

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

High Street, Carisbrooke, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1NR

Inspection dates	8–9 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders' efforts have focused sharply on improving the school quickly. Past weaknesses in teaching have been tackled successfully but there is more to do to provide pupils with a good education.
- Pupils make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics between Years 1 and 6. Attainment is average by the time pupils leave but should be higher.
- Pupils' progress is not good in Key Stage 1. Standards at Year 2 dipped in 2015, leaving the current pupils in Year 3 with ground to make up.
- Pupils do not benefit consistently from teaching that has drive, energy and depth. Most-able pupils should be making swifter progress.
- The curriculum is not as broad and balanced as it should be. Arts subjects receive little emphasis and not all classes in Key Stage 2 have regular French lessons.
- Not all teachers monitor learning astutely during lessons to check how well their plans are working. They do not adapt their teaching promptly enough to take account of the ebb and flow in pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders are involved in improving the school as members of the leadership team. They have developed their skills as leaders but do not yet have a strong enough influence and impact on improving the school's effectiveness.
- A small group of governors have taken a lead role in overseeing the school's improvement. They provide appropriate challenge and have a general awareness about the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is managed and supported. Not all governors are as proactive in this respect.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a good start in Reception and are provided with an interesting range of experiences to develop their skills, knowledge and personal development. Links with parents are good.
- Pupils are friendly, open and interesting to talk to. They behave well during worship and breaks, and get along well together. Pupils' well-being is nurtured well and they learn in a happy and supportive atmosphere.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership so that it has a clear impact on moving the school to good, by:
 - ensuring that all monitoring and evaluation activities have a sharp, analytical focus on the learning of different groups of pupils, to determine precisely what needs to be improved
 - improving middle leaders' ability to identify weaknesses, lead change, and have a clear and demonstrable impact on pupils' outcomes
 - reducing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1, in reading, writing and mathematics, and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally
 - making sure that statutory requirements are fulfilled for teaching a foreign language in Key Stage 2, and that all pupils have a sufficiently broad arts curriculum
 - enhancing pupils' cultural development to make sure that they are well prepared for life in a more culturally and ethnically diverse community than the one in which they currently live
 - ensuring that all members of the governing body fulfil their strategic roles in monitoring and challenging the school's work.
- Improve teaching and the consistency of pupils' progress between Years 1 and 6 so that pupils build successfully on their start in Reception, by:
 - making sure that teachers monitor the effectiveness of pupils' learning as lessons progress, and adapt their approach, or the activities, promptly when pupils need this
 - ensuring that all teachers have high enough expectations of most-able pupils and step in to move them on, or deepen their learning, when the pupils are capable of such challenge
 - ensuring that the school's approach to how lessons are planned is implemented consistently well in all classes, so that it is entirely clear what pupils will learn and how they will know that they have been successful
 - making sure that the very small minority of pupils who disrupt other pupils' learning are managed successfully, and that all adults in the class help to bring this about
 - making better use of the strengths in teaching that already exist in the school to share expertise more widely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have been successful in steering the school out of a category of concern and have resolved significant weaknesses in teaching. Teachers' performance is managed appropriately and teaching quality is checked through a suitable range of activities. However, when they monitor teaching, leaders' oral and written observations tend to focus more on the teachers' work than the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Strengths and weaknesses in the pace, appropriateness and depth of learning, for example, particularly for different groups, receive less attention yet these are important aspects to get right if teaching is to become good.
- Support from the local authority and the federated primary school has developed middle leaders' skills and confidence, as leaders, to some extent. They check planning and pupils' work, for example, and produce detailed reports. However, these are not sufficiently diagnostic about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning to pinpoint what needs to be strengthened to move the school to good. Although supportive and involved, these leaders do not have sufficient influence on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders have worked successfully with partners, including local authority advisers and a national support school, to improve teaching and leadership. Senior leaders have demonstrated that they have the capacity to sustain and build on the school's improvement. Inconsistencies in provision, particularly teaching, are not yet fully ironed out; hence, pupils' progress is not secure enough to be judged good.
- The curriculum themes are popular with pupils. They enjoy the various topics and the interesting activities that 'hook' their interest at the start of each new theme. While these bring a certain breadth to pupils' curriculum experience, as different subjects are woven in, the curriculum is not as broad and balanced as it should be. Creative areas such as art and, particularly, music have not had enough priority while the school has been in special measures. These aspects of pupils' learning are not developed enough. Curriculum breadth has not been monitored sufficiently. French, the school's chosen modern language, is not taught regularly in all Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils are likely, therefore, to move to secondary school without the necessary grounding in a modern foreign language.
- Provision for special educational needs has improved and the school uses a range of interventions to help pupils to catch up. These are not always evaluated regularly and thoroughly to check that they are having a clear impact on pupils' progress, so that any adjustments necessary can be made promptly.
- Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is promoted well. This is evident in pupils' demeanour, behaviour and personal development. The school's ethos and provision encourage pupils to take responsibility and initiative, as members of the school community. They are encouraged to be tolerant, empathetic and understanding of others who are less fortunate than themselves, such as refugees from war-torn countries. However, pupils' cultural awareness is underdeveloped. The curriculum is not preparing pupils well for life in an area with wider cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities. Their learning is enhanced by a range of trips. The government funding for physical education and sport has widened opportunities for pupils and increased their interest and participation. Teachers' expertise has been broadened through courses or working alongside specialist coaches to build skills in teaching, for example, cricket, tennis, athletics or skipping. The funding has allowed pupils to take part in competitive sports with pupils from the federated primary school and the local cluster of schools.
- Members of staff are proud to work at the school and see themselves as part of a committed team pulling in the same direction for the benefit of the pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has developed its strategic role considerably over the last year in providing an appropriate degree of challenge for the school's leaders. Three governors, in particular, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, have kept in close touch with the school's improvement. They ask pertinent questions to assure themselves that the school is on track with its plans and that pupils' education is improving.
 - Governors have a sound overall knowledge of the main messages coming through from information on pupils' performance. Governors monitor the school's use of the pupil premium (additional government funding). They review the gaps in these pupils' learning and know where these have narrowed or widened. Over the last year, the funding has been used effectively to narrow the gap at Key Stage 2 but it has had less impact at Key Stage 1.

