

**The Diocese of Hallam**  
**Section 48 Inspection Report**

**The Catholic Life of the School, Religious Education and  
Collective Worship**

**St Thomas of Canterbury School**

A Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Chancet Wood Drive  
Sheffield  
S8 7TR

<b>School URN</b>	<b>138828</b>
<b>Overall Effectiveness grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Date of inspection</b>	<b>January 24<sup>th</sup> 2019</b>
<b>Name of Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Dr Julie Bourne</b>
<b>Name of Executive Head teacher</b>	<b>Mr Andrew Truby</b>
<b>Name of Head of School</b>	<b>Mr Liam Colclough</b>
<b>Name of RE Subject Leader</b>	<b>Mr Matthew Richardson</b>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	<b>November 2013</b>
<b>Previous inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Section 48 Inspectors</b>	<b>Mr John Cape Mrs Lindsay Gamble</b>

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good,  
3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of the following three sections:*

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

<b>OUTSTANDING (1)</b>	To be judged <b>OUTSTANDING</b> for overall effectiveness: The three Section judgements must all be <b>OUTSTANDING</b>
<b>GOOD (2)</b>	To be judged <b>GOOD</b> for overall effectiveness: The three Section judgements must all be at least <b>GOOD</b>
<b>REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT (3)</b>	To be judged <b>REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT</b> for overall effectiveness: One or more sections will be judged to <b>REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT</b> with no sections judged inadequate.
<b>INADEQUATE (4)</b>	To be judged <b>INADEQUATE</b> for overall effectiveness: At least one Section will be judged inadequate.

## Summary of key findings:

### **This is an Outstanding Catholic Primary School**

- The Catholic Life of St Thomas of Canterbury school is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school taking a lead role in activities which promote the school's ethos within school, parish and wider community.
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding. Teachers have deep subject knowledge and plan high quality lessons that inspire children to think about their faith and how to live their lives. Children enjoy their learning and as a result make good or better progress over time.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding, is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every school celebration. Staff and pupils plan and lead high quality acts of worship and pupils act with the deepest reverence and respect.

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

- To continue to rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education to ensure there is consistently outstanding teaching throughout the whole school.
- To ensure a consistency of high-quality marking and feedback so that pupils know their next steps in learning and can show depth to their understanding.
- With guidance and support, review and update the whole school approach to the policy on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) rooted in the Catholic tradition.
- To ensure that quality professional development is accessed through outstanding provisions to support the recently appointed Religious Education Coordinator.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection of St Thomas of Canterbury School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Hallam. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The school's self-evaluation document (DSEF)
- Previous and current inspection reports and information about the school
- Pupils' contribution to the Catholic Life of the school
- The Religious Education curriculum
- Acts of Collective Worship
- The achievement of pupils

The inspection was carried out by Mr John Cape and Mrs Lindsay Gamble on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 over one day:

- During this one-day inspection, we had the opportunity to discuss the work of the school with several key stakeholders including teaching and support staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils.
- Detailed forensic discussion took place with the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Deputy Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator.
- We talked to the pupils about St Thomas of Canterbury school and how they enjoyed their learning and being part of the school community.
- School assessment information, progress reports, portfolios of work, photographic evidence, focal points and displays in and around school, provided valuable evidence and essential information during the inspection.
- Each class provided a range of children's Religious Education work over time for pupil progress analysis.
- There was the opportunity to scrutinise a wide range of children's Religious Education work.
- There was a review of information posted on the school website which provided specific evidence about the importance of the Catholic faith and tradition at St Thomas of Canterbury school and how this is lived out daily in the school.
- Three acts of Collective Worship and a whole school assembly were observed.

## Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average, mixed school for pupils between the age of 3 and 11.
- The school is a Catholic Voluntary Academy and a member of the Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust.
- The Trust comprises three separate academies, with three governing bodies, who work together in collaboration to provide a distinctively Catholic education.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at 'SEN Support' or with an Education and Health-Care Plan (EHCP) is well above average at 10%, including a number of pupils who are placed within 'resourced provision' to meet their multiple and complex special educational needs and disabilities.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average, but increasing year on year
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Full Report – Inspection Judgements

