

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St Thomas More

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**Chair:** Mrs Louise Dyas

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**Inspector:** Mrs Morita Metcalfe

A Report from:  
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service  
Section 48 Inspection Team  
50a The Avenue  
Linthorpe  
Middlesbrough TS5 6Q

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

### What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Saint Thomas More School is a smaller than average-sized primary school situated in the city of Hull near Hessle. It has 187 pupils on roll at the January 2013 School Census. The number of pupils at the school with English as an additional language is above both LA and national averages. The main languages spoken other than English are Polish, Filipino / Tagalog and Malay, although in total the school supports 23 discrete language groups. The school's Minority Ethnic profile is above both Local Authority and **National Averages**.

The total incidence of special educational needs is broadly in line with both the LA and national averages. The percentage of SEN pupils categorised as school action is 10.7%, which is 1.2% above the national average and 0.3% above the LA average. The percentage of pupils categorised as school action plus is 8%, which is 2.3% above the national average and 0.8% above the LA average. 69% of pupils are baptised Catholic and 40% of the staff are Catholic.

The school has not got nursery provision.

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 187

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 30

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 69%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 27%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 4%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 19%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 9

Part-time Teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 40%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 4

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 11

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 53%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 50%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

10% for all Year Groups

**Parishes served by the School:**

West Hull Parishes –St Joseph's, St Wilfred's, Corpus Christi

Our Lady of Lourdes- Hessle

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

Saint Thomas More is a good Catholic school with high regard in the community. The recently renewed Mission Statement emulates this when it states the school is a “community centred in Jesus Christ.....” A strong Catholic ethos pervades the school in all areas and all aspects of school life. All stakeholders including the pupils are proud to be part of Saint Thomas More.

The school leadership team and the Governors are instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the school’s Catholic identity. They support and care for all its pupils, families and staff. There are strong home, school and parish links and the parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor.

The provision of Collective Worship is strength of the school, offering pupils varied opportunities to reflect and celebrate with reverence. A termly timetable of worship is agreed between the parish priest, Chaplaincy Co-ordinator, Head Teacher and R.E. Co-ordinator. Acts of worship follow the liturgical year and link to the Come and See topics. Weekly school celebrations link directly to the school’s ethos (kindness, sharing, respect) these are the qualities and values that have a strong emphasis in the life of the school. In all classrooms there is a focal point linked to the liturgical year for devotion and reflection.

The areas identified for improvement in the last Section 48 Inspection were

- To assist its pupils to develop further their love and use of scripture.
- To ensure that its pupils’ achievements in Religious Education improve by building on the foundations of good classroom practice.

Standards in R.E are not yet high enough particularly with regard to presentation, spelling, quality and quantity within pupils’ R.E. work.

There have been several changes of staff in recent years which has meant improvement hasn’t been as rapid as it should have been. The staff situation is now stable and this should guarantee real improvement. Staff are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school and act as good role models for the pupils.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

- Develop the role of the new R.E subject leader by ensuring she is equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to lead and manage the subject effectively.
- Ensure the available procedures for assessment and moderation of the R.E curriculum are effective and ensure the pupils make the appropriate progress especially for the more able, gifted and talented groups.
- Develop further governors' knowledge of R.E curriculum and the levels of attainment for all pupils.
- Improve R.E. standards by driving improvement through pupils' spelling, presentation, quality and quantity of work within the R.E. curriculum.
- Update the Collective Worship policy that reflects the work of the school.

## 2. PUPILS

### How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account of variations between groups.

Pupils are very aware and benefit greatly from the Catholic Life of the school. They have a good sense of belonging to the school community and are keen to participate in all aspects of school life. Pupils are beginning to understand and have a sense of the Mission of the school as they have been consulted and involved in rewriting the Mission Statement. Contributions from the pupils in Collective Worship are at a developmental stage but plans are in place to involve all pupils in leading Collective Worship through the Chaplaincy Team. Pupils have an understanding of the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year. They are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need i.e. Harvest collection for Hull Food Bank, supporting a village in Malawi and CAFOD.

Pupils' attainment has improved in recent years and is now average in R.E. Moderation of pupils' work against the national levels of attainment in R.E is conducted within the Hull cluster is developing and improving the subject leader's ability in collating and analysing data, the results of which are disseminated to staff. Pupils enjoy learning in R.E. especially within K.S. 2 and the year 6 class.

