

# St Thomas More RC Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118055
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston-upon-Hull
<b>Inspection number</b>	312798
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Elaine Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Anthony Hay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	St Thomas More Road Hull HU4 7NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 354093
<b>Fax number</b>	01482 507657

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size primary school serves mainly Roman Catholic families from a large area to the west of Hull. The locality is disadvantaged in terms of its socio-economic character. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The number with a statement for special educational need is below average. Many pupils have a White British heritage and others come from Polish, Indian, Nigerian or Filipino origins. A small number are learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The headteacher, ably assisted by his leadership team, provides sound educational direction to the school's work for all staff. Together they successfully promote the school's Catholic values of care and consideration and foster the philosophy that every child does matter. This is a very inclusive school, and it successfully integrates the many migrant pupils who join during the year.

When taking pupil's backgrounds and starting points into account, their accomplishments reflect satisfactory achievement and personal development. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from families where English is not their first language, or who are more able and talented also make satisfactory progress. The school forges effective partnerships with parents and the local authority to support pupils' well-being. Many parents have full confidence in the school and value the information and feedback about their children's progress they receive. One parent's comment sums up their views. 'I feel the Catholic ethos is important.... the teachers have done a brilliant job educating my son, stimulating his interest in lots of subjects and encouraging his confidence and friendship groups'.

Although a minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour in school, it has improved: pupils are well behaved in lessons and act safely and sensibly in and out-of-doors. They enjoy school, especially practical activities where they work enthusiastically. They are delighted when they do well and happily share the success of others. They talk informatively about the importance of diet, exercise and sleep to a healthy lifestyle. They contribute in several ways to their school and wider community and they are prepared satisfactorily for their future education.

Pupils achieve well in Reception and satisfactorily through Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1, standards in the 2007 statutory assessments were broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Standards in the Year 6 assessments fell in 2007 to broadly average in English and mathematics but science was a weakness because standards fell below average. The school has acted promptly to tackle this issue. The initiative to extend pupils' expertise in scientific investigations is already paying dividends by raising standards. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on course to reach broadly average standards by the end of the year, although standards in writing are not quite as high as in reading and mathematics. Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers' marking is not consistently helpful in helping pupils to improve.

The leadership team, working with the relatively new governing body, have successfully fostered some key improvements in the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, pupils' behaviour, the use of assessment to plan effective support for pupils having learning difficulties, and more recently to raise standards in science. The governing body has markedly developed its role and effectively ensures the school is competently managed. Governors are very committed to ensure standards rise and recognise the school's action planning has not given this sufficient attention so far. Their strong determination and track record of progress over the recent past indicates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

#### Grade: 2

The effectiveness of provision in the Reception class is good. Recent improvements have enabled children to make good progress from starting points below those typical for their age when

they join the class. Those who entered Year 1 in 2007 had skills and abilities in their personal development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, typical for their age. Teachers and assistants know their children well, and ensure they are safe and well cared for. Good, productive links with parents are developing well. Staff are particularly effective in welcoming children from other countries and helping them settle. Good leadership and management ensure good teaching and a good curriculum. Planned activities make good use of indoor and new outdoor facilities to engage children's interest and foster good learning. Parents comment very positively about how much their children enjoy school and learn well.

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

- Raise standards in writing and science to at least the levels reached in other areas of learning.
- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently identifies strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, and sets them challenging targets with pointers for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. From starting points that are average when they join Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. From the end of Year 2, pupils presently in Year 6 have also made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2.

In national assessments in 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 remained broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Year 6 results in 2007 fell short of the school's targets. Standards slipped from above average the year before to broadly average in English and mathematics. They fell to below average in science. Given their starting points, pupils in Year 6 achieved satisfactorily in English and mathematics but not in science.

