

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

Hooks Lane, Havant, Hampshire PO9 3DR

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because:

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
- Improvements in teaching have led to above average attainment in English by the end of Year 6. Attainment has also risen in mathematics, but not as fast as in English.
- Teaching is good and occasionally of high quality. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and make lessons interesting so that pupils learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare and that any incidents are dealt with effectively.
- The headteacher's effective leadership, supported well by governors and other leaders, has been significant in ensuring the school has improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The school enjoys a good partnership with parents.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are occasions, especially in mathematics, when pupils do not know how well they are doing and are unsure how to improve their work.
- In some lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to work independently or think for themselves.
- Occasionally, work is too easy, particularly for the more able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 teachers teach 21 lessons, of which four were joint observations with members of the school's leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and observed a number of small groups of pupils being taught by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors heard pupils reading from both Key Stages 1 and 2 and also held meetings with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, members of the school management team and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with some parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection and also letters from parents addressed to the inspection team.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 28 staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including school improvement plans, achievement data and school data on pupils' current progress as well as documents relating to safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Edward Wheatley

Additional Inspector

Joy Considine

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. Nearly all pupils come from the local community.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A privately managed pre-school is located on the school site, which is inspected separately.
- The school has a number of recent awards including Sports Active Mark, Enhanced Healthy Schools status and is a Fairtrade school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2013 to help pupils to make even more rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils know how well they are doing and know how they can improve their work, especially in mathematics
 - providing all pupils with enough opportunities to work independently and to think for themselves
 - ensuring work is always hard enough for more able pupils in particular.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress from their varying starting points because they enjoy their learning, as a result of good teaching. Progress is improving fastest in English because this is where the school has successfully focused its efforts. Progress is also improving in mathematics where the school is now directing its work. Small past differences in the progress made by boys and girls have been dealt with effectively.
- Learning in lessons is usually good, but occasionally, pupils do not work by themselves well enough. There are occasions when teachers provide too much support and do not encourage pupils to think for themselves.
- The more able pupils generally make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants usually make sure work is demanding and tailored to their particular needs. However, there are occasions when the pupils find the work they are expected to complete too easy and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good and improving progress. Sensitive, well-organised support from teachers usually enables these pupils to gain confidence in their own ability and promotes their learning well. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, and the small number at the early stages of learning English, make good progress because of effective support from teachers.
- Pupils develop good literacy skills because writing, reading and speaking activities are included in most subjects.
- Pupils read well. They use phonic approaches (linking sounds to letters) effectively and like the fact that this helps them to read awkward words. They use their reading well to support their research skills.
- Pupils' writing is good, and work displayed in classrooms and corridors is of good quality. Pupils use a wide vocabulary, accurate grammar, and words that connect separate ideas together to make complex sentences. Nevertheless, sometimes, when pupils write in exercise books, their writing is untidy and careless.
- Pupils have good mathematics skills. They carry out mental calculations competently and show their working for mathematical problems accurately in their books.
- Pupils know how well they make progress and how to improve their work in English, but in mathematics, pupils are not so sure about how well they make progress, or how to improve their work.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress from broadly average starting points, in particular in developing good literacy skills.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is good, with some particularly high quality teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, which they use effectively to provide a wide range of activities that promote pupils' skills well in literacy and numeracy.
- In the great majority of lessons, teachers use what they know about pupils' progress well to ensure that work is matched to the abilities of all pupils. For example, in a skills lesson, the teacher provided a range of imaginative opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of literacy to significantly enhance their creative writing. The school is effective in ensuring all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and demanding activities that motivate pupils to become involved in their learning and to achieve well. What pupils learn is supported by a wide range of visits and visitors, good quality resources, and effective links between different subjects.
- Relationships are warm, friendly and supportive. Teachers encourage pupils to work with each

other and to discuss their ideas. This helps pupils learn to tolerate and accept each other's opinions and promotes their moral, social and cultural development effectively.

- Generally, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning by supporting pupils in lessons and in small groups that are withdrawn from classes for particular help.
- Most marking is good. In English especially, it usually provides good information about how well pupils are progressing, how to improve and what the next steps in learning are. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies and sometimes pupils do not know how well they are making progress. Marking is improving in mathematics, but pupils are often not sure how to improve their work.
- Teachers regularly check the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and adjust their work so that they make good progress. For example, providing clear instructions, careful questioning and encouraging independence in an observed English lesson led to all pupils making outstanding progress in writing their recounting reports.
- Teachers frequently display pupils' work in classrooms and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning because they are encouraged to produce the very best work they can do.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well behaved and have a positive attitude towards their learning. They generally concentrate well on their work.
- Teachers set a good example of how to respect each other and this contributes to good relationships between pupils, respect for others and celebrating each other's achievement and success.
- A very small number of parents and carers who responded through Parent View indicated some concern about behaviour and bullying at the school. However, pupils said that behaviour is good and any bullying is swiftly dealt with. The inspection supports this view and found that over time, behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils spoken to said they enjoy school, that teachers help them learn well and lessons are interesting. This was verified by what inspectors saw in lessons.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. The great majority of pupils have good rates of attendance. Persistent absence is decreasing rapidly due to the school's effective approaches to families to impress on them the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear direction for the school's improvement. All staff, especially those in leadership positions, reflect his ambition and determination for success. The school accurately identifies what it needs to do to improve further and, in particular, how pupils' progress should improve.
- Leaders are effective in improving the quality of teaching. Pupils' performance is at the heart of teachers' performance management targets and there is an extensive programme of professional development to support staff in improving their teaching. Teachers work together closely to share effective teaching methods and resources.
- The local authority provides effective support to help improve teaching and to help plan improvements in the curriculum.
- Teaching is improving, pupils' attainment has risen, past gaps in progress between girls and boys have narrowed, and persistent absence has reduced. The school demonstrates the capacity to continue improvement.
- The curriculum is well managed and provides a wide range of activities in response to pupils' needs and interests. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy, and the effective use of computers, are promoted well in all subjects. Good behaviour, tolerance and understanding of other people's values and beliefs are well embedded in learning, and promote pupils'

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

- Parents are pleased with the school. They say that the school is well led and managed and that staff are very approachable and supportive. Parents support school activities. For example, attendance at the recent harvest liturgy assembly was high. The school provides considerable help for families finding themselves in difficulty and this promotes pupils' attendance and progress effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a high level of challenge to the senior staff and is not afraid to ask searching questions about the effectiveness of the school. It works with leaders to decide how the pupil premium funding is spent and monitors the impact it has on pupils' progress thoroughly. It ensures the school has a performance management policy that links the quality of teaching to pupils' progress, and to teachers' progression on salary scales. The governing body ensures safeguarding procedures are robust. It checks that all requirements are fully met, and that the processes for appointing staff are secure.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116377
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405644

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Dove
Headteacher	Colin Flanagan
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2010
Telephone number	02392 475909
Fax number	02392 472050
Email address	Colin.flanagan@st-thomasmores.hants.sch.uk

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