

**Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)
Inspection of**
(Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
Park Lane, Eastfield Peterborough PE1 5JW

DfE No: **874/3378**
URN: **147385**

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs Ann Morris

Headteacher: Mrs Anne-Marie McElhinney
RE Leader: Mrs Leanne Phillips

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Margaret Stewart

Dates of Inspection: 23rd February 2022

Date and grade of previous inspection: February 2014. Grade 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is 4-11 mixed Primary in the East Ward of Peterborough serving the parishes of St. Peter and All Souls and St. Luke's. The school joined St. John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust in September 2019. The catchment area of the school has changed considerably over the last five years with the number of English as an additional language (EAL) children increasing to 80%. 49% of the pupils are Catholic, 6% are Other Christians and 34% are from Other World Faiths. Pupils receiving free school meals is higher than the national average and stands at 30%. Those who are identified as having a disability or special educational needs (SEND) is 10% of which there are 11 pupils supported by an Education and Health Care Plan. (EHCP). There are 14 classes with 2 form entry from Reception to Year 6 and 33% of the staff are Catholic.

The S48 RE Inspection included:

The day began with introductions and a tour of the school, meeting staff and visiting classrooms and communal areas. The meeting with the chair of governors and parish priest took place via Zoom and this was followed by a collective worship reflection in the new Community Prayer Room, led by year 4 pupils. Discussions took place with the headteacher and Religious Education (RE) leader about the RE self-evaluation form (SEF), school development and improvement plans and other data and documentation on outcomes of monitoring. Teaching and learning of RE in all classes was observed alongside the RE leader and this was followed by a book scrutiny of a range of learners from each year group including evidence of teaching and learning from the school's on line offer during the COVID 19 pandemic. Pupils who were school ambassadors, including those who belonged to the chaplaincy team gave their views of life in school and this was followed by a meeting with a range of staff fulfilling a variety of roles throughout the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade 1

St. Thomas More is an outstanding Catholic primary school where religious education is regarded as the utmost priority in the life of the school. The school's mission statement, 'a community working through prayer, celebration and learning, to achieve excellence' is lived out in the way everyone supports and communicates with each other and in the way they promote the highest regard for the Catholic life and mission of the school. Leaders and teachers hold the highest aspirations for pupils and this is promoted by an inclusive and supportive culture that is embedded in the Catholic character of the school. When talking about 'giving and receiving', one Key Stage 2 pupil said; 'The best thing you can give to another person is your time, giving helps to make you a better person and makes the world a better place'. Over time, pupils develop a deep understanding of their faith through the richness of their experiences of the Catholic traditions of worship, prayer and service to others within their school, their own community and to the wider global community. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and this is demonstrated by their highly respectful and considerate behaviour in and outside of lessons. The environment is a colourful and vibrant expression of the Catholic character of the school, celebrating Catholic social teaching, care for the environment and dignity of the human person. Pupils make very good progress in all areas of their learning and development from their various starting points and they show that they are proud of their school and their achievements. Communicating with parents and carers is regarded as having the utmost importance so that they can feel part of the life of the school and support their children well. Information about

the curriculum including the RE curriculum, school values, liturgy and feast days is shared regularly. The Wednesday Word, based on the Sunday Gospel is also shared and enables families to pray and reflect together.

COVID 19 Response

During the COVID 19 pandemic the school's response was exemplary, providing learning, support and pastoral care to everyone within the school community.

The needs of the staff were carefully considered so that they could provide a bespoke offer to families, both in school and on line. The school became a hub for the local community, opening each day including over the Easter break and bank holidays to support children of key workers and those identified as needing to be in school. To ensure the online learning offer was accessible to all, staff delivered IT equipment to families who needed essential or additional resources.

Key staff worked tirelessly to make sure families were well supported through regular contact, often on a daily basis for those who needed extra care and support.

Teachers used a variety of online programs to deliver engaging and age appropriate RE lessons and engagement with learning was carefully monitored. Leaders and key staff ensured any concerns were addressed immediately. Collective Worship continued to be a priority throughout the pandemic, including the period of partial return to school where all pupils felt included in reflections, daily prayers and assemblies. School meals were provided by the dedicated kitchen staff ensuring everyone in school had a meal alongside preparing packed lunches for those in receipt of free school meals.

When the school returned in September 2020, a carefully prepared Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) unit was taught across all year groups, facilitating a smooth transition back to school life. Teachers and support staff were visible and available to reassure and advise parents and carers at the beginning and end of each day. The vigilance of the pastoral team continues to identify and support those who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. Staff have undertaken special training to support pupils' wellbeing and have created a space in each of their classrooms as a quiet area to support pupils who may feel overwhelmed.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- * Ensure that the families' rich cultural backgrounds are reflected in the Catholic traditions of the school to include celebrations, prayer and liturgy and Saints days.