- Governors have a general picture of the quality of teaching. Leaders' self-evaluation is not yet analytical enough to give governors precise information on which aspects of teaching and learning need to improve to move the school to good.
- Governors' arrangements for managing the performance of the headteacher are appropriate. Governors also keep oversight of how the performance of other teachers is managed, to assure themselves that pupils' progress is given due consideration when deciding upon pay awards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children meet requirements and staff are appropriately trained. Several senior staff have undertaken additional training to take the lead for safeguarding incidents, should they arise. Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures, what to do should they have concerns and who should be informed. New members of staff are inducted promptly in safeguarding. Leaders are alert to signs that could, potentially, indicate a concern, such as a pupil's extended absence. Leaders involve other agencies, as appropriate, to ensure that pupils learn in a happy and safe environment. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View confirmed that their children feel happy and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Leaders' work to improve how teachers plan units of work, and individual lessons, has been a clear factor in improving teaching. Teachers have benefited from seeing practice in a national support school and have taken on board new ideas. One change senior leaders wished to see was pupils being more actively involved in lessons and having more choice over the tasks they attempt to challenge themselves. This is still becoming embedded. Pupils are not always clear what they are learning, in accordance with the school's approach, and they sometimes make the wrong choices given their capabilities. This initiative is working more successfully in some classes than others.
- Teachers do not always spot when pupils are capable of moving on more quickly or are ready to tackle something that demands more effort. Pupils' books show that most-able pupils sometimes work well within their capabilities and are not challenged sufficiently. In mathematics, for example, they complete pages of repeated calculations that are all correct when they could have moved on more quickly to challenging questions and problems to deepen their thinking and reasoning.
- Curriculum themes provide pupils with a range of writing experiences across different styles of writing. Pupils tackle writing tasks readily and soon knuckle down to tasks, but they do not always have opportunities to write more extended pieces of work on a consistent basis.
- The school is in its first year of implementing the assessment arrangements in line with the new National Curriculum. These are, understandably, still in the early stages of becoming embedded. Teachers are conversant with the new approach adopted by the school. Interim assessments and the information teachers gather, day to day, from reviewing lessons and pupils' responses, are used effectively to guide the future learning in some classes but not all.
- Teaching assistants have benefited from appropriate training and have developed their skills in using questions to guide and support learning. They also do not always watch pupils' reactions as they teach, to monitor how well they are learning and spot when they may need to intervene, encourage or explain.
- There are pockets of consistently good teaching in the school. In addition to the early years, good teaching is a common feature in Year 5. Books show that pupils work hard and produce a good amount and range of work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Almost all pupils work hard in lessons and want to try their best. They form positive relationships and are willing to help one another with their learning.
- Pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility. They realise that certain roles are given out following a democratic process and talk in a mature way about how, for example, it is not fair to vote for yourself when electing the class member who will sit on the school council.

