

Inspection of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Park Lane, Eastfield, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 5JW

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Anne-Marie McElhinney. This school is part of St John the Baptist Catholic Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kim Payne, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth Hollis.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Thomas More is a school where diversity is celebrated. Pupils learn to value the characteristics that make people different as well as what unites them. There are warm, positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils feel confident to share any worries they may have with staff. Pupils are well supported in lessons, in which they feel safe to learn from any mistakes they make.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are busy and purposeful. Pupils work hard in lessons. They know the school wants the very best for them and have worked hard to raise standards. Pupils aspire to going to university to train as vets, doctors or teachers.

Pupils receive an exceptional level of care. The school has a family feel and strong links with the local community. Year 6 pupils delight in welcoming everyone with a warm buttered bagel as they arrive at school. This helps pupils start their day with a smile.

Staff take time to get to know every child and their family well. There is a well-considered programme for pupils' personal development. It ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are fully immersed in the life of the school.

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

The school has made reading a high priority. Well-trained staff follow a consistent approach to teaching phonics. This helps pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident and fluent readers. Leaders check pupils' progress in reading at regular intervals. If pupils fall behind in reading, staff provide support. This means pupils catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy choosing books to read at home from the well-stocked 'reading bus'.

Improving pupils' outcomes in mathematics and writing are priorities for the school. Historically, outcomes in these subjects have been weak. The curriculums have recently been reviewed and now clearly set out the most important knowledge pupils need to know at different points. Some teachers' knowledge of the revised curriculums is not yet strong enough. In a few lessons, teachers choose activities for pupils that do not help them build on their learning. To address this, leaders are setting out the content for all lessons as well as what resources must be used. Although this work is in the early stages, pupils are learning the revised curriculum to a high standard.

The curriculum in other subjects is broad and ambitious. Staff have good subject knowledge. They provide pupils with clear explanations and plan interesting lessons.

The school is a nurturing and inclusive environment. The provision for pupils with SEND is a strength. Pupils' support plans are precise. Skilled adults help pupils to

overcome their individual barriers to learning. Leaders work closely with outside agencies and parents to provide effective support for pupils with SEND. As a result, most pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. The early years curriculum is well structured. Children begin learning about letters and numbers straight away. They enjoy learning and playtime in the outside spaces. By the time they move on to Year 1, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils flourish socially and emotionally. They gain a strong understanding of equalities and tolerance. Pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge of healthy relationships and diversity. They learn about eating well and maintaining an active lifestyle. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils value the popular after-school sporting clubs. They experience a wide range of trips and have visitors to the school. Pupils carry out leadership roles, such as prayer leaders and house captains, with pride. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 as responsible, respectful and active citizens.

At all times throughout the school day, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are courteous and polite. Respect is important to pupils. It is seen in their relationships with each other and with adults in school. Pupils recognise that positive behaviour reflects the school's values and ethos. The high pupil attendance reflects how much pupils enjoy being at school.

School leaders, the trust and governors work well as a team. Together, they keep a close eye on the quality of education and wider provision for the pupils. Staff value the training and networking opportunities offered by the trust. They appreciate leaders' consideration for their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not yet have secure knowledge of the revised mathematics and writing curriculums. Consequently, they do not always plan lessons that help pupils build on their learning. Leaders should continue their work setting out lesson content and resources that should be used. They should also provide training and support for teachers to improve their knowledge of the curriculum content. This will ensure all teachers plan lessons which help pupils build on their learning and improve their outcomes.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147385
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10323790
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Hollis
Chief executive officer	Kim Payne
Headteacher	Anne-Marie McElhinney
Website	www.st_thomasmore.peterborough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school operates a before- and after-school provision.
- The school is part of St John the Baptist Catholic Trust, which consists of 10 schools.
- The school is within the Diocese of East Anglia. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within five years of its last inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, pupils and parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at work in pupils' books. Inspectors also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the SEND coordinator. They also spoke to subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders and teachers to talk about the curriculum, workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. They also met with groups of pupils to talk about learning and well-being and to hear about their views of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with governors and directors from the trust. They also met with the chief executive and the deputy chief executive officers from the trust.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement and minutes of meetings of the local governing board and trust. They also looked at a range of pupil workbooks from each year group.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons, around the school, in the lunch hall, in the playground and at the before-school club. Inspectors looked at behaviour and attendance records and considered leaders' analyses of these.
- Inspectors considered the 13 online responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including nine free-text comments. They also spoke to 23 parents during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 193 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Karen Stanton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Scott	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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