
**The Diocese of
Hallam
Section 48 Report**

**The Catholic Life of
the School and
Religious Education**

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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| School URN | 420661 |
| Name of Chair of Governors | Peter Maycock |
| Name of Head teacher | Donna Faley |
| Date of inspection | Monday 18 th November 2013 |
| Section 48 Inspector | Mr P Davison |

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam. The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Description of the School

St Thomas More is a smaller than average primary school with the majority of pupils of White British heritage. The school serves the Parish of St Thomas More, Grenoside. The school is some distance from the Church of St Thomas More. The catchment area draws children from a variety of home backgrounds, with the school deprivation indicator being higher than the National average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average, with 20.5% being eligible for free school meals. The numbers of pupils supported at school action is lower than the national average but those at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational need are higher than national averages. Their needs range from Autistic Spectrum Disorders to physical disabilities, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. 42% of pupils on roll are Catholic, with 55% of pupils belonging to other Christian denominations and 3% of children belonging to other World Faiths.

Since the last inspection in July 2009, there have been significant changes in staffing with a new headteacher and senior leadership team in place. The school was put into OFSTED category of Special Measures in December 2011 and exited the category in July 2013. Children are educated in seven classes; all single form entry and single year groups. There are eight full-time and two part-time teachers of whom seven are Catholic, one of these teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent. The school offers a wide range of enrichment activities including after school activities, visits and visitors to further enhance learning.

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| Type of School | Primary |
| Age profile of students | 4 to 11 |
| Number on roll | 202 |
| Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register | 35 |
| Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs | 3 |
| Number of Catholics on roll | 85 |
| Number of Other Christian Denominations | 111 |
| Number of other Faiths No religious affiliation | 6 |
| School Address | Creswick Lane Grenoside Sheffield S35 8NN |
| Telephone Number | 0114 2468020 |
| Email | enquiries@st-thomasmore.sheffield.sch.uk |
| School Website | http://st-thomasmoresheffield.co.uk |

SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

2

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

2

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

2

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

The overall effectiveness judgement is based on all the evidence available.

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

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| The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school. | 2 |
| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. | 2 |
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship | 2 |

The pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is good. They are eager to take on roles of responsibility, such as during assemblies, Masses and in the playground helping younger children. Pupils have a very strong sense of belonging and their caring attitudes permeate the school. They speak confidently when expressing their own beliefs and are understanding and respectful of those beliefs different to their own. A recent World Faith Day was an exciting learning opportunity where the children learnt about Islam, Judaism and Hinduism in a very enjoyable, cross curricular way. They understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. They raise money for charities such as

CAFOD, Mission Together and the Hallam Caring Service showing care and compassion for those who need help at home and overseas.

All pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their Religious Education lessons. One pupil stated " We like our R.E. lessons because we are challenged – the questions are deep." Scrutiny of workbooks and assessment data show that pupils make good progress from their starting points. They are given good guidance through a clear marking strategy that indicates the next steps in their learning.

Pupils' response and contribution to Collective Worship is good. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and they act with reverence and show respect to their fellow pupils. They are at ease when praying formally or informally and there is a peaceful, calm atmosphere that is based on mutual respect for each other's beliefs and understanding. Collective Worship contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. To improve the current good practice, greater opportunities for children to develop skills in leading prayer and liturgy should be provided.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

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| The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education. | 2 |
| The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning. | 1 |
| The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school. | 2 |

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned to ensure that pupils really understand what they should know by the end of a session. Time is given for children to think about their learning. They report: " We learn lots of new things and have time to reflect and think.", "We learn something one day and reflect on it the next." Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and contribute greatly to the children's enjoyment and maturity of approach to their learning. During the inspection some excellent assessment practice was observed with marking and clear learning intentions being particular strengths. Teachers make good use of information and communications technology to illustrate challenging concepts and ideas. This was particularly evident in classes where the interactive facility of the whiteboards was used to good effect. Lessons are generally well-paced and techniques to ensure all pupils are actively engaged are used very effectively throughout the school.