- *Widen the range and scope of continuing professional development (CPD) in RE for all staff to strengthen their subject knowledge in RE, (CCRS), spirituality, servant leadership and Catholic Social Teaching.

- * Continue to develop age appropriate strategies in pupil self-evaluation and in how to improve work further.

- * Embed the role of the Chaplaincy team so that prayer and liturgy is independently planned and delivered across the school by the pupils.

- * Develop teaching and learning strategies that enable pupils with specific learning needs, including EAL pupils, to communicate their understanding in more varied ways.

CATHOLIC LIFE:

Grade 1

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

At St. Thomas More the whole school community fully embraces the meaning of the mission statement by the way they communicate and support each other in all aspects of school life. Active participation in Catholic life is a strength of the school with a strong commitment to working together to develop the vision of its Catholic character and ethos. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of taking on leadership roles in serving each other, leading prayer and liturgy and being active Christians. For example, pupils are fully involved in organising fundraising events, allowing them to see the impact of their faith in action. Children in Need, Macmillan and Mary's Meals benefitted from their work and in addition, local charities such as the Salvation Army foodbank and the local hospital where pupils in year 5 and 6 put their creative skills to the test by knitting cannula covers for premature babies, clearly shows a strong commitment to Catholic social teaching. School Ambassadors come into school early to provide fellow pupils with a bagel for breakfast which is inspired by the national 'Schools Breakfast Programme'.

The school environment throughout is inspiring, clearly celebrating and communicating the Catholic character of the school. There is a striking mural of inspiring people, affirming quotes and creative art work celebrating scripture, the Sacraments and the liturgical year. The school mission statement is highly valued and displayed in all communal spaces alongside pupils' work from across the curriculum. Pupils comment that they enjoy looking at these and talking about them as they move through the school. Prayer tables in each class are interactive and relevant to the current RE theme, supporting pupils with their learning and their prayer life. The richly diverse community of the school is highly valued by all and there are many strategies in place to ensure each pupil and their family are made to feel welcome. Pupils speaking English as an additional language (EAL) are supported by staff and other pupils who speak their language to ensure a welcoming transition at any phase. Pupils are valued and cared for as unique persons, made in the image and likeness of God and for those who need extra care and support the role of the SAFE officer is vital in working alongside staff to identify and support their mental health and wellbeing. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is carefully taught in an age appropriate way using resources from 'Journey in Love' leading to pupils having an excellent understanding of positive and respectful relationships.

Leaders and governors are highly committed to the Church's mission in education and it is regarded as a core leadership responsibility. This is demonstrated by their full and active involvement in shaping and challenging the school in all areas of RE. They ensure that pupils' experience is broad and varied. Pupils have a wealth of opportunity to visit other places of worship within the community and wider diocese and as visits are curtailed due to the pandemic, pupils enjoy following a virtual pilgrimage to holy places across the world. Leaders and all other adults in school are exemplary role models of positive and supportive relationships for the pupils, they care deeply for their wellbeing and as a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure in their physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Grade 1

Pupils make very good progress in RE from their starting points, with many predicted to make outstanding progress this year. Attainment in RE is broadly in line with other subject areas. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning in RE and take great pride in the quality and presentation of their work as consistently evidenced in all RE books. During lessons, pupils are fully engaged in their learning, promoting outstanding behaviour and sustained concentration. Activities are differentiated for a range of learners including EAL, allowing access to the content and skills in each topic. Pupils are guided to make links to learning in RE with their own lives and to use scripture to support their ideas.

Teachers use the 'Come and See' programme to plan, resource and deliver high quality RE lessons. They employ a wide range of strategies to engage pupil learning and to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced. In each year group, pupils have frequent opportunities to use art, roleplay and collaborative discussion and written tasks to challenge and motivate them in their learning. The use of the 'Big Question' within each topic invites further challenge and curiosity for learners and allows learners to appreciate that some things are difficult to answer or as one Key Stage 2 child said 'there may be lots of answers, not just one'. One Key Stage 2 pupil said he enjoyed working with others as it 'helps to make things clearer, because sometimes the work is hard.' The RE working walls in each classroom display religious vocabulary and scripture references related to the theme and the vocabulary is supported by relevant visuals and posters promoting religious literacy. Support staff are highly effective in supporting a range of learning needs using appropriate questioning, language and resources.