### CATHOLIC LIFE

#### The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

#### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- Pupils at St. Thomas of Canterbury are proud of their religious identity and make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life and mission of the school which has a very high priority across the school.
- Pupils value the Catholic tradition of their school and are proud of it. Throughout the school they are involved with both parish and diocesan celebrations and activities.
- They are learning to know and understand a loving God and can demonstrate many qualities including empathy, a willingness to listen, celebration and forgiveness.
- Pupil Perception and Religious Education surveys confirm their interest in and support of all aspects relating to the Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them and are happy to take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's ethos within the school.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice, responding willingly to the needs of those beyond the school. They articulate their views with confidence explaining the purpose of fundraising for various charities, such as for St. Wilfrid's Centre, St. Vincent's furniture store and Cafod. This is a clear demonstration of their understanding of a living faith.
- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the liturgical year and its key celebrations. One pupil was able to explain the liturgical steps presentation which follows the Church's year exhibited in a corridor display outside the hall.
- They speak confidently of their Catholic identity and what this means and how they can turn their faith into action to support others in need.
- Pupils say they are always listened to, highly valued and often presented with opportunities to express their views and feelings.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth, demonstrating excellent behaviour towards adults and each other.
- There is a powerful sense of belonging and involvement from the pupils and some take responsibility for key roles, for example the Liturgy Leaders.

- Older pupils have key roles in supporting the younger or new pupils to school. They act as reading or playground buddies building self-esteem and confidence.
- Regular opportunities to celebrate, reflect, forgive and listen focus on key aspects of school life - mindfulness, school values and rules, for instance.
- The four school core values of Faith, Aspiration, Effort and Respect are carefully linked to 22 values shared over a two-year period. These values are introduced and developed with the Pupil Voice group and shared throughout the school which highlights the Catholic identity of St. Thomas' and underpin daily life.
- Parents commented on how their children are nurtured and cared for and how they have the highest possible trust in the school. 'The value system is at the heart of their learning'. They were highly praiseworthy of the school and applauded the outstanding communication and high quality information they receive.
- The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme is currently being reviewed by staff and governors. The Head of School is actively involved in working with governors to formalise a new policy and programme to ensure it is thoughtfully designed, carefully planned and taught consistently well celebrating Catholic teachings and principles.

**The quality of provision of provision for the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding.**

- Careful consideration had been given to the leadership structure to ensure it is fit for purpose. On a day to day basis the Head of School has the responsibility for leading the Catholic Life of the school and Religious Education. He is held to account by the Executive Headteacher and Governing Body through a specific performance management related target and ongoing monitoring.
- This structural arrangement has confirmed a significant acceleration in progress and development especially since September 2018. There is strong capacity for continued and sustained excellence in the Catholic life of the school and teaching of Religious Education in St Thomas of Canterbury school.
- The Head of School provides strong leadership and direction and fully upholds the Catholic life of the school. His strong qualities pervade the whole school.
- The Head of School is highly committed to his faith and leads by example, demonstrating a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the Catholic ethos and mission of the school.
- The recently introduced rigorous programme of professional development is having a very positive impact in developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition, reinforcing teaching and learning in Religious Education and supporting the ongoing development of quality collective worship across school.
- There is an explicit Catholic identity in school evidenced in some public areas of the school, such as the reception area, the learning environment and in displays in classrooms and around the school.
- The integrated resource provides specialised education for 12 pupils with a range of multiple and complex special educational needs and disabilities. Despite the huge challenges to provision the school delivers bespoke support and incredible pastoral care at the highest level from an outstanding teacher ably supported by skilled assistants.

- A high quality of care permeates the school and, as a result, there is a real sense of team spirit and positive working relationships.
- St Thomas has a vibrant and engaging learning environment apparent both in the classrooms and in and around the school itself, where there are focal points and displays linked to the liturgical seasons.
- The quality presentation within school is a testimony to high expectations which value achievement and promote aspiration.
- Within school there is a tangible sense of community at all levels, which is evident in the quality of relationships between staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The school's behaviour policy reflects Gospel values. It is clear that pupils are well supported in making right choices and that they understand personal responsibility.
- Pupils' achievements are celebrated at weekly celebration assemblies and every pupil is taught that in God, all things are possible and that they celebrate each other's God given talents and abilities as a Christian family.
- Leadership is attentive to the well-being and pastoral care of staff and throughout the year staff are offered catch up days to promote work life balance.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and the school's shared vision.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the life of the school. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well. They work effectively with the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Religious Education coordinator and are most committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists.
- The Religious Education link governor gives tirelessly of her time and effort; she is a regular visitor to school to carry out learning walks and meet with the Religious Education coordinator to discuss developments and monitor progress. The outcomes are fed back to the full governing body.
- The leadership of the school in promoting the Catholic Life is outstanding and they have a very positive presence around the school, as well as a very clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school. They are embedding this very effectively throughout the school so that pupils, staff and parents recognise and support its realisation.
- The school's self-evaluation is given high priority and the leaders and managers have established a range of monitoring activities to provide clear and accurate evidence which is successfully used to move the school forward.
- The recently appointed Religious Education subject leader guides and supports the Catholic Life of the school and Religious Education by continually seeking out new and exciting ways to challenge and guide pupils and staff on their faith journey.
- Parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's vision and recognise and appreciate the significant acceleration of development in the Catholic life of the school.



