

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Appleton Road, London, SE9 6NS

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

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.

- Leaders, governors and staff have successfully worked together to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- All groups of pupils' achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning because they are set work that captures their interest.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Relationships are promoted effectively so that pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. Pupils attend school very regularly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. Well-chosen training for staff and high expectations of what pupils can achieve have helped the school to improve the overall effectiveness of its work.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress enable the school to identify any pupils who need additional support and effectively help them to achieve well.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They understand how well it is performing and work closely and effectively with the headteacher and senior leaders to further drive improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the most able pupils are not set difficult enough challenging work to do.
- Although there are examples of high quality marking and feedback on pupils' work, teachers do not always make clear how pupils might improve further and encourage them to respond to comments and suggestions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They visited 15 teaching sessions, including three sessions together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading. They looked at work in pupils’ books and the school’s information showing pupils’ progress.
- They considered a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school’s action plans and the self-evaluation report. Inspectors also looked at records of the monitoring of teaching, and information relating to how teachers’ targets are set, and professional development. The school’s website and records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspection took account of 32 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and the school’s own analysis of a recent survey of parents’ views. The inspection team also received two letters from parents and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clementina Aina

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Thomas More is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from many different ethnic groups with the largest being other White backgrounds and African. A larger proportion to the national average speaks English as an additional language. Few of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below the national average. A larger proportion than average is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families) is below the national average. There are currently no looked after children or children of service families at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure the most able pupils are always set work that is hard enough to challenge them.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and comments make clear how pupils might improve their work and that pupils respond systematically to teachers' feedback.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils including those from minority ethnic groups and those speaking English as an additional language achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics because they appreciate the interesting activities that they are given to practise solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is good. Boys and girls enjoy the topics they are given to write about because they are effectively chosen by staff to engage their interest and encourage them to want to write well.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading. Children in the Reception class achieve well overall and develop their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) quickly. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, more children than the national average attain the expected standard in reading. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, an above-average proportion reached the expected standards.
- The school's information on the progress in reading of pupils currently at the school in Key Stage 2 shows they make good gains. Improvements to classroom libraries, workshops for pupils led by authors, regular practice in reading aloud as well as extra sessions for selected pupils are all helping to improve reading in Years 1 to 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They benefit from guidance from additional adults in lessons as well as extra sessions with well-trained adults and specialist therapists that help them to build up their skills quickly.
- The most able pupils in Year 6 are helped to reach high standards, particularly in mathematics, because they benefit from regular sessions taught by a specialist mathematics teacher. In other lessons, the most able pupils are not always set work that is hard enough to help them to attain as consistently highly and this slows their progress rate.
- Pupils at the earliest stages of learning English are helped to develop their English vocabulary and pronunciation effectively because they benefit from regular additional classes in communication skills.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is good because the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination effectively. The additional funding is used successfully for a wide range of additional sessions to close the gap between eligible pupils and the others. The school's information on the progress of eligible pupils currently at the school shows that they make similar good progress to the others.
- In last summer's national assessments, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were less than a term behind the others in mathematics and less than two terms behind their peers in reading, which is a smaller gap than that found nationally. In writing, they were just over two terms behind the others, which is the same gap as that found nationally.
- The additional sports funding is being used to increase pupils' participation in sporting activities and raise standards. Through links with a local secondary school, older pupils experience a wide range of sports including golf and cross-country. After-school multi-sports activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2, as well as football clubs for boys and girls run by a local football club are popular and are helping to foster positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils enjoy their time at school and have positive attitudes because teachers set work that engages their interest in English and mathematics. For example, in an English lesson, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed writing when they were set to write stories about mythical creatures they had invented themselves. Pupils in a mathematics lesson worked hard because they liked the

challenge of solving real-life word problems.