An initial assessment at the beginning of each topic demonstrates pupils' starting points and reveals the 'Big Picture' of what they will be learning. By the end of the topic pupils can identify and reflect on their progress. Teachers use marking and feedback strategies effectively to identify if the learning target has been achieved and to suggest next steps. Pupils are given time to 'Read and Respond' to marking and to address improvements to their learning within that lesson. Further embedding of pupil self-assessment will lead learners to recognise their strengths and what they can do to improve a piece of work. Assessment is thorough and systematic, informing teachers what has been taught and learnt well. Moderation with colleagues in school and within the Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) secures teachers confidence in recognising age related standards and it consistently promotes open and supportive dialogue around good practice and excellence in RE.

How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for RE is outstanding. Improvements are identified through robust monitoring by leaders and addressed effectively and collaboratively during CPD sessions and staff meetings. Outcomes of monitoring by the RE leader is set out in a subject impact report and this is shared with colleagues and governors. The evaluation of monitoring of work within the CMAT is having an impact on standards, expectations and outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and RE Leader are highly effective in supporting teachers and support staff through both planned and spontaneous CPD. Joint planning with colleagues from the same phases ensures accuracy, quality and productive dialogue, improving provision for learners.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

Grade 1

Pupils are enthusiastic and confident in organising and leading prayer and liturgy in an age appropriate way. They value the responsibility of being involved in the prayer life of the school and they have a good understanding of its purpose and rhythms. Each class has prayer monitors who lead daily prayers and acts of worship and all pupils take responsibility for ensuring the class prayer table reflects the seasons of the liturgical year and displays scripture and appropriate artefacts. The formation of the new Chaplaincy team will greatly enhance the development of pupil led liturgy. During an observed reflection by a lower Key Stage 2 class, the pupils were reverent and deeply reflective, each taking turns to read passages of scripture and prayers of intercession. They placed their decorated stone on the focus table while taking a moment for personal prayer. It is evident that prayer and reflection is an important and valuable part of their everyday life in school and that pupils have a good understanding of its purpose in developing their spirituality and a deeper relationship with God. A Key Stage 1 pupil said 'When you pray you become closer to God and you can tell him all your worries', while an upper Key Stage 2 pupil said 'Praying gives you a chance to be thankful to God for everything good in your life.'

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and this is evidenced in the range of sacramental liturgy, prayer and reflections provided in school to enable the community to grow in spirituality and develop their faith journey irrespective of their starting points. Everyone is welcome to join in community prayer and pupils and staff of other faiths show immense respect for the sacramental liturgy and prayers celebrated in school by praying alongside others or listening quietly, leading to a prayerful community built on deep respect and reverence. The installation of the new Community Prayer Room is a cause of great celebration and a further demonstrates that Collective Worship is treasured and valued. This space will continue to deepen the experience of prayer and reflection for years to come. Collective Worship has a clear purpose in gathering together as a community to listen to the message of the Gospel or to reflect on the monthly school value. The school has invested in TenTen resources to further support assemblies, class worship and staff prayers enhancing the variety of styles of prayer and building teacher confidence in leading prayer and liturgy. Collective Worship is carefully planned to reflect the liturgical calendar. For example, the Rosary is said during the months of May and October, there are special prayer meetings during Lent and sacramental opportunities include Reconciliation during Lent and Advent and there are Masses to mark special school feasts and Saint's days.

Teachers are confident in facilitating pupils to deliver acts of worship and, where needed, support is given by the headteacher and RE leader who demonstrate a high level of expertise in modelling excellent practice. The parish priest is fully involved in developing the sacramental and spiritual formation of the school community and building links between the school and the parish. Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the schools monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship. They support the school by attending Masses and celebrations and are instrumental in leading future improvements.



EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

Diocesan Inspection of St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School

25th February 2022

Dear Pupils

It was such a pleasure to visit you all at St. Thomas More on Wednesday 25th February. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for all the hard work you do to make your school such a special place for everyone.

Here are some of the things I especially liked

- You are a very prayerful and respectful school community and you show that everyone is welcome and included. Your teachers and other adults take very good care of you and each other.
- Your RE books are excellent, they show that you work very hard in your lessons and that you enjoy your learning.
- Your teachers are dedicated to teaching exciting RE lessons and plan lots of ways for you to record your learning.
- You are given many opportunities to put your faith into action by serving each other, your community and those around the world who need your prayers and help most.

I have asked your teachers to consider these ideas:

- To find ways to celebrate the cultures and traditions of your families when you pray and learn together.
- To help improve your learning in RE, I have suggested that your teachers help you to reflect on your work and find more ways of improving it further.
- As you enjoy the responsibility of being leaders, developing the role of the Chaplaincy team will help you plan and deliver prayer and liturgy across the school.
- As teachers also enjoy learning new things, your teachers will go on courses outside school.

Thank you again for a very enjoyable visit, I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Stewart
Diocesan Inspector for East Anglia