

Inspection of St Thomas Cantilupe C of E Academy

Coningsby Street, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 2DY

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and happy at St Thomas Cantilupe Church of England Academy. A strong sense of community fills the school. Staff are proud to work here. One staff member commented, 'There is a real feeling of team here.' Other staff echo this.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils play well together at social times and concentrate during lessons. Pupils told us bullying hardly ever happens. Adults quickly resolve the rare fallings out. Pupils respect people's differences.

Over the past two years the school has improved significantly. All staff have high expectations of pupils and expect them to work hard. Pupils respond well to the challenge. Pupils are keen to learn. Subjects are planned and taught well. However, some gaps in pupils' knowledge remain in the foundation subjects, especially for the older pupils. Leaders know this and are working to fill these.

Pupils speak positively about the wide-ranging enrichment opportunities they had before COVID-19 (coronavirus). Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the changes that have taken place. A typical comment sums up the views of many: 'The school has changed dramatically for the better under the new leadership. The expectations are so much higher now.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have worked incredibly hard and successfully to improve the school since the previous inspection. The initial focus on developing English, mathematics and phonics has paid off. Staff are exceedingly well trained in these subjects. They know the right questions to ask pupils to check what they know and remember. If pupils need additional help, this is given quickly to ensure that they do not fall behind.

The curriculum is very well planned. The order in which lessons are taught develops in a sensible way. Pupils are not overloaded with information and are given time to practice what they have learned. Leaders know that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge due to a historic legacy of weak teaching. The curriculum supports teachers to revisit learning to ensure that gaps are addressed. This is beginning to help pupils catch up, but it is taking longer in the foundation subjects.

Children learn to read as soon as they are ready. Phonics teaching starts in Nursery and prepares them well for starting Reception. Teachers follow a well-planned sequence of lessons that allows pupils to learn new sounds quickly and securely. The learning environment is designed to immerse children in language. Activities are designed to help children practice the skills of early reading. This teaching continued during the recent lockdowns. Teachers worked well to engage parents in their child's learning. Any child falling behind in phonics gets extra help, including one-to-one

daily support. Consequently, most pupils in Reception and Year 1 are reading at the standard expected for their age.

Staff read to the older pupils regularly. They introduce pupils to both classic stories and books they have not come across before. This helps promote a love of reading and helps to widen their vocabulary. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the books they enjoy reading.

Teachers know their pupils well. Staff set high expectations and develop pupils' resilience. If pupils find something hard, they are given additional help if they need it. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers support pupils with SEND to be successful. Pupils are given carefully considered resources to allow them to work alongside their peers. Lessons are adapted to ensure that these pupils achieve well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils well. Checks are made to ensure work is closely matched to what pupils can do.

Leaders have a relentless focus on developing children's language. In early years, it is a hive of activity. Children are immersed in language. Teachers model speaking in full sentences. This is also seen in mathematics across the school. Pupils answer questions using full sentences to explain their answers. This approach is creating confident pupils who relish talking to their peers and adults.

Curriculum plans show how the school is making useful links with their local community. For example, a professor from a local university visited pupils in Years 5 and 6 to talk about biomes. Although some links have been paused due to COVID-19, the school is working hard to restart activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know what to do if they have a problem, and they say that staff will always listen to their worries. Pupils of all ages can talk with confidence about how to keep safe when using technology. Staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe. Training is regular. Staff have had training on neglect, peer-on-peer abuse, county lines and radicalisation and extremism. Leaders are relentless in getting families the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers use assessment to find out what pupils can and cannot do in English and mathematics effectively. However, assessment is not used as effectively in the foundation subjects. This means that the gaps in pupils' knowledge are not being addressed as quickly as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that teachers continue to use the strong assessments seen in English and mathematics in the

foundation subjects to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, so they can be filled as quickly as possible.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140183
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10184718
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Will Finn
Headteacher	Claire McKeown
Website	www.st-thomascantilupe.org
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2017.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. The current headteacher was appointed in June 2019. The SENCo, early years leader and literacy leader were appointed since the previous inspection. The school's governing body was replaced by a strategic task group.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

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.

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo, early years leader and other curriculum leaders.
- We also met with the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Hereford multi-academy trust and representatives from the school's strategic task group.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, the school's statement of action, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- We considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted's Parent View, and 23 free-text responses. A team inspector met with parents at the start of the day.
- We considered the 31 responses to the survey for staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, writing and computing. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Townsend

Ofsted Inspector

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