- Pupils talk confidently about ways that they can keep themselves safe. They know about the potential issues that can arise through using social media, for example. They trust adults in the school and feel they can approach them with any difficulties.
- In most cases, staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Although the vast majority of pupils behave well, a few pupils, mostly boys, do not demonstrate the same degree of self-discipline and awareness of how their behaviour can affect others. In one class, this small group sometimes disturbs other pupils' concentration and staff are not always quick enough to re-establish a calm and productive learning atmosphere.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over the last year and is now broadly average. Levels of persistent absence have also reduced considerably.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in and outside lessons, in the playground, the hall and when moving around the school. They show respect for one another and realise that their attitudes and demeanour help to bring about a happy school community.
- Pupils are sociable at playtimes and mix happily together, talking, playing or eating their fruit. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils report that this is typically the case. Scrutiny of behaviour logs shows that behaviour problems arise rarely and are dealt with in a fair and decisive way, involving parents, if necessary, to resolve any fallouts between pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' progress has improved over the last year and the past inadequate achievement has been eradicated. Pupils make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move from Year 1 to Year 6 but this is not yet good, partly because most-able pupils do not work at a good enough rate to reach their potential. Although outcomes have improved to average by Year 6, pupils should be leaving the school with even higher standards.
- As the leaders and staff have, rightly, focused on English and mathematics while the school has been in a category of concern, some other subjects have had less attention. As a result, pupils' progress in arts subjects and in French, in Key Stage 2, is inconsistent.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their knowledge of phonics steadily. They use this knowledge (the sounds that letters make) confidently when reading, to help them with words that are more tricky to work out.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally closed considerably in Year 6 for the pupils who left in 2015. At Year 2, while it closed slightly in reading and writing, this was not the case in mathematics. In this key stage, there is more to do to make sure that disadvantaged pupils catch up as quickly as possible so that, by the time they leave the school, the gaps are non-existent.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress overall. They benefit from additional help and extra programme, to support their learning, but these are not sharply evaluated to check whether they are working and helping them to catch up. The arrangements for holding teachers accountable for the progress of pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently robust to encourage better than expected progress.

Early years provision

is good

- Although the early years has not been a major area for development since the last inspection, leaders have identified appropriate training and support in response to their monitoring, or that of advisers. Provision has improved in the Reception class over the last year. Appropriate arrangements are in place to moderate assessments and check that they are accurate.
- A number of children enter school with limited skills, experiences and understanding in their communication and language, and personal and emotional development. Although the outcomes vary from year to year, most children leave Reception ready to move to the National Curriculum in Year 1.

- Children's learning is encouraged through a good range of planned activities, both inside and outside, and they make a good start in the Reception year. When children are learning key skills, such as literacy and mathematics, the activities set up outside have a clear link to the main teaching focus for the session. This helps to build coherence in children's learning. They know they are learning to count in different ways, for example, or to write, whether they are inside or out.
- Staff make sure that children learn and develop in a supportive, safe environment where they feel well cared for and looked after. Children know the classroom routines and become increasingly independent choosing activities, putting on their coat and wellies, and following instructions.
- When adults work on more directed tasks with children, they ensure a careful balance between intervening, asking questions and allowing children to have a go for themselves. They provide good role models and encourage children to share ideas and give things a go. Occasionally, outside and inside, adults miss opportunities to develop children's talk and ideas, encourage them to persevere, or change activity when they lose interest and drift off to less purposeful activity.
- Children's learning is captured and annotated in books that the staff collate to record children's development. These demonstrate their learning across different areas of the early years curriculum. They are well organised and the teacher ensures that children's next steps are identified, alongside their successes. In this way, the teacher's planning is aligned to children's different needs and steps taken to narrow any gaps for children, particularly those who have special needs or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Links with parents are good. Parents are actively encouraged to keep in touch with their children's achievements and support their learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	118199
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10005273

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katrina Rigby
Headteacher	Janet Tuck
Telephone number	01983 522747
Website	www.stthomasofcantrcpri.iow.sch.uk
Email address	stocprimary@tiscali.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average. It is part of a federation on the island with St Mary's Catholic Primary School. The headteacher is the executive headteacher of both schools. Since the last inspection, a deputy headteacher has been appointed for the federation. The deputy spends most of the week at this school.
- Over recent months, the school's leaders and staff have received support and advice from Halterworth Primary School, Romsey, Hampshire. The executive headteacher of this school is a national leader in education.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs, which are managed by the governing body.
- A section 48 inspection of religious education did not take place at the same time as this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and looked at pupils' written work. Some visits were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- An inspector met two groups of pupils to talk to them about their school life, and many other pupils were spoken to during the school day.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including records of leaders' monitoring, minutes of the governing body, safeguarding records, behaviour logs and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority (Hampshire).
- Parent View received 30 responses, which inspectors considered along with 21 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Dickinson, lead inspector

Darren Aisthorpe

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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