



## DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### St Thomas' Catholic Voluntary Academy

Church View, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 4LF

<b>School URN:</b>	146145
<b>Inspection Date:</b>	02 October 2018
<b>Inspectors:</b>	Mrs Patricia Hurd and Mrs Catherine Murphy

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	<b>This Inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Catholic Life:</b>		Outstanding	1
<b>Religious Education:</b>		Good	2
<b>Collective Worship:</b>		Good	2

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

#### St Thomas' Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- The Catholic Life of St Thomas' is outstanding. The headteacher's strong leadership, supported by senior staff has secured excellent promotion and support for the Catholic Life of St Thomas' so that it is prominent in every aspect of the school. The school mission statement, which is also the school prayer, is fully embraced by pupils and staff and enables everyone to have a secure understanding of how they 'Work together, play together and serve God'.
- The behaviour and good relationships that exist between pupils and staff are strengths of the school. Parents enthusiastically support the work of the school with genuine affection and appreciation. There is challenge from knowledgeable governors who are passionate about the Catholic Life of the school. The environment is rich in expressions of the faith and the mission of the school.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and can relate their learning to their everyday lives. The quality of teaching is at least good with some examples of outstanding practice, which enables most pupils to make progress. Although pupils' attainment is now tracked effectively, formative assessment and feedback is undergoing a period of transition and is not fully embedded.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The school has chosen 5 Gospel values which underpin every Act of Worship. Pupils take an active part from the Early Years Foundation Stage right up to Year 6 and are becoming more involved with the evaluation of Collective Worship.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Thomas' Catholic Academy and is an average sized primary school situated in the town of Ilkeston.
- There are 247 pupils on roll of which 66% are baptised Catholic. 28% of pupils are from other Christian denominations, 2% of pupils are from other faith backgrounds and 8% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- The parish served by the school is Our Lady and St Thomas of Hereford, situated in Ilkeston.
- St Thomas' became part of the newly formed St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust from 1 September 2018.
- The percentage of pupils who receive the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or with a parent in the armed forces is slightly below the national average at 17%.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 6.4% with 0.8% of pupils having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which is below the national average.
- Since the last diocesan canonical inspection, there is a new chair of governors and a new headteacher.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

#### ■ Catholic Life:

- Embed the recently introduced Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme 'Journey in Love' across the school so that pupils can grow in self-knowledge and develop healthily and holistically towards an understanding of all human life.

#### ■ Religious Education:

- Challenge higher attaining pupils further so that more pupils can reach a greater depth of understanding in Religious Education by the time they leave the school;
- Ensure that feedback to pupils is systematic and that it becomes embedded into the learning process;
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to write at length, so developing their depth of religious knowledge in both written and oral responses;
- Ensure that formal monitoring of Religious Education is frequent and involves all levels of leadership by undertaking lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and then robustly identifying accurate actions for improvement which are followed up by senior staff.

#### ■ Collective Worship:

- Ensure that formal monitoring of Collective Worship is frequent and involves all levels of leadership with a particular focus on continuing to empower pupils to lead Collective Worship by offering training and mentorship to develop and enrich pupils' skills and confidence in leadership;
- Encourage the expansion of the chaplaincy team.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding**

- Almost all pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. Pupils willingly engage in the chaplaincy team's activities and events to actively promote the Catholic mission of the school. Their advocacy and leadership has led to most pupils having a deep sense of belonging and understanding of the demands of their faith.
- Behaviour is exemplary with pupils showing a deep respect and tolerance for themselves and others.
- Pupils take an active role in the school's Catholic Life and mission both in their local community, including helping the homeless and globally, involving support for a school Gambia.
- The Catholic traditions of the school that have built up over some years (such as the Year 6 leavers buying the school a gift) are much loved and respected by all; they also enrich pupils' sense of belonging.
- Strong links to the parish and diocese enhance the faith development of all members of the school community.
- Pupils value the opportunities provided by the school to find out about other faiths and traditions. They speak enthusiastically about visits to other places of worship and visits from local leaders of other faiths.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding**

- The school is a joyful and strongly supportive community where the quality of relationships between all colleagues and pupils echoes the mission statement, 'Work together, play together and serve God'.
- The learning environment of the school is a key feature in promoting the school's Catholic character including a well-developed outside prayer space.
- Displays creatively celebrate pupils' work and exemplify the depth of their faith. Twitter messages from both the Pope and the Bishop were prominent around school and illustrated the school's faith in a contemporary and engaging way.
- All staff have benefitted from high quality professional development and are fully committed to the implementation of Catholic Life throughout the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities and events which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- All staff promote and model high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils.
- The school now follows the diocesan recommended programme, 'Journey in Love' for Relationships and Sex Education however, this scheme now needs to be firmly embedded.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good**

- The enthusiastic, driven headteacher supported by all leaders and managers demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded by staff as models of Catholic leadership.
- The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The Catholic Life of the school is promoted by active and knowledgeable governors who are keen to ensure the quality of Catholic Life of the school. They have just introduced a new way of formally monitoring, to which all governors contribute, however it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Although there is informal monitoring of Catholic Life, there is insufficient evidence of evaluation, at all levels of leadership and management but the school has plans for this and is in a strong position to address it.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – good**

- Pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education lessons and can say how this might affect their own lives as Christians. They are able to draw on a range of scripture and other religious sources in their oral and written learning.
- Most pupils show good listening skills and behaviour for learning is consistently strong throughout the school as pupils are engaged and challenged by lessons.
- The quality of pupils' written work is consistently good although higher attaining pupils would benefit from more work involving writing at length. Pupils are particularly good at articulating 'I wonder...' questions. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, a child wondered 'Did Jesus' family love him?'
- Pupil attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 is now slightly above diocesan averages, however, higher attaining pupils are not consistently showing the progress needed by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils have some understanding of how well they have done and what they need to improve, however, with the introduction of a new school policy on formative assessment, this aspect of learning needs careful monitoring and thorough evaluation to ensure that progress in Religious Education continues to improve.
- During pupil interviews, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their lessons, they said that they are challenged and that their Religious Education lessons help them to understand God and to lead better lives.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good**

- The quality of teaching is mainly good with some examples of outstanding practice, consequently, most pupils and groups of pupils including those with special educational needs make expected progress in Religious Education.
- The majority of pupils enter St Thomas' with average knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and due to consistently good and better teaching, pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement is above diocesan averages. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6, but not all higher attaining pupils reach the 'greater depth' of which they are capable.
- Display is effective in the classroom to support pupils' learning, with all classes having a focus table that pupils' used independently to write wonder statements and prayers. Consistently effective use of 'driver words' and Levels of Attainment are clearly displayed and referred to during lessons. A wide variety of resources including scripture and 'real life' examples is available for pupils to use independently in their research.
- Teachers consistently plan challenging and focused learning activities, enabling pupils to enjoy and engage in Religious Education lessons. One group of Year 2 pupils was asked to infer how Jesus was treated as a child using their knowledge of Jesus' actions as an adult. With the teacher's skilful scaffolding, pupils were able to talk about this, referring confidently to the Bible stories they knew.
- There is a generous sense of partnership between colleagues which ensures that support staff are well deployed and have a clear understanding of the outcomes expected by the end of the lesson. Pupils with additional individual needs are well supported and participate in the whole class learning.
- Exceptionally sound subject knowledge ensures that teachers are able to confidently weave creativity into Religious Education lessons with the result that most pupils are very engaged with their learning and develop a good understanding of themes covered. In most lessons, teachers' good quality verbal feedback and questioning enables most pupils to make progress both within lessons and over time.

### **The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good**

- Leaders ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in every respect and that sufficient time is given to the subject.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is both effective and experienced and has taken advantage of guidance and support from the diocese which she skillfully cascades to colleagues.
- The headteacher has developed an effective tracking system which allows the school to track attainment and progress over individuals and groups over time. There has been internal and external moderation of pupils' work so that the school has confidence in its assessment judgements.
- Although there is some monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders, it is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that there is well planned, strategic action leading to even better outcomes in Religious Education.
- Governors have recently changed the way they monitor provision in Religious Education and are beginning to have an impact. Following on from recent interviews with pupils, a more creative approach to Religious Education was developed.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – outstanding**

- Pupils act with reverence and are eager to participate. They sing joyfully and join in with community prayers.
- In a recent review with pupils, staff and parents, five Gospel values were chosen which has become the foundation for Collective Worship in the school. The pupil chaplaincy group is well established and they enjoy preparing and leading regular whole-school liturgies.
- Pupils report that they all have the opportunity to prepare Acts of Worship, supported by adults. They are knowledgeable about the structure of a liturgy and were confident to choose suitable readings and prayers.
- In the Act of Worship observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils were beginning to make choices in the liturgy and take an active part in the readings, prayers and music, ably supported by their teacher. This was even filmed by one of the pupils. Other Acts of Worship across the school, led by pupils, included creative ways of ensuring participation by all present and inspirational ways of taking their mission forward.
- Plans are in place to further develop pupil leadership in the evaluation of Collective Worship.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good**

- The quality of Collective Worship is good and central to the life of the school; reflecting the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Prayer is integral to the school day with all at St Thomas' benefitting from the resources made available to them by the recently appointed Lead Lay Chaplain of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning and resourcing. Parents of leaving Year 6 pupils join together to buy a high quality resource for the school which enhances provision and contributes to the feeling of community in the school.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship across all key stages. The '5 for Faith' Gospel values provide a strong thread which runs through both whole school and class Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship in the school is valued by parents and the parish. One governor commented that it was 'standing room only' at Thursday morning Mass and liturgies.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good**

- All leaders know how to plan and deliver Collective Worship and have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Leaders are eager to make worship relevant and engaging for pupils in a contemporary context.
- The committed headteacher offers staff regular opportunities to receive liturgical formation and the school has invested in resources for the planning of Collective Worship.
- The provision of Collective Worship is reviewed by leaders, however, this needs to be more robust in order to lead to more effective self-evaluation and improvement; the school is in a position to address this.
- Many of the governors are new to their role and have just begun to monitor the provision for Collective Worship in a more formal way so it is too early to judge the long term impact of this.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

<b>School Name</b>	St Thomas' Catholic Voluntary Academy
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146145
<b>CMAT</b>	St Ralph Sherwin

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *Evaluation Schedule (September 2018)* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 3 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, an HLTA with some chaplaincy responsibilities, the chair of governors plus two other governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mrs Susan Doczynska
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Graham Lobb
<b>Date of Previous School Inspection:</b>	05 November 2013
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0115 9320550
<b>Email Address:</b>	headteacher@st-thomas.derbyshire.sch.uk

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires Improvement
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.