Pupils currently in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress: their standards are broadly average, but a little lower in writing than in reading and mathematics. Present standards in Year 6 are broadly average but also a little lower in writing than in reading and mathematics. The school has successfully raised science standards through improving the curriculum and teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those for whom English is not their first language and gifted and talented pupils are all achieving satisfactorily.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good aspects. School assemblies, visits and recent changes to the personal, social and health education programme contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils talk willingly about the friendships they make and how they enjoy school, especially practical aspects of their work. Attendance is satisfactory but a minority of pupils are late in the morning. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They say there is little bullying and they know how to report any instances. They speak convincingly about important aspects of a healthy lifestyle, and take opportunities to exercise and eat healthily. Behaviour has improved. It is good in lessons and does not disrupt learning. Pupils conduct themselves safely and sensibly in the playground, halls and corridors. They are polite and courteous to adults. Their contribution to

school life is satisfactory and is developing as the school council, buddy system and playground leader initiatives become established. They are charitable towards others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory, reflecting their competent social skills and average basic skills in learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where teaching is most successful, sessions are carefully planned between teachers and teaching assistants to ensure all the different groups of pupils make good progress. Activities are thoughtfully designed to suit pupils' abilities: they successfully challenge the more able and challenge and support those needing extra help. Teachers reinforce key points and this helps consolidate pupils' learning.

At other times, where progress is satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower. Activities are insufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities, such as in mathematics where occasionally tasks confuse pupils with limited mathematical skills or do not challenge higher attaining pupils to think deeply. Too little time is taken with the whole class to review the extent of their learning. The extent of teachers' discussion and feedback to pupils varies widely in lessons and in their marking of pupils' work. Such inconsistency limits pupils' achievement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. A balanced range of activities in all subjects covers the recommended knowledge, skills and understanding. Recent improvements to science have increased pupil's skills in first-hand investigations and raised standards. Visitors to school and visits outside, such as to museums, art galleries and outdoor activity centres, contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. Assemblies, charitable work and relationships with the Church and parishes enhance their spiritual and moral development. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities, which are mainly sports-orientated leading to the school achieving the Activemark award. Links with a local secondary specialist sports college enhance both boys' and girls' physical development and contribute to their healthy lifestyles. However, there are few extra opportunities for creative activities such as art and music. Other aspects of personal and social education, taught through a nationally recognised programme, have made a clear contribution to improving behaviour and the respect and consideration pupils show for others.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Some aspects stand out, for example in the way all staff are committed to the welfare of pupils and successfully promote the Catholic values of consideration and respect for others. Effective arrangements and supervision allow pupils to play energetically and use outdoor play equipment safely or to enjoy quiet socialising at break-times. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet current government requirements. The school tracks and analyses pupils' progress effectively and uses information well to identify and successfully support pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

Although class teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments when marking their work, they only occasionally give them useful pointers to improve, and rarely refer to their targets. Pupils are unsure about what is expected of them or the extent of their progress. Such inconsistency does not foster learning and holds back improvement in standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership diligently monitors teaching and analyses pupils' performance. However, self-evaluation overestimates the school's and the leadership's effectiveness in relation to pupils' satisfactory achievement. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths in relation to pupils' standards of work, and a very strong determination to improve. The school's priority to redress the dip in standards in science is clearly successful so far this year, but it is too early to gauge its long-term effect. Otherwise, action planning for improvement does not focus sufficiently on raising standards and achievement. In relation to raising standards overall, the leadership sets challenging targets for the whole school but does not ensure that learning targets set with individual pupils have sufficient precision or consistency throughout. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources so that in relation to pupils' starting points and their achievements, value for money is satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

6 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Thomas More RC Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU4 7NP

Mrs Taylor and I really enjoyed our recent inspection of your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. We did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. You were very polite and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and especially to hear how you like to take part in practical activities. You are well behaved and considerate to others in lessons, around the premises and on the playground. We were pleased to see how your school council, buddies and play leaders contribute to school life and how, through your charitable work, you help others who are less fortunate than you. I know the headteacher and all the staff are rightly very proud of you.

Overall, your school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is warm and welcoming. All the adults in the school look after you well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Last year many pupils did as well as expected in English and mathematics but not well enough in science in the Year 6 tests everyone has to do. This year you are doing much better in science although the standard of your work in writing is not as high as it could be. We were impressed with the way you try hard and like to take part. When we looked at your books we saw how teachers tell you how well you are doing and occasionally give you useful pointers to improve.

The staff are going to help all of you to improve the standards of your work, especially your writing, and to continue your practical investigation work in science. The staff are also going to help you understand how to reach higher standards in your work, to be clear about your targets and to help you know when you meet them.

You have many opportunities at St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector