Inspection of a good school: St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Havant

Hooks Lane, Bedhampton, Havant, Hampshire PO9 3DR

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

Outcome

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Havant continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their welcoming community. Staff are united in their determination for all pupils to succeed. In class, pupils work together well. They are keen to contribute and share their ideas. Pupils enjoy their trips, such as a visit to Longdown Dairy Farm, which brings their curriculum to life. As a result, they learn well in most areas of the curriculum.

The school's values of 'dedication, empathy, forgiveness and generosity' give pupils a strong basis on which to understand the world. Pupils behave well. They are kind and courteous to all. Pupils enjoy playing with their friends at breaktimes, especially on the pirate ship. Incidents of bullying are rare. Any instances of unkindness are dealt with swiftly by adults. Pupils engage well with community projects and charity fundraising. For example, they support local homeless charities and collect for the local food bank.

Leaders encourage pupils to develop their own talents and interests. Pupils look forward to after-school clubs. They enjoy learning new skills, such as playing an instrument, creative writing and karate. This wider provision is valued by parents, with one stating, 'every child is encouraged to be something more and to be the best version of themselves.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of this school. This starts in the early years, where children learn and play together well. Pupils show respect and empathy for others. They learn about different religions and cultures as part of the curriculum. Pupils respect the right of others to have beliefs and views different to their own. As a Year 6 pupil said, 'we are all treated the same, even though we are unique.' Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to work with a range of professionals and learn about different careers they may wish to pursue. Pupils are proud of the many leadership

roles they have. Many apply for roles such as a junior road safety officer or house captain. The elected school council is actively working to secure funding for new lunchtime equipment.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum is well sequenced. Leaders have identified the essential knowledge pupils need to learn from early years to Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and supported well.

Where the curriculum is fully effective, pupils learn and remember more over time. For example, in art, pupils use what they have learned about a diverse range of artists and techniques to create high-quality pieces of work. Teachers use a range of strategies to check what pupils know, understand and remember. In mathematics, pupils revisit learning daily, using strategies such as 'flashback 4'. Teachers make adaptations to how learning is delivered to enable pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their peers. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not yet set out the precise knowledge that is to be taught. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders know the value of reading. They have provided expert support to ensure that staff subject knowledge is strong. Staff successfully make sure that the youngest pupils read books that help them to practise their phonic sounds and strategies. Children in the early years join in with familiar rhymes enthusiastically and share books with their friends. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their reading skills. In all year groups, teachers make sure pupils who are struggling to read get extra help quickly. This ensures that pupils learn to read with fluency. During the day, pupils enjoy listening to the range of stories and texts their teachers read to them. This fosters a love of reading and encourages pupils to read a wide range of books from different authors.

Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils take care of each other and their environment. In the early years, children quickly learn routines. Across the school, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They take a pride in their work. Older pupils in 'buddy' roles mentor their younger peers, helping them in assemblies and during playtimes. Pupils also enjoy celebrating when their classmates get a 'Classdojo' reward in class or awards in the weekly assembly.

Governors are committed and understand the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Consequently, they provide effective support and challenge for leaders. Staff welcome leaders' support and consideration for their workload and well-being. Leaders ensure that staff time is prioritised on actions that have the most important impact on pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to keep safe. They can identify their trusted adults and know to report any worries they may have. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risk, including when online.

Leaders ensure that staff have relevant and up-to-date training so that they know how to identify any signs of concern. Systems for reporting safeguarding issues are effective and rigorous. This means that any needs are quickly spotted and acted on. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not identified precisely what pupils need to learn. This can lead to teachers planning activities that do not build pupils' understanding. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum, identifying and ordering the essential knowledge pupils are to learn from Nursery to Year 6.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116377
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256484
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Baker
Headteacher	Jeff Sendall
Website	http://www.st-thomasmores.hants.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. It was previously inspected in June 2016 under section 48 of the Education Act for schools of a religious character.
- The governing body manages a nursery for children aged three to four and before- and after-school childcare provision.
- Currently, the school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also met with members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader and scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. She also spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe.
- The inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. She reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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