

Inspection of a good school: St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

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

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 July 2023

Outcome

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this caring and nurturing environment. The school's mission of 'live, love, believe', is underpinned by the seven school virtues. These are interwoven across all aspects of school life. Pupils are rewarded when they use a virtue, such as courage.

Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils feel safe. They know there is always someone to talk to who will listen and help them with any worry. Pupils know the rules, 'bee kind, bee brilliant, bee respectful'. In class, pupils from the Reception Year to Year 6 are engaged and eager to participate in lessons. Pupils can explain what a bully is. If bullying happens, adults swiftly deal with it. This is confirmed in behaviour records seen. During lunch, pupils are calm and chat away with their friends. They leave the hall quietly and sensibly. Pupils who struggle with their behaviour receive the support they need.

Governors and leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders strive to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to widen their horizons. These range from going to the theatre on the mainland to listening to a world champion freestyle footballer.

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

Leaders have carefully considered their curriculum, designing one that is engaging, broad and ambitious. Leaders know what they want pupils to know and remember from the early years to Year 6. They ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge. Staff value their thorough training. They are also appreciative of leaders' support and consideration for their well-being and workload.

Teachers know what pupils have learned and where they need to get to. They make sure that learning is well sequenced and progressive, so that pupils build their knowledge and skills securely over time. For example, in the Reception Year, children use their knowledge

of counting to fill in missing numbers to 20. Year 5 pupils' knowledge of times tables helps them to find if a large number is a multiple of 3.

Teachers start each lesson recapping learning from the previous term, week and day. This helps pupils to embed their learning and make connections with the new knowledge. Teachers make sure that pupils understand the task before they move learning on. Staff use assessment effectively. They quickly spot any pupil who is struggling. Support is given and any misconceptions are resolved promptly.

Reading is a high priority for leaders. This year, they have made significant changes to the teaching of reading. Leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained in the phonics programme. They check regularly that pupils are reading books that match the sounds they are learning. Children in the Reception Year get off to an excellent start in reading. They learn their phonics as soon as they start school. However, leaders know that, currently, not all pupils are reading as fluently as they could. This is because leaders' improvements to reading approaches are not yet fully embedded.

Leaders foster pupils' love for reading. They have invested in high-quality books to ensure that pupils experience a range of different texts. For example, leaders have purchased books that support pupils' understanding of issues, such as diversity. The youngest children have 'linked books' in all their areas of learning. For example, in the construction area they can enjoy reading about 'Rosie Revere' the engineer. Parents and pupils value the opportunities to read together in the reading cafe.

Leaders know pupils with SEND well and have high expectations for them. Pupils with barriers to their learning are quickly and accurately identified. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not always adapt tasks as well as they could to support learning. Leaders have already planned training to address this development priority.

Pupils, including the youngest, are engaged and eager to learn in their lessons. They listen attentively, concentrate well and do not distract others from learning. The school is generally calm and purposeful.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. Leaders aim to ensure that pupils thrive personally and learn to be responsible citizens. Pupils have opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. For example, as ambassadors for the class or as a class chaplain. Pupils know that differences should be celebrated and that everyone is equal. However, some pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and other cultures and religion is not well developed. Over time, leaders ensure that pupils experience a variety of valuable outdoor learning experiences in the school woods. This includes learning the skill of orienteering.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive weekly safeguarding updates. Staff are well trained and are able to identify safeguarding concerns. Records of concern are dealt with swiftly

by the safeguarding team. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies. Safer recruitment checks are carried out. The single central record is well maintained and checked by leaders and governors. Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They can talk about how the school helps them to keep safe and not talk to strangers. They know when online not to share information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Changes to the implementation of the phonics programme are not yet fully embedded. As a result, some pupils are not yet learning to read as quickly as they could be. Leaders need to fully embed recent improvements and strengthen further the support for pupils who are not yet fluent readers.
- Some pupils do not have a secure understanding of British values or other faiths and cultures. Consequently, some pupils are not well enough prepared for life in the wider world. Leaders should ensure that pupils receive a curriculum that prepares them for life in modern Britain.

Background

When we have judged a school good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	118199
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256526
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rod Hodgson and Alex Pettitt (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Margaret Sanderson (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stthomaspri.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with St Mary's Catholic Primary School. The two schools share the same governing body.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher and a head of school. They took up their roles in September 2022.
- The school has a religious character as a Catholic school in the Diocese of Portsmouth. The last inspection of its religious character was in June 2017.
- The school currently uses two alternative provisions. Neither provision is registered by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspector also reviewed curriculum information about science and history and looked at pupils' books in these subjects.
- Meetings were held with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. She also talked to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe. The inspector also considered a wide range of safeguarding documents and policies.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke to representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils were considered through Ofsted's online surveys. The inspector also considered pupils' and staffs' views through meetings with them.

Inspection team

Becky Greenhalgh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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