

St Thomas More RC Primary School

St Thomas More Road, Hull, HU4 7NP

Inspection dates 16–17 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The interim headteacher and the consultant headteacher, skilfully supported by governors, have a strong vision and ambitious plan for the continued improvement of their school. Teaching and achievement are improving. Recent progress has been particularly rapid.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They are well prepared to begin Year 1.
- All pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in other subjects. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their lessons.
- Teaching is good. Teachers typically plan stimulating lessons that engage pupils' interest and encourage studiousness.
- Behaviour and the work of the school to keep pupils safe are good. Pupils are keen and become increasingly confident learners within a secure and caring environment.
- The curriculum offers a good balance of subjects. Together with a full range of clubs and other extra activities, pupils are encouraged well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors know their school well. Because of this, they are able to offer informed challenge to school leaders. They monitor school performance and planning closely and effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not always challenging enough. Pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve as highly as possible. They are not always required to think deeply and to solve problems that extend their thinking. Some targets are too easily within their grasp.
- Pupils' extended and imaginative writing is not always confident and fluent and does not fully reflect the range of their reading.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching. A proportion of observations was conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, folders and in school displays. Inspectors listened to pupils reading in class and in separate groups.
- They met with senior and middle leaders, including the special educational needs co-ordinator and those leading the teaching of literacy and mathematics.
- There was a meeting with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. There was a meeting with a representative of the local authority and a telephone discussion with the Director of Schools for the Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- Inspectors met groups of pupils, including members of the pupil council, and took other opportunities to speak informally with pupils.
- They took account of the 18 responses made to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parental opinion. Inspectors also spoke informally to a number of parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- They examined a wide range of documents and records covering the work of the school. These included information about pupils' progress and attainment, plans for improvement, records relating to pupil safety, governing body minutes and documents summarising the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Paul Copping, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding that schools receive to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is greater than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom their first language is not believed to be English is much larger than the national average.
- The school met the current government current floor standards in 2014. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been extensive changes to staffing at all levels since the last inspection. Both the interim headteacher and the consultant headteacher are recent appointments.
- The school receives school improvement support including that from National Leaders and Local Leaders of Education from the following schools and organisations: The Hull Collaborative Academy Trust; The Hull Collaborative Teaching School Alliance and St Mary's College (with whom St Thomas More has a confirmed federation soon to take place). The current consultant headteacher of St Thomas More is seconded from Sutton Park Primary School within the Teaching School Alliance. The interim headteacher is seconded from St Mary's College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve teaching in order to raise achievement further, by:
 - teachers rigorously checking on understanding in lessons and planning next steps in learning so that the level of challenge remains consistently high for all pupils, including the most able
 - teachers consistently requiring pupils to think more deeply and to use problem-solving skills
 - further developing pupils' writing skills so that they are more fluent when writing imaginatively and at length.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a rapid and wholesale change in the composition of school leadership. The interim headteacher and consultant headteacher are recent appointments. They constitute a skilled team, formidably committed to the advancement of their school and enjoying the full support of a highly committed governing body. They have been able to draw on a support network of exceptional depth, commissioned by governors and the Diocese and including the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, National Leaders in Education, a teaching school alliance and a partner secondary school with which St Thomas More will soon federate.
- This array of professional support and advice has been used to good effect. The headteachers have enthused and motivated teachers, the large majority of whom are appointments within the last year. The sense of an aspirational common purpose amongst members of staff is strong.
- School leaders identify the professional development needs of members of staff with great accuracy. The range of training is impressive and ensures that teachers have the opportunity to see the best practice locally and nationally. Teachers receive the training they need to continue to improve pupil progress. Teachers and middle leaders spoke of the impact made by Specialist Leaders of Education commissioned to support the school in improving teaching.
- Middle leaders, like senior leaders, are recently in post. They are enthusiastic and inventive in their approach to their roles. In a short time, they have developed cross-curricular approaches that improve the opportunities for pupils to practise key skills.
- The interim headteacher and consultant headteacher have clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses of their school. In response to an identification of weak teaching, they acted promptly and decisively. As a consequence, pupil progress has accelerated very rapidly in the past two terms.
- The quality of teaching is closely monitored by senior leaders and judged in terms of the progress made by pupils. Any salary advancement for teachers is securely linked to this monitoring.
- Leaders promote equal opportunities well. Ethical purpose is central to the school's faith status. Caring, tolerant relationships are promoted from the Reception class onwards and encourage good behaviour from pupils. Discrimination is combatted effectively through such specific activities such as focused assemblies and, more generally, by the modelling of and attention to core British values of democracy and tolerance in the way that adults supervise the school community. Pupils are, therefore, well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The school's policy and practice are effective. The members of staff leading in this area are fully trained for their roles. The school is vigilant with regard to safety and has improved the quality of its communication with parents, including with families who do not respond as frequently or as fully as others.
- Pupil premium funding is deployed to good effect. For example, it funded additional adult support in Key Stage 1. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 achieved better than other pupils as a result.
- The curriculum is good. Reading, writing and mathematics are accorded suitable priority. Increasingly, connections between subjects are made so that pupils can practise skills more widely and adapt what they learn to different contexts. Year 5 pupils make links between reading, writing and mathematics and produce associated art and geography work, all derived from their reading of Michael Morpurgo's *Kensuke's Kingdom*. Year 6 pupils write in detail about genetics, comparing different species, adapting their style of writing to suit the subject matter.
- The additional funding for sport and physical education is used effectively. It supports clubs that bring an additional dimension to school life. For example, three lunchtimes each week, football coaches offer expert training to boys and girls of all ages. There is also frequent after-school sport. Pupils look forward to the inter-house athletic competition in a spirit of friendly rivalry and some train for the event, quite independently, on the school field at break. An Irish dancing club and instrumental tuition provide an additional cultural dimension. A menu of supervised lunchtime activities, including board games and crafts, give pupils popular alternatives to informal play. Residential visits for outdoor activities broaden the experience pupils gain. In combination, these different facets of school life contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have good, detailed knowledge of their school. Their understanding of key performance data is thorough and this allows them to provide highly effective challenge to school leaders. Working in partnership with the diocese and local authority, they identified the cause of underperformance by pupils and took decisive action to improve school leadership. They continue to monitor school

performance closely, including differences between the performances of different groups. They maintain close oversight of any advance of teachers on the pay scale and understand the necessary linkage between the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.

- The school's budget is closely scrutinised by governors to ensure that all spending is determined by the priorities in the school's development plan. The allocation of the pupil premium funding to assist disadvantaged students is checked on effectively to ensure that it makes the intended impact and represents good value for money. Governors scrutinise the spending of the additional funding for physical education and sport with the same rigour.
- Governors are attentive to pupil behaviour and safety. They give a high priority to their monitoring of the school's work in this area and assure themselves of the practical implementation of the policies they have approved, making frequent visits.
- The local authority has provided additional funding to the school that has contributed to the comprehensive and effective support partnerships from which the school benefits. It also makes training that helps to maintain and to improve their skills available to governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School records and conversations with parents, staff and pupils showed that it has improved strongly since the last inspection. Many spoke of the way in which pupils fully understand the consequences of their actions so that repetition of unsociable behaviour is less likely. The role of the emotional well-being worker (a member of staff focusing on pupils' social and emotional development) in improving behaviour is valued by pupils and families.
- Pupils are supportive of one another in lessons, celebrating one another's successes. Increasingly, they are asked to use electronic media to research topics independently and they respond enthusiastically to this responsibility. They are pleased to share their work with visitors to the school.
- Pupils arrive at their classes ready to learn. Their parents confirm that they enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well. Because the pupil council sees its suggestions having an influence in school, membership is a source of pride and taken very seriously. The council produced its own survey about bullying and adults as well as children were required to complete it. They had discussed the format and made changes to make it more engaging.
- Pupils conduct themselves around the building in a very mature way. They wear their uniform with pride. They respond to the bright, stimulating environment, indoors and out, with a keenness to show it off to visitors. They are courteous in taking turns and opening doors and very helpful to adults and to one another.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Well thought-out policies guide practice. Members of staff are efficiently trained and vigilant about risk.
- Pupils are guided to manage risk in ways appropriate to their age. They are mindful of road safety issues and older pupils have the option of instruction in cycling proficiency. Pupils are aware of the role of the emergency services and the hazards posed by fire and accident.
- Pupils appreciate the value of the internet and understand how it may be used for learning and fun, but are aware of its limitations and understand the caution they need to exercise in using it. Even younger pupils appreciated that information on line may be inaccurate. Older pupils know, for example, that 'pop-ups' on the computer screen are uninvited messages and may be trying to sell something.
- Bullying is very rare. However, pupils understand what it is and how to respond. They have absolute confidence in the adults around them to sort out any problems, should they occur. That the adults in school are 'very kind' was something repeated by pupils in discussions.
- Attendance is improving and is in line with the national average. The school takes both supportive and firm actions to maximise attendance and liaises well with other involved agencies. Where resolute, formal action has been necessary to secure a child's attendance, it has been taken.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers foster good relationships in their classrooms. Hard work and application are the norm. Where the noise level is raised, with very rare exceptions it is because pupils are enthusiastically discussing the

task in hand.

- Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils. This does not always, however, ensure that activities in lessons respond flexibly to pupils' needs. Sometimes the eventual, expected outcome of a task is clear, early in a lesson, particularly to the most able pupils. This limits pupils' opportunity to think more deeply and work towards a solution without any sense of a 'ceiling' on what is expected.
- A very large majority of lessons are well planned and engaging. Classroom displays are of a high quality and closely linked to what pupils are learning. Different areas in the classroom provide spaces to encourage reading or reflection.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide effective additional support to disadvantaged pupils. Interventions are timely and well judged.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) are taught well and pupils are coached in accurate articulation of sounds; pupils gain a solid grounding for reading from the early years. School initiatives give pupils the chance to design the reading areas, an attractive feature in every classroom that stimulates the imagination and supplies a quiet space for reading. Pupils are able to make decisions about the books purchased for each class and are encouraged to take them home. Pupils' choice of favourite book when asked was clearly influenced for the better by these initiatives. Home-school reading logs confirmed that pupils read widely outside school and that the books selected increase in difficulty at a good rate.
- Children are given a solid foundation in letter formation in the Reception class. As they move up the school, pupils are required to present writing across the curriculum to a high standard, grammatically and in terms of punctuation. They learn that different purposes require different styles and that they must consider for what audience they are writing. Debates comparing evidence in science, for example, require pupils to use their notes as a script. However, in writing with less obvious structure, pupils are less confident and, consequently, less fluent in expressing themselves.
- Mathematics is taught well overall. Pupils acquire the key skills they require at a good pace. Sometimes, opportunities to practise reasoning and problem-solving skills are not prominent enough in lessons, limiting the opportunities for the most able pupils to advance at a quicker rate.
- Teachers make effective use of teaching assistants. They show good subject knowledge. They work skilfully with the few pupils whose behaviour can be poor and who can be distracted, ensuring that they return quickly to the task in hand.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2014 national test confirmed a continuing trend of improvement. From below average starting points, pupils in Key Stage 1 achieved broadly in line with national standards in the tests at the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Results in the 2014 national tests in Year 6 were broadly in line with the national averages. School records and evidence during the inspection indicate that the slowing of rates of progress has been rectified and that standards overall have improved further, with the pace accelerating rapidly over the past two terms. A greater proportion of pupils is achieving higher levels in Year 6 tests. The proportion in mathematics was above the national average in 2014.
- The school strongly promotes reading. In the Year 1 phonics check in 2014, a high proportion of pupils met or exceeded the expected standard. Pupils of all abilities used their knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Pupils explore their interests through reading and are skilfully guided toward extending their range. Consequently, older pupils are prepared to experiment in what they read and are able to appreciate, for example, the symbolic aspects of fantasy writing.
- Pupils' writing develops well because they have opportunities to practise their skills across the curriculum. Although pupils develop increasing fluency as they move through the school, extended writing is not as good as their reading and pupils are more hesitant in handling imaginative themes.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. Skills in calculation build steadily from a secure foundation in key facts, such as number bonds and multiplication numbers. Pupils in Year 6 are proficient in the essentials of calculation, but less confident in reasoning and enquiry because opportunities to do this are not always available.
- The high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the very high proportion for whom their first language is believed to be one other than English achieve well. Their attainment in tests exceeds that of other pupils.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is small and caution needs to be exercised in establishing trends because of the impact that the results for a single pupil has in producing a significant change to data. In the 2014 national tests, disadvantaged pupils were about three terms behind other pupils nationally and

other pupils in the school in mathematics. In reading, the difference was three terms behind other pupils nationally and four terms behind other pupils in the school. In writing, the gap was four terms below other pupils nationally and others in the school.

- Gaps are closing rapidly this year and inspectors saw rapid improvement in the work of disadvantaged pupils during the inspection. Their work consistently showed narrowing gaps in achievement between themselves and other pupils. The rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils is broadly the same as that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. There is close attention to what will best help them. Support for them is timely and well focused, ensuring that they receive the help that most advances their learning.
- Overall, the most able pupils achieve well. The proportion that make better progress than expected is increasing. Occasionally, they are limited in what they can achieve because the objective of a lesson is too easily within their grasp.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is led well. Following a recent change in leadership, the accuracy of assessment of children's progress has improved, allowing teachers to plan to meet their needs more exactly and to maximise the rate at which they gain and consolidate new skills.
- The physical environment is stimulating. Outdoors, children have an area divided into different zones calculated to prompt investigation and discovery. Children benefit, for example, from reacting to insects in the outside area, speculating about exactly what they are and how they live. Equally, they imagine how a swamp might be created for the dinosaurs they write about.
- Children enter the Reception class with a level of development below what is expected for their age. In 2014, a minority of children had achieved a good level of development by the time they began Year 1. Progress has improved this year and children are currently making rapid advances. The small group of disadvantaged children make better progress than others.
- Induction procedures for children are thorough. Early years staff liaise with families and pinpoint gaps in children's learning.
- Teaching is good. Phonics skills are taught in groups, divided by rate of progress, jointly with Year 1 pupils. This gives children advancing more rapidly the opportunity to work at a higher level and to have a head-start on what they will be doing in Year 1. Teachers encourage children to use their phonics skills accurately in spelling.
- Children's behaviour is good and children are kept safe by rigorous policies and practice. Members of staff are mindful of the needs of children whose communication skills are less developed and listen attentively to any anxieties they may have. Most children learn quickly to apply themselves for extended periods and to listen carefully to their teacher. The few who find this particularly difficult are given additional, well-focused attention.
- Reading and writing are taught well. The children's "Learning Journey" books show good progress since September, with handwriting increasingly well formed and growing vocabulary reflecting a wide range of topics.
- Mathematical skills are introduced in a well-structured way and taught effectively. Children gain an understanding of the first elements of shape and number through practical activities such as creating patterns and have many opportunities to practise them.

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	118055
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	462254

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	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Collette Braithwaite
Headteacher	Ged Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2013
Telephone number	01482 354093
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@st-thomasmore.hull.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