The quality of pupils' learning is improving mainly due to the introduction of the Come and See programme. Pupils acquire a real grasp of the Mission of the Church and elements of the sacraments. In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils were able to act out the sacrament of Baptism using the correct terminology with a sense of awe and wonder. However there is a significant variation between groups of pupils in their progress and underachievement among particular groups who could be doing better. In the lessons judged outstanding pupils were actively seeking to improve their knowledge and understanding and were keen to develop their competence as learners. Systems have been introduced for collating data and tracking progress but all staff need to improve the accuracy of this data through consistent agreed levelling and moderation of pupils' work. Most pupils make the progress expected given their starting point and a minority make good progress especially those pupils whose English is an additional language. These pupils seek to produce their best work and are often interested in their learning.

Collective Worship is a strength of the school. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in all religious events in and out of school. They sing out joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately. They have a good understanding and value the importance of prayer, religious seasons and feast. They feel comfortable when praying together as a community. The recently reformed Chaplaincy team have plans to involve the pupils more directly in liturgies and the prayer life of the school.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	3
How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

Teaching and Learning are frequently good with some outstanding lessons. The school is following the Come and See programme and the teaching and the delivery of this is mostly good. In areas and lessons where it is strong is when teachers add their own perspective and are more adventurous in the planning and teaching of each topic. Teachers on the whole have a good subject knowledge which in the better lessons inspires pupils and builds on their understanding. Resources including other adults are deployed effectively.

The marking policy is clearly embedded and used throughout the school but not consistently. Although assessment is now in place this is also inconsistent across the school. "I can" statements are not used effectively or consistently to help pupils progress in their knowledge and understanding of R.E. Therefore pupils are unsure how well they have done and what they need to do to sustain good progress.

The R.E. curriculum is matched to pupils' needs, interests and aspirations. All statutory requirements are met including pupils' spiritual and moral development. Some aspects of the curriculum are good including the extensive use of technology and appropriate resources i.e. God's Story and Church's Story however this is inconsistent also. The recently renewed Mission Statement reflects the work of the school and is clearly displayed throughout the school.

Parents with different backgrounds are involved as fully as possible in the life of the school. They are often invited to religious celebrations although the support for these can vary. The wonderful Harvest Festival that took place during the inspection was fully supported by a group of parents who clearly enjoy being invited and being part of the school's religious festivities. All pupils took an active role in the festival, responded well to prayers and were enthusiastic in their joyful singing, especially with the song 'Cauliflowers are fluffy'. Pupils and parents were made very aware that their giving of food would help Hull Food Bank and The Homeless and Rootless project. The Harvest Festival was the direct evidence of why Collective Worship is a strength of the school.

Year 6 experience 'Reflection Days' as part of their transition and these are valued by parents, pupils and staff. Pupils have been introduced to 'Godly Play' which has impacted on their knowledge of scripture and their confidence at expressing their own thoughts and prayers.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	3
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	2

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

### **How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

Leadership and management of R.E. are good because leaders have a clear direction and understanding of what is needed to bring about improvement.

The Deputy Headteacher has recently taken over the mantle of R.E subject leader from the Headteacher. This is proving to be effective and having a positive impact in driving improvement although she is very aware there are areas for further development. These areas are being tackled together with the Senior Leadership team.

Relationships within the school are good. This is most evident in the staffroom where staff felt comfortable praying together; laughing together and sharing part of their spiritual lives freely even for those non-Catholic members of staff.

Part of the School Improvement Plan has a focus on raising standards and achievement in R.E. The new subject leader has attended some Diocesan training enabling her to develop her role whilst supporting staff with the teaching, learning and delivery of R.E. curriculum for all pupils. She is aware that other staff need further training and new staff will be given opportunities to access the available Continuous Professional Development from the Diocesan Training programme. R.E. lessons are now part of the regular routine lesson observation and monitoring procedures of the school which includes pupils' books and teachers' planning scrutiny.

The knowledgeable and experienced Governors are very supportive of the school and feel they are well informed through Head Teacher's reports, curriculum meetings and visits to the school. However they do not have a clear enough understanding of standards and data information with regard to teaching and learning in R.E. They also recognise that all governors need to access the available training programme by the Diocese. Governors feel strongly that all their decisions are always viewed from a Christian perspective. As a Governing Body they understand that their role is very much to support and foster Catholic life of the school. Governors attended the Harvest Festival and make every effort to attend Religious celebrations where practical. The R.E. governor works in close partnership with the Senior Leadership Team and is a regular visitor to the school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>