- The school priorities are correctly identified in the School Development Plan which provides detailed actions and timescales to drive improvement, including a focus on the Catholic life of the school as its priority. This plan is regularly reviewed by the governors' Strategic Development Committee and the senior leadership team to ensure continued development and constant improvement in provision.
- Parents speak very highly of the school: they have a clear understanding of the school's vision and are very supportive of this. They are extremely proud of the school, applauding the accessibility of the Head of School, the availability of teachers in person and via email and the warm welcome they receive.
- St. Thomas now needs to focus on further promoting the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education on the school website so that the outstanding practice can be shared with the wider community and beyond.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### The quality of Religious Education is Outstanding

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

#### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.

- The most recently submitted data indicates strong progress across both key stages and all pupils from their varied starting points make at least good progress or better.
- The EDUcater tracking package gives clear evidence that all groups of pupils including the most vulnerable and those with SEN are making progress at least in line with other pupils.
- Religious Education is now at the heart of the school curriculum and children's learning and is intricately linked with many subjects, such as music, art and English.
- Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education; they have positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning, explaining how it helps them to understand how to live their lives.
- They are keen to do well and most work at a very good pace in lessons.
- As a result of innovative and ambitious teaching, behaviour for learning throughout the school enables high quality learning to take place.

- Pupils develop and apply a range of skills well, and as they reach upper key stage two are able to interpret sources, reflect and evaluate, engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives.
- Pupils are consistently challenged to think at every point of the lesson. The impact of effective use of the 'Big Question' enables opportunities to be created for them to think at a much deeper level.
- Pupils use their knowledge and understanding to reflect spiritually and are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life through prayer and actions of how they treat and respect others.
- Pupils are articulate, confident and passionate about their faith and know how it will help them on their journey through life.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- The recently appointed and passionate Religious Education coordinator is taking an active role in ensuring high quality planning and preparation for lessons.
- The coordinator is working in partnership with leaders and has introduced an effective unit plan for topics that prompt and scaffold teachers to plan lessons which are based on what pupils will understand at the end of the lesson.
- By sharing the very best practice and continued modelling by leaders, all teaching could be consistently outstanding throughout the school.
- As a result of high quality mentoring and coaching support, teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are not afraid to take risks and be innovative in their teaching.
- The preschool pupils experience an outstanding start to their education learning about 'Celebrations'. They demonstrated an eagerness, excitement and joy of learning about Simeon and Anna in the temple.
- Excellent use of talking partners throughout school supports learning and engagement in order to value and promote opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways.
- Year 2 pupils know and understand some stories in the bible related to the teachings of Jesus. Five pupil storytellers led group activities focused on key characters of the bible such as Noah, Daniel and Joseph and shared their own texts which had been created at home. Outstanding teaching enabled these stories to be linked to the school core values in an innovative and interesting way.
- Teachers use key learning stickers to ensure that assessment is based on an understanding of knowledge rather than on the actual activity.
- Teaching Assistants support learning in a variety of different contexts whilst encouraging independence.
- Very good use of art and other medias is used to support learning in Religious Education.
- Pupils in Reception were learning about Simeon and knew 'Jesus is the chosen one'. Excellent use of questioning, a recall of previous learning and dialogue within group activities, evidenced high quality learning.

- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teachers' assessment strategy shared during the lessons. Pupils genuinely believe 'The only way to fail is to not try'.
- Most teachers communicate very high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with great enthusiasm.
- Marking and feedback is in line with the school policy and identifies how the religious content can be further improved. In general, the majority of pupils respond positively to teacher commentary although more regular checking would ensure the policy is applied consistently throughout school.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Since September 2018, leaders and governors have invested heavily in accelerating the development of Religious Education to match other core curriculum subjects.
- The Head of School is fully committed and passionate about promoting the profile of Religious Education amongst staff, pupils, parents and parish.
- The subject leader of Religious Education is very committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. He is well informed about current developments and has high expectations which he communicates effectively with staff on a regular basis during dedicated meetings.
- It is evident that Religious Education has had its profile raised and is highly regarded as a core subject within the school.
- Inspectors are confident the continuing professional development training in place will grow from strength to strength if implemented accordingly and wholly supported and monitored by leadership and governors in the future.
- Professional development is important and given high priority in many ways. Not only do staff attend diocesan courses, they share good practice within the school community and the umbrella trust.
- Governors are very aware of the current recruitment challenges regarding high quality Catholic teachers. Using a bespoke model through the Learning Unlimited Teaching School they created a post for a Catholic teacher who is now employed as the Religious Education Coordinator.
- Recorded minutes and notes found in the Pupils and Curriculum Committee, Strategic Development Committee and full Governing Body confirm governors fulfil their responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life and Religious Education.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### The quality of Collective Worship is Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

#### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is Outstanding.

- Although at an early stage of redevelopment and reinvigoration, most pupils have an outstanding understanding of the structure and delivery of Collective Worship.
- Pupils from a young age have the ability to initiate and lead worship following using a carefully designed and purposeful structure.
- The ongoing strategic plan facilitates opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver Collective Worship. Liturgy Leaders provide a valuable resource to deliver and model high quality worship in class, key stage and whole school celebrations.
- They understand that God can be praised through song as well as prayer and happily and enthusiastically join in hymns in class and assembly.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its celebrations, rites and colours.
- The 2018 pupil questionnaire confirmed the majority of pupils really enjoy Collective Worship and are able to talk about their relationship with God.
- All pupils at St Thomas of Canterbury school respond very respectfully and thoughtfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and larger gatherings. Pupils act with reverence, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils participate actively in the parish sacramental preparation programme following diocesan guidelines. The excellent relationship between school and parish and the key role of skilled catechists, ensures children are thoroughly prepared to receive first sacraments rooted in the church community.
- St. Thomas is a very prayerful and spiritual school where worship is a regular and meaningful part of the day. All pupils are inspired by, and enthusiastic in, their response to Collective Worship. This is evident in their keen participation in liturgies, particularly their gathering, joyful singing and prayerful reflection. They listen intently, show respect and offer heartfelt responses.
- Pupils are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others. This is evidenced in pupils' learning about Judaism and Hinduism.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship is Outstanding.**

- Prayer and acts of Collective Worship are given high priority and are a key feature of every day, and every school celebration, providing inspiration for staff and pupils.
- The Head of School led an affirming and positive well-resourced whole school assembly, supported by the Ten Ten programme, based on the theme of 'I'm on a Mission'. Pupils had a variety of opportunities to engage through discussion, listening to the Word, responding and heartfelt singing.
- The recent introduction of the Thursday prayer group has impacted positively resulting in a number of pupils voluntarily attending and wishing to share their experiences with others.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and a good range of structures to ensure that it is frequent, regular and inclusive.
- Whole school Collective Worship resources are high quality. These have provided a range of purposeful opportunities for meditation and reflection on the mission of the gospel and are often linked to the Ten Ten resource.
- Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced to enhance the worship experiences throughout the liturgical year. Pupils and adults praying together is a daily experience and on occasions other adults are welcomed into this prayerful community.
- Leaders are passionate about ensuring that Collective Worship is of the highest quality and take every opportunity to model high quality liturgies. A planned programme of Collective Worship ensures themes chosen reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical year.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are given further opportunities to share in the spiritual life of the school through various acts of Collective Worship, celebrations and Mass.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to school and is well known to staff, pupils and parents. He reassuringly offers valuable guidance and support to staff in terms of their formation and development and his contribution is very highly welcomed and appreciated by all.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is Outstanding.**

- Leaders are highly skilled to offer and deliver quality Collective Worship and role modelling exemplifies and accelerates this progress.
- Leaders' and governors' collective knowledge and experience ensures an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Governors provide ongoing challenge and support and accurately understand the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship.
- As a result of frequent meetings, monitoring, learning walks and evaluative opportunities governors confirm the quality of provision in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Leaders and governors, working in partnership, have an accurate involvement in and ownership of the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form.

- Significant ongoing priority is now being given to the professional development of staff through a range of curriculum and worship opportunities, partnerships with the Diocese and umbrella trust and a strong link with the parish.
- As a result of a dedicated and committed Religious Education Link Governor, strong record keeping, and a range of procedures designed to develop the quality of Collective Worship, governors fulfil their monitoring role and ensure a consistency of high-quality purposeful Collective Worship.
- Governors confirm they will continue to monitor this outstanding provision to ensure St Thomas of Canterbury school remains a proud and successful community rooted in the Catholic tradition, unlocking lives, unlocking potential, nurturing faith and developing a global conscience.