



# St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 107119  
**LEA** Sheffield  
**Inspection number** 277711  
**Inspection dates** 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms Joan McKenna CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Creswick Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Grenoside
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S35 8NN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 246 8020
<b>Number on roll</b>	173	<b>Fax number</b>	0114 257 7917
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr M Levery
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs D Kay

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 April 2006 - 27 April 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277711
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The pupils who attend this small school come from a mixture of backgrounds, but most are from the areas immediately surrounding it, which have higher levels of social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are of white British heritage. Small numbers of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and all speak English fluently. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with that found nationally.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school, providing good value for money. While some staffing difficulties have adversely affected pupils' achievement in recent times, the headteacher's strong and determined leadership has ensured that many good features of the school's work have been maintained through this difficult period.

Pupils are highly valued and there is a very inclusive ethos. Good quality care and support result in the positive personal development of pupils. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Their behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good. The curriculum has some very strong features, such as modern languages being taught, and there is a wide range of enrichment activities.

Pupils' achievement overall is good, including in the Foundation Stage. Most of the staffing issues have been resolved and teaching is now good overall. Pupils' work and progress are assessed regularly, but systems for these require some improvement. Leadership, management and governance are good. Strengths and areas for development are well known and the school's judgements about itself are mainly accurate. With more new teachers and leaders due to join the school next term, there is a need to ensure a consistent team approach at all levels. There is a strong commitment to securing this, and, with key members of staff now back in post, there is a good capacity to build on the good developments since the last inspection and to bring about further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

In order to improve the achievement of pupils the school should focus on:

- working with the new staff team to establish an effective corporate approach to the school's work
- continuing to take action to improve the quality and consistency of teaching
- further developing the arrangements for assessing pupils, as well as tracking and analysing their progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the Reception class with standards that overall, are below those expected for their age. They progress well towards meeting the goals set nationally for pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are broadly average. A recent focus on improving writing has resulted in this being stronger than reading and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, pupils also attain broadly average standards. Results in 2005 were higher than in 2004, mainly because of the successful efforts to improve the standards reached by higher attaining pupils. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress across the school. English is the strongest subject and pupils achieve well in their reading and writing. Whilst not all targets set for 2005

were met, the resolution of some of the staffing problems is resulting in better progress now being made by pupils. The school is on line to meet most of the targets set for 2006.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The extremely positive ethos results in pupils liking school very much and they feel valued, safe and secure. Most pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They clearly enjoy their lessons. They work hard and respond well to teachers' efforts to make learning fun. For example, one class carried out an amusing and energetic role play of the 'Miss World' competition in drama, developing their confidence well in the process. Pupils understand about healthy lifestyles and they participate actively in opportunities for physical activity in and out of lessons. Some girls said, 'we love playing football.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Clear attention to valuing cultural diversity and respect for all pupils means their self-esteem is high. In an excellent assembly, the teacher very effectively emphasised both the similarities and differences between pupils. Older pupils exercise responsibility maturely. When on 'duty', they care well for younger pupils, such as offering to fasten their coats for them in the playground. The School Council is well established. Members are proud of its work and governors were very impressed with the presentation made to them about the council's contribution to school life. Attendance is slightly below the national average overall, mainly due to the poor attendance of an extremely small number of pupils. Punctuality is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Changes in staffing and the return of key experienced teachers have resulted in improvement. Teaching is now improving pupils' rate of progress. It is best in English as teachers are particularly confident in the subject. In all classes, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and provide a supportive climate for learning. They use imaginative approaches to capture pupils' interests, such as getting a pupil to take on the role of an explorer answering questions from pupils, following a writing activity on the same theme. Specialist music lessons involve enjoyable practical activities.

In the best lessons, activities are sharply focused, well matched to pupils' differing needs with a high but realistic level of challenge, and the pace of learning is fast. In less effective lessons, the pace is slower and time is not always spent on the most productive and challenging activities. Nevertheless, pupils always respond well, are keen to learn and work hard. Teaching assistants generally provide skilled and effective support, although this is not always achieved consistently. Teachers regularly assess

pupils' work and give them useful feedback on how well they are doing. Although targets are set for pupils to help inform them how to improve their work, this is not done consistently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with some very strong features. There is an appropriate balance between promoting basic skills and developing pupils' broader interests and talents. Provision for literacy is good. Because of difficulties in covering all the mathematics curriculum requirements in a way that meets the full range of needs in the three mixed aged classes in Key Stage 2, there are plans to teach the subject to single year group classes next year. The curriculum is enhanced very well. Spanish is taught and pupils benefit from some teaching of music, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) by specialist teachers from neighbouring secondary schools. Foundation Stage pupils have continuous access to the outdoors for playing and working outside. Annual themed weeks on aspects such as 'Healthy Living' and 'Global Issues' deepen pupils' understanding of related topics. Enjoyment is promoted through the many visits outside school, such as to Sheffield Ski Village and Eden Camp. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities, with a good coverage of sport. Rehearsals for the forthcoming Year 6 production of 'The Pirates of Penzance' showed an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop their skills and confidence in the performing arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school places great emphasis on ensuring that pupils are well cared for and supported. Very positive relationships with teachers and adults mean that pupils are confident to approach staff with issues or problems. Effective support is provided for the specific needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Child protection procedures are good with safety checks made on staff new to the school. Arrangements for health and safety are in place. The school has helpful systems for regularly assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress, but the latter do not give a sharp enough view of whether progress made is as good as it should be. A lot of useful analysis of performance data takes place. While it highlights weaknesses and use is made of the resulting information, it is not comprehensive enough to give a full overview of pupils' achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong direction. She has guided the school through its recent challenges in a way that has minimised negative impact and maintained many positive features. Management processes are thorough. An annual monitoring and evaluation programme, involving all leaders,

results in strengths and areas requiring development being well known. Effective action is taken as a result, as seen in the rising standards reached by higher attaining pupils. Staff are valued and are appreciative of the support they receive. Their ongoing professional development is prioritised. Action is planned to improve the confidence and skills of middle leaders in giving feedback to their colleagues, for example. Governors are effective and involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. They have a positive impact as seen by their completed refurbishment programme, which has resulted in the acquisition of a new ICT suite and an attractive learning environment. One governor conducts exit interviews with Year 6 pupils, asking frank questions, which provide very interesting insights into their views. Parents' views are sought. They are very positive about the school which works in good partnership with them and others to improve its provision. Rightly, the school expects to establish a strong corporate approach to practice amongst the new school team.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn very much.

What we liked most about your school

- You like school and enjoy your lessons.
- Your teachers and other adults care for you very well and make sure that you feel safe and happy.
- You behave well and play very nicely with each other.
- Teachers work hard for you and you work hard for them. This helps you learn.
- The school arranges lots of extra activities outside of lessons for you to enjoy and help you develop your interests. We really enjoyed seeing the rehearsals for 'The Pirates of Penzance'.
- Mrs Kay and the other senior staff lead the school well and are working hard to make it an even better place for you.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Work with all of the staff, including the new teachers who will join your school next term, to make sure they all work as a team to improve your school further.
- Try to make your lessons even better than they are now so they are all as good as the best ones.
- Make sure that the way teachers check your work and how well you are doing gives them as much information as possible about the progress you are making.

We hope that you continue to be happy at school and that you continue to work hard.