



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 133774

**St Thomas of Canterbury
Catholic Primary School
Commonside East
Mitcham
CR4 1YG**

**Inspection
date:** 19th May 2017

Chair of Governors: Mrs Josephine Spittles
Headteacher: Mr Sean Small
Inspectors: Mrs Janette Mann
Mrs Rufina Ebenebe

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic School is situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark, in the Merton Local Authority. The principal parish it serves is St Peter and St Paul, Mitcham. Pupils also come from Christ the King, Balham; St Boniface, Tooting and St Michael's, Pollards Hill. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 60%. Overall, the weekly allocation of curriculum time is 10%. The school takes pupils from 3 to 11. Currently there are 659 pupils on roll.

The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is broadly average. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly below average. 1% of pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Educational Health Care (EHC) plan with 15% of pupils receiving some level of SEN support. The school receives Pupil Premium (PP) funding for 24% of its pupils. St Thomas of Canterbury is a school with a multi-ethnic profile. The largest ethnic group is Black African with White (non British) being the second largest group.

Date of previous inspection:

24th May 2012

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding
Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires improvement
Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

St Thomas of Canterbury is a good Catholic school. Leaders and governors are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school community so that it becomes a beacon of faith for the families and the wider community. Governors and school leaders are dedicated to ensuring the school grows in faith and that pupils continue to benefit from the improving quality of teaching.

Governors are developing a more rigorous process of monitoring the Catholic Life of the school and the standards of teaching and learning. They have good capacity to become more expert in their role. Expectations for continued progress are high.

Pupils are proud of the school and know they are safe and well cared for. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the support they and their children are given. There is an impressive level of inclusion of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. Recently, a Diocesan advisor's report stated "Evidence of the core values and ethos of the school are abundantly clear from the moment you arrive."

Positive relationships exist between home, school and parish. Parents appreciate the level of communication from the school. They are welcome visitors to school Masses, special assemblies and celebrations. The strong links with the local parish are helping the school develop its distinctive Catholic identity.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to deepen their understanding of their role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school leadership.
- Develop the role of the Faith Monitors and establish a team of pupils to prepare acts of worship.
- Establish a system of pupil leadership by investigating ways of giving pupils more responsibility to act as role models for younger pupils.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

Pupils are taking on a greater responsibility for contributing to and benefitting from the Catholic life of the school. Their attitudes and the respect they have for each other have helped the development of the caring ethos which permeates across the whole school. Pupils know they are safe and well cared for by teachers.

They have pride in themselves and their learning. Prayer Monitors are increasingly playing an important role in school life through supporting and sometimes leading prayer times. The School Council is active and make decisions which affect their peers. Pupils are proud of being elected onto the School Council. They know they are listened to and that their views are respected by staff. Pupils have a deep sense of duty to others and respond well when opportunities arise to help each other during the day. They know the difference between right and wrong and understand that right decisions benefit everybody. As a result, behaviour is excellent and relationships are very strong.

Pupils are aware of people in the school and in the wider community who are less fortunate. Fundraising is a strength of the school with pupils often coming up with their own fundraising activities to raise greater awareness of the needs of others. For example, they partake in activities to raise money for CAFOD, goods for the local foodbank and the Catholic Children's Society (Westminster).

Pupils' achievements are celebrated throughout the school with displays and Key Stage assemblies. Pupils are very proud of their learning and the way they contribute to the school. They value the regular presence of the Priest who contributes to their faith formation through his participation in assemblies and Masses.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Standards of attainment and levels of progress in Religious Education are mostly above average. They are generally above standards achieved in other core subjects. All groups of pupils make at least good progress with some making outstanding progress. Pupils display enthusiasm for their lessons and are proud of their achievements. The written work, seen during the inspection, was of a very high standard which reflects the positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils are generally attentive and responsive during acts of worship. They display their understanding that they belong to a community of prayer and faith. Pupils confirm that they are often involved in preparing and leading acts of worship. The Parish Priest said he was impressed with the reverence pupils showed and the enthusiasm with which they participated. In the Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils were reverent in their prayer and sang beautifully. The school should consider how pupils might take more responsibility for preparing and leading acts of worship. Older pupils could become good role models for the younger ones.

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How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are committed to the school's mission to serve pupils and their families. Part of their vision is to ensure the school is a beacon of care for the wider community. Gospel values are the foundation of the school. They insist on high levels of care for pupils to promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Governors are monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school more effectively. They are very aware of their responsibilities and keep themselves informed through formal reports and visits to the school. They know what they must do to challenge and support the Headteacher and senior staff to bring about sustained improvements. The areas for improvement are honestly identified and detailed plans for achieving this are in place.

The Subject Leader is highly motivated in ensuring the Catholic life of the school grows. For example, she has introduced Faith Monitors to assist with acts of worship. She acknowledges that this is an area for development. The subject leader liaises effectively with the Parish Priest to ensure acts of worship are in place. She is open to new ideas and is willing to share her expertise with senior and middle leaders.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

The school benefits from an extremely committed governing body. Governors are beginning to have a deeper understanding of their role in monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning.

Following the last inspection, the subject leader was allocated more time to lead on improving standards in Religious Education. She is a knowledgeable, well-organised and enthusiastic leader. She monitors standards annually and provides accurate information for teachers to help them plan appropriate intervention and support for pupils. Monitoring and work sampling are carried out on a regular basis. Findings are analysed and meaningful feedback is given to leaders and pupils. Inspectors felt that clear and consistent lines of accountability would ensure a greater understanding of how to improve standards further.

There is a high level of inclusion. All pupil groups are catered for. Consequently, standards of learning are improving in all pupil groups. Pupils with particular needs are effectively supported to ensure they make progress and feel more confident in contributing their ideas in lessons.

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The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

The quality of teaching observed was good with some outstanding examples. Teachers engaged pupils with a variety of tasks to ensure that they learn and progress according to their ability. Where lessons were at least good, they were well planned with differentiated tasks, a lively pace and appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. For example, drama was used to great effect in one lesson by allowing pupils to produce a tableau of how the fruits of the Holy Spirit can be lived out in their everyday lives. Outcomes are good. Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. All pupils whom inspectors met confirmed that their lessons were fun and that they felt challenged and well taught. The support provided by other adults was very good.

Pupils are responsive in their lessons. They show enthusiasm for learning and enjoy opportunities to contribute their ideas. Teachers build in reflection time into their lessons. Additional needs are provided for through the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Teachers adapt their planning to meet pupils' needs. They use prior knowledge and experience as a starting point at the beginning of each topic.

Behaviour in all lessons is exemplary.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The school follows the 'Come and See' programme and gives 10% curriculum time over both key stages. The Religious Education curriculum is delivered to help the development of pupils' moral, spiritual and social development. Pupils learn how to live by Gospel values. The study of other faiths is covered. The school follows the requirements of planning, assessment and provision of the study of other faiths.

Pupils are enthusiastic in championing the causes which need support in the local and wider community and can discuss why, as Christians, they have a duty to those less fortunate.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Prayer and worship are central to the daily life of the school, not just in formal events, but in classes and at various times of the day. All classrooms have prayer corners and focal points to inspire pupils to pray and reflect. Pupils said that there are many opportunities to pray as a school and a class and that often their own prayers and intentions were used.

Mass is celebrated regularly throughout the year, both in school and in the church. Assemblies are prayerful occasions where pupils are given opportunities to pray. The feasts and seasons of the liturgical calendar are celebrated, for example, penitential services during Advent and Lent.

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