

# St Thomas More RC Primary School

St Thomas More Road, Hull, HU4 7NP

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over the last two years achievement in mathematics and for more able pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 has been below the national average.
- Until recently, too much teaching has required improvement, or been inadequate, and as such it has not been good enough to raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is not yet consistently good, and in some lessons behaviour does not contribute to successful learning. Some pupils have not yet developed the ability to persevere or concentrate for longer periods of time.
- The turbulence in the leadership team has meant that the leaders' impact on improving teaching and achievement has been reduced.
- Governors did in the past not hold the school to account for the pupils' achievement.
- The work of the new subject leaders has yet to have a full impact on improving key aspects of the school's work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Achievement has accelerated recently, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching is improving.
- Less able pupils, those eligible for extra funding (pupil premium), boys and those with special educational needs are beginning to close the gap in achievement with their peers.
- Governance has improved rapidly and the leadership team is now stable.
- Pupils are proud of the school and say they feel safe while they are there.
- Plans made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons of which two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors made short visits to a series of lessons with the headteacher and observed the teaching of reading in small groups.
- The inspectors listened to several pupils read and examined in detail English and mathematics work from all classes.
- Inspectors considered the school’s written view of its own performance, held discussions with staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a foundation governor, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors held discussions with a member of the safeguarding team from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the Diocesan Director of Education.
- The inspectors took account of the school’s procedures for safeguarding. They looked at the school development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils’ progress.
- The inspectors spoke individually with a number of pupils, held a discussion with the school council and a further group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 29 staff questionnaires. They also spoke to parents on the playground.

## Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lyn Field, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a minority are of Indian, Filipino, Polish, or African heritage. The number of girls is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who move into or out of the school other than at the usual times is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection, and some absences amongst the leadership team. The staff team is now stable.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding in order to raise pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics and for more-able pupils, by making sure that:
  - work given to pupils matches their abilities so that all groups of pupils are effectively challenged throughout the lesson, particularly the more able
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve so that pupils reach their full potential
  - marking is always gives precise information to pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work
  - pupils are always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking
  - teachers provide more time in lessons for pupils to use and apply their skills in mathematics in problem solving and investigations
  - teachers develop their subject knowledge further in mathematics
  - outstanding practice in teaching is shared more widely in the school.
- In relation to pupils' behaviour and safety:
  - ensure that pupils' behaviour and attendance is good at all times
  - making sure all staff consistently apply school policies and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour
  - give pupils work that captures their interest so they remain focussed on their learning and develop the ability to concentrate well
  - routinely analyse the attendance of groups of pupils and use the information gathered to improve rates of attendance.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further developing the role of the subject leaders so that they provide more effective support in driving improvement forward
  - making checks to ensure that school policies and procedures are fully implemented.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- National data for the end of Key Stage 2 over the last two years shows that attainment is broadly average. However, achievement in mathematics, and for more-able pupils by the end of Key Stage 2, has been below the national average.
- The gap in attainment between boys and girls has been too wide and national data in 2012 showed that the achievement of boys was over a year behind that of girls. School data for the current year shows that this gap is now closing.
- The gap in the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers has varied widely since the last inspection. In 2012, the data showed that eligible pupils' overall attainment was two terms behind that of their peers overall in English and mathematics. Although this gap is closing, it is still too wide.
- In 2012, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs attained below the national average. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus attained above expectations in reading and writing.
- The knowledge and skills of children who enter the Reception class are, in the main, well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and literacy. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those who arrive later than at the usual times make the same progress as their peers.
- Overall, children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 at the expected level. Almost all pupils make the expected progress, and reach broadly average standards overall in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of reading is now more effective because it is well organised and teachers are more skilled in teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make). The work of teaching assistants with individual pupils and small groups is making a significant contribution in ensuring that any pupil at risk of falling behind is quickly identified and given appropriate support. This is having a good impact on raising standards. Older pupils say they enjoy reading.
- Over the last year all groups of pupils, including boys, have made accelerated progress, especially in writing and mathematics. Pupils with lower starting points in writing have made about two terms' more progress than their peers. This shows that gaps are rapidly closing.
- A minority of parents who responded to the on line questionnaire (Parent View) said that they disagreed that the pupils made good progress. Inspectors agree that some pupils should be making more progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Until recently, too much teaching has required improvement, or been inadequate, and as such it has not been good enough to raise pupils' achievement. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection.
- In less effective lessons, pupils can spend too long on the same task, which means that the more able are not challenged well enough and they lose interest.
- Marking varies in quality. Comments provided too often lack precision so pupils do not understand what they are doing well or how to improve.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Some is now outstanding. Effective training for all staff has been provided, which has improved their teaching skills.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' expectations are very high, and pupils are fully involved in their learning throughout the lesson. In these lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils are challenged to reach higher levels. This is shown in pupils' books where there are many examples of impressive work.
- Recent training in mathematics focused on pupils' number skills and the use of subject-specific

language has raised teachers' expectations. Questioning is often good, especially in starter sessions for mental mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as developed as it might in mathematics and more time could be given in lessons for pupils apply their mathematical skills in problem solving and investigations.

- In the best lessons, teachers plan work well for different groups and how adults are to be deployed. In a Year 3 writing lesson, each ability group received finely tuned teaching in turn so other groups worked independently applying what they had learned so all pupils maintained a good rate of progress.
- The quality of writing across the curriculum is a strength because topic work, especially in religious education, extends pupils' thinking and stimulates ideas for their writing. For example, the quality of extended writing in Year 5 is improving rapidly.
- In the best teaching, marking is sharply focused. Teachers suggest ways to improve and make time for pupils to respond. Progress accelerates because in lesson after lesson pupils learn new skills. Peer assessment is effective because they use technical language and the teacher checks their assessments to ensure they are accurate.
- A small minority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) did not agree that their children are well taught. Inspectors agree that over time this has been the case.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- Behaviour and attitudes are inconsistent. Improvements in pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, for example, are recent because policies and procedures are not always applied consistently by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour in some lessons does not contribute to successful learning. Some have not developed the ability to persevere or concentrate for periods of time appropriate for their age. Where learning activities demand less of pupils they follow instructions but with limited enthusiasm.
- Attendance has risen but the rate of improvement is too slow. This is because action has focused too narrowly on the poorest attenders. Although there has been significant improvement for this group, not enough attention has been given to other pupils who need to improve their attendance.
- Behaviour has improved where the school has looked closely at checks made. The number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour at lunchtime has halved with the introduction of a wide range of activities, with a netball club and story-telling and other activities. Extra training for lunchtime staff in how to calm any tensions has been very positive.
- Attitudes to learning are very positive where teaching is exciting and inspires pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The school's support for parents as well as pupils in the very small number of instances where bullying happens, is tailored well to the needs of the pupils concerned. The quality of the follow-up over a lengthy period of time is effective in improving pupils' behaviour. The school's records indicate a low incidence of bullying and racism. Pupils understand the different forms this can take and how it is different from times when friends fall out. They feel strongly that when there is name calling, pupils do not know the meaning of the words they are using.
- Pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of issues around e-safety, especially social networking and what action to take if they feel uncomfortable.
- A minority of parents who responded on Parent View disagreed that the school dealt effectively with bullying. Inspectors found that the school gave a high priority to the prevention of bullying and ensured that any incidents were taken seriously and reported appropriately.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- The resilience of the headteacher has made a significant difference to the school recently. Keen ambition, clear plans and precise actions to bring about improvement, are now well understood

by staff. However, leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that policies and procedures are always followed consistently by all staff and good practice in teaching is shared.

- Already, improvement is evident in a number of areas, the progress of boys and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is accelerating because the quality of teaching is improving. The number of incidents of poor behaviour has fallen.
- A re-established stability in leadership with clear responsibilities is now firmly in place. The headteacher is ably supported by senior leaders who are strongly leading school improvement. Senior leaders, along with subject leaders are now focusing on raising pupils' achievement. Although subject leaders are now helping to improve the quality of teaching, by observing lessons and reviewing work in pupils' books, this work had yet to have a full impact because it is very recently in place.
- In the past, teachers' pay has not been linked well enough to the quality of their teaching and they were not held accountable for the progress of their pupils. However, these procedures have been strengthened with the governing body involved, and are now having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching.
- Training in teaching the new skills-based mathematics curriculum has taken place, as well as training for teaching assistants in running funded reading activities for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Pupils' previously weak achievement and the wide gaps that have existed between the performance of groups of pupils means that the promotion of equality of opportunity has been inadequate. However, leaders are now tracking the progress of groups of pupils more carefully and gaining a clearer picture of where improvement is needed most. Gaps in pupils' achievement are closing.
- Leaders are making important improvements to the curriculum. The focus of the new religious education curriculum on broad questions, challenges pupils' thinking by developing their enquiry skills. As a result, pupils are beginning to tackle global issues, such as Fair Trade from both a religious and moral perspective. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved.
- The local authority has provided extensive, high-quality support and this has made a significant contribution to improving the leadership of the school and to school improvement overall.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has rapidly improved its effectiveness in holding the school to account since the last inspection. As a result, funding is used effectively and standards are beginning to rise. Frequent visits to the school give governors an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and pupils' achievement. The governors support and challenge the school effectively. A good structure of committees ensures that governors' work is carried out efficiently. They have a clear picture of teaching quality, and understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any under-performance through performance management procedures.
  - Governors ensure that salary increases are linked to teaching quality, responsibilities held and pupils' performance. They have made good decisions over the spending of the pupil premium and this is having a very positive impact on eligible pupils' progress. Governors check the impact on pupils' progress carefully to ensure best use of this funding. The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118055
<b>Local authority</b>	City of Kingston upon Hull
<b>Inspection number</b>	405744

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Louise Dyas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Wass
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2011
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