- Children in Reception are happy because the adults make sure they have interesting activities to do. They were enthusiastic to get on with a choice of activities based on a Bible story about sharing loaves and fishes. Children make good progress and enjoy reading because they practise phonics regularly and read individually to parent volunteers each week.
- Extra sessions in mathematics for the most able pupils in Year 6 help them to do suitably difficult tasks. The most able pupils in other classes are not always given activities that are hard enough to help them to progress quickly to reach higher standards in their work.
- Relationships and cooperation are encouraged successfully so that pupils develop strong social skills and work well together. Children in Reception share resources readily and older pupils collaborate well when they complete tasks and solve problems together.
- The school regularly checks pupils' progress and uses the information to identify any pupils who need additional support. Additional adults contribute well to the good progress of the pupils they support in classrooms and in additional sessions outside the classroom. This helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, to achieve well.
- The quality of teachers' feedback and marking on pupils' work is variable. There are some effective examples. However, pupils do not improve quickly when marking does not make the next steps clear or when they are not encouraged to respond to the comments and suggestions teachers make.
- Pupils appreciate the outings and visits to local places of interest that the school organises, including a residential trip to an activity centre for pupils in Year 6.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn and want to achieve well. Effective routines help lessons to run without any interruptions. Pupils listen attentively, settle quickly to their work, and pay attention to the teachers promptly because staff make their high expectations consistently clear.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. They are polite and friendly and their conduct around the school is orderly and calm.
- Through assemblies and workshops pupils know what constitutes bullying and what does not. They say that bullying is rare but there is some occasional name-calling or sometimes pupils are deliberately left out. Pupils are confident to report problems via the worry box and know that staff will help them, although not all the adults tackle any problems equally decisively.
- Children in Reception conduct themselves well. They take turns, listen sensibly and follow routines with confidence.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is successful and pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves from harm. Advice on how to avoid risks when using computers and information and communication technology as well as learning to swim and how to ride bicycles safely all help pupils to develop a good awareness of hazards.
- Attendance rates have remained above national averages and risen further since the previous inspection. The school makes the importance of attending school every day very clear to the whole school community. Very quick action and supportive steps make sure that any absence is tackled effectively.
- Weekly competitions, celebration of the classes with the best attendance rates as well as awards for pupils who attend school very regularly over the year successfully encourage all pupils not to miss valuable learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have driven improvements since the previous

inspection. Through working closely with the staff, identifying where training is needed and leading enhancements to the way reading, writing and mathematics are taught have been successful in establishing a culture focused on high quality of teaching. Pupils' good behaviour has been maintained. As a result, the school provides a good standard of education and demonstrates capacity to improve.

- Accurate self-evaluation has helped the school to identify appropriate actions to secure improvements. Regular checks on teaching, additional training for staff and systematic checks on the progress pupils make have been effective in tackling issues in teaching quality and improving pupils' learning.
- Leaders of subjects lead effective improvements to teaching in their subjects: for example, the introduction of writing projects that capture the interest of boys and girls. Opportunities for pupils to use computers are improving mathematical skills and new books have increased pupils' motivation to read.
- However, leaders and managers have not made sure that the most able pupils are consistently given work that challenges them to achieve even higher standards, or that marking and feedback always make clear what pupils might do to improve further.
- The school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered so that pupils develop caring attitudes and self-confidence. Activities including charity fundraising, singing in the school choir and learning to play musical instruments together with celebrating religious festivals are well organised to promote pupils' personal skills.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school's leaders and has provided good support to help the school secure lasting improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes a strong interest in all aspects of the school's work and is keen to see the school improve further. Governors know how well the school performs because they examine the school's information on pupils' achievement and have made sure they understand how it compares with other schools. They know the quality of teaching, and are well informed about how any aspects of underperformance have been addressed. Through performance management they make sure there is a clear link between teaching quality, pupils' academic outcomes and salaries. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective.

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	100176
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	430821

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Grice
Headteacher	Peter Finlay
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2012
Telephone number	020 88569153
Fax number	020 88569153
Email address	sao@stmprimary.greenwich.sch.uk

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