The quality of the curriculum is excellent. The time allocated to Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and in addition, is supplemented daily by the way tradition and prayer permeate the school in class and assemblies. The new 'Come and See' programme is being used effectively to ensure progression through the age groups. Work is well matched to pupils' earlier learning and contributes significantly to the wider curriculum. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures. The curriculum supports pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral social and cultural development extremely well. They express this through the way they look after each other and through their thoughtfulness for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils reported: "We are one community – we work together and don't let anyone fail.", " In our R.E. lessons and assemblies we do presentations – we're not embarrassed as we are all at ease with each other. No-one puts us down." Through the innovative manner in which the school presents the curriculum the children have the opportunity to be enthusiastic and highly motivated learners.

Acts of Collective Worship are central to the life of the school and make a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils. They are carefully planned and resourced to reflect the liturgical year and linked with the Sunday Gospel. Praying is a daily experience and the staff meet together every Monday morning, before the school day, for a collective staff liturgy. Parents and parishioners are invited to join whole school and class led liturgies and Holy Mass. Adults provide good role models for the children and they support them to wonder, contemplate and reflect. Pupils show respect for different faiths and have a good understanding of how religious beliefs are important to people. The Parish Priest is a regular presence in the school and he supports all aspects of school life, is supportive of staff and the school's mission.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

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| How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. | 2 |
| How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils. | 2 |

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher’s passionate, enthusiastic and visionary leadership of the whole school community is ably supported by the senior leadership team, Parish Priest and members of the governing body. There is a clearly shared sense of commitment to promote the Catholic identity that extends beyond classrooms to links with homes and the parish. The weekly school newsletter proudly proclaims and reaffirms the school’s mission statement. Evidence shows that the mission statement is a lived reality.

Regular monitoring and honest, accurate self-evaluation underpin school improvement. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly and have a clear and thorough understanding of the positive impact of measures put into effect. The governing body knows the school’s strengths and areas for improvement well and is working on refining its monitoring role even further. As a result, the school provides high quality care and a good education for all groups of children. Close contact with the parish and other agencies helps the school keep in touch with families within the community, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents and children speak very highly of the support offered by the school in times of crisis. The Rainbows group is particularly welcomed for children grieving a death, parental separation or other family related issues affecting their well-being.

This final section draws together all the evidence and judgements made in the preceding sections.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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| How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education | 2 |
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This is a good Catholic school. The dedicated headteacher, senior leaders and governors are totally committed to the ethos and mission of Catholic Education. The promotion of pupils’ spiritual and moral development is good. The school’s capacity for sustained improvement is good due to the accurate self-assessment that has led to clear, challenging targets and relevant priorities.

St. Thomas More School is held in high regard by parents and the parish community: “ This school provides a loving, inclusive and nurturing environment for our children.” “The Christian ethos and community spirit is quite noticeable.”

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Their level of participation in prayer and in the liturgical life of the school is good.

Everyone in the school community is valued and has a vital role to play. The school provides a good Catholic education. Good teaching and learning in Religious Education is promoting positive attitudes

enabling all children to make good progress. The Religious Education provided is varied and is meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. New procedures for assessment and academic guidance together with effective monitoring and tracking systems ensure that pupils thrive and succeed.

Collective worship is good and shows signs of further development. Staff are excellent role models for the pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. The headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, respected as individuals and are motivated to make progress. Leadership has a clear sense of direction and purpose in Religious Education which is recognised as a core subject of the curriculum. The headteacher is highly committed and inspirational in developing the Catholic life of the school and religious education. Professional development of all staff is a high priority, resulting in competent staff who are committed to raising standards. The highly dedicated and enthusiastic staff together with an effective governing body make a significant contribution to the success of the school. Governors are well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school, understand well the school's performance in Religious Education and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. There is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors discharge their statutory duties well and are very supportive of leaders and staff.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Develop strategies to enable pupils to take more responsibility in planning and leading the prayer life of the school.
- Strengthen systems in assessment further by increasing teachers' confidence in using the levels of attainment so that pupils are accurately assessed and their progress tracked.