the theology underpinning the principles of Catholic social teaching by highlighting the importance of serving others. Caring for the well-being of staff is a school priority. Leaders and governors ensure every effort is taken to provide staff with a healthy work/life balance. Governors set a clear direction for the Catholic life of the school and help to ensure it is delivered. They offer the school support and challenge in equal measures. Visits from the diocesan advisor keep the school's self evaluation on track. The children are at the heart of school improvement and a perfect example of this is how their views and suggestions were listened to and acted upon when the school prayer was formulated.

Religious education

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

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

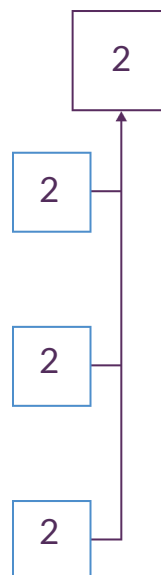
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 make good progress across the school from their starting points in religious education and this is clearly evident in their books. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in religious education is comparable to the rest of the core subjects and often better. Pupils enjoy learning and are reflective and focused in lessons. When asked why they liked the subject, one said, 'We can strengthen our connection with God through religious education' while another said, 'We learn about all the wonders and miracles Jesus performed during his amazing life'. The good quality of work in books reflects pupils' engagement in lessons. They are encouraged to have high aspirations, and exemplar work is celebrated through displays in classrooms which inspire others to achieve similar standards of work. Pupils were keen to show us work they produced in their books and all around the school. A Year 1 child showed her religious literacy by explaining the significance of her work on the Last Supper by linking the breaking of the bread to Jesus' own body. Children spoke with pride about the amazing displays around the school, their significance and the contributions they made to them. Pupils understand how well they are doing because teachers' comments are clear. However, not all know what they need to do to improve. A strong response included linking scripture to written responses to strengthen a viewpoint while weaker responses refer to writing more and improving handwriting. The school has the opportunity now to consolidate this area.

Teachers are growing more confident in their subject knowledge and demonstrate enthusiasm for their teaching of the new Religious Education Directory. All teachers ensure that pupils with additional needs are fully included in every aspect of the lesson and teaching

assistants are used effectively to optimise learning for all pupils. Good use is made of questioning in lessons and in particular 'I wonder' which promote curiosity in younger children and guides them to think critically and spiritually as they develop. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher asked, 'I wonder how you would know if someone was a Christian?' A pupil responded saying, 'By their kindness and the way they pray'. Key vocabulary was on display in every classroom but in some classes a greater range of key words would offer more opportunities in lessons to use them. Challenge activities in books offered pupils a range of activities which promoted creativity including personal prayers that complemented the work they had been studying. Teachers recognise the impact the subject has on the moral and personal development of pupils and provide space and time for reflection.

All year groups are following the Directory. Leaders and governors ensure that the subject is the core of the core curriculum. The headteacher is the subject leader and also teaches. She regularly attends diocesan training. Staff feel well supported in their teaching and have received training on all of the branches of the new Directory. The increase in pupils with additional needs has meant that adaptations of lessons have become essential. The impact of the special needs coordinator in supporting and advising staff cannot be underestimated. Adults are used effectively to optimise learning for all pupils, offering support and challenge when needed through positive and nurturing relationships. The delivery of religious education has been enriched by visits from other faith leaders. However, opportunities to visit places of worship of other faiths are limited. There is a drive at St Thomas of Canterbury school to constantly improve and enhance the religious education provision. This is strengthened by diocesan and trust support. Leaders ensure priorities are fulfilled through learning walks and the headteacher's reports to governors.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

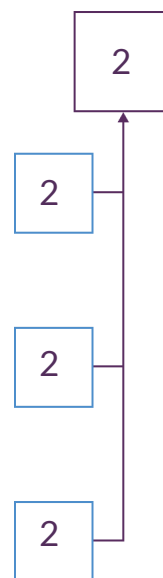
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



All pupils, from their earliest years, are reverent and engage in prayer with sincerity and respect. Appropriate to their age and capacity, pupils understand different ways of praying including the use of scripture, hymns, music and silence. The school has the opportunity now to explore the wide range of approaches to prayer including lectio divina, visio divina, spontaneous prayer and the examen. Pupils articulated the impact of prayer in their lives when one said, 'The more we pray, the closer we get to God', while another said, 'Our prayer books strengthen our bond and connection to God'. They lead the celebration of the word and work closely with others including the teacher, the Trust lay chaplain and other pupils to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy. Pupils now have the opportunity to ask how their prayer and liturgy presentations make the class feel closer to God and also what else could be added or changed to make them feel closer to God. The prayer and liturgy offered by pupils and staff enables all to feel included. A member of staff summed it up saying, 'Love is key to this school. We make sure everyone is welcome, feels safe and is loved'. A young child was even more succinct saying, 'The best gift we can give to Jesus is our hearts'.

Praying together is clearly part of the daily experience with prayer in the morning, before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. Every pupil has a prayer book with common prayers including the school prayer which they all know. The rhythm of the liturgical year is reflected in the pupil led rosary during October and May, the writing of prayers for the dead in November and Lenten promises. Well chosen scripture passages form the heart of prayer and liturgy but, on occasions, pupils would benefit from a fuller explanation of the theme and the scripture chosen at the introduction. Staff are models of good practice by fully engaging and

leading by example; every Monday morning at staff briefing they take turns to lead in prayer as they prepare for the week ahead. Every classroom has a prayer table and there is a peace garden for staff and pupils to visit and silently reflect. The corridors and communal areas include thought provoking images of Mary from all around the world and mosaics and paintings representing St Francis' 'Canticle of the Sun' to mark the 800th anniversary of his death.

The prayer and liturgy policy is well formulated and fit for purpose. It puts prayer at the heart of school life and contributes towards a spiritually enriching school community. School leaders have secure knowledge of how to plan and deliver good quality worship. The headteacher is an authentic Catholic leader and staff truly appreciate the support and guidance she provides. Inspirational professional development provided by the diocese and the Trust lay chaplain improves the quality of collective worship and strengthens staff confidence. Staff also appreciate that they are always released to attend professional development. Leaders ensure that resources are provided so that worship is engaging, meaningful and relevant with numerous artefacts and images. Close links with the parish priest enable the school to create a comprehensive calendar of Masses in the church. The acknowledgement of these feasts builds pupils' understanding of the liturgical calendar and strengthens the shared faith of home, school and parish. The introduction of rosary prayer bags for pupils to take home so that families can pray together has proved impactful. A parent confirmed this by saying, 'This Catholic school teaches my children about relationships with God through prayer'.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	100357
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2053648
Full postal address of the school	Estcourt Road, LONDON, SW6 7HB
School phone number	020 7385 8165
Headteacher or Head of School	Miss Joanne Breslin
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Bell
School Website	www.stthomasrc.lbhf.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Dermot O'Neill

Lead

Norah Flatley

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