



St Thomas of Canterbury School
a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Many parents have commented on how useful they found the analysis of the recent questionnaire carried out by the Governing Body, particularly because the challenge questions from the governors were clear and the responses from the school were very honest and open. Our aim is to be more transparent in the way we operate so that, as we move forward, we take the whole community with us.

As promised, this document includes the vision for the school for the next two years, which has been heavily influenced by ideas and suggestions from children, parents, staff and governors. In addition, we have included the latest school Self-Evaluation, which shows where the school judges itself to be and why. There is a lot of reading within the three documents and some technical language however it all links together and will hopefully inform parents about where the school is currently and where it is moving to.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email them to a.truby@st-tc.co.uk

Vision for the next Two Years
School Self-Evaluation

Redefining Our Vision for the Next Two Years

Thank you to all of the children, parents, staff, children and governors who have contributed to the vision for our school for the next two years. More in depth sessions with governors and with school staff led to this concise vision. The vision for the school is where we aim to be in two years and our mission statement is our current and on-going mission as a school. Both the mission statement and the vision include the entire school family, made up of children, parents, governors and staff. The vision is deliberately quite conceptual rather than containing specific detail however we will also be sharing some specific strategic plans that we have in the next few months.

The Vision for St Thomas of Canterbury School for the next two years

Our family will continue to build upon its inspiring, nurturing and loving environment to create a school where all individuals can grow in confidence, communicate effectively, know God and experience success.

- Children have an unquenchable thirst for learning by being valued as an individual and developing spiritually, morally, socially, culturally, academically and creatively therefore taking delight in pushing themselves and achieving well beyond expectations.
- All parents will feel part of the school, fully engage with the school and support their child's learning.
- School staff place the children at the centre of all that they do, striving to give them the very best learning experiences, exploring and implementing innovative approaches or pushing boundaries, founded in a belief that every child will exceed expectations.
- Governors engage effectively with the school, often acting as the moral compass, providing a high degree of challenge in the places where it is needed to ensure that resources are targeted at the school's key priorities and keeping a close eye on the impact.

Our Mission Statement

At St Thomas of Canterbury School we encourage in all members of the community a shared sense of awe and wonder as we grow closer to God. We foster creativity and inquiring minds, learning through collaboration and interdependence to become motivated lifelong learners.

Purpose of Self-Evaluation

The school has made incredible progress in recent years to become one of the leading primary schools in the Diocese and in Sheffield both in terms of the quality of teaching and the achievement of its pupils. As a school, we are far from complacent and we are still on a challenging journey to become an outstanding school and, ultimately, a world-class school. It is hugely important to take the whole family with us on this journey therefore effective communication is vital if we are to achieve our goals. In school, there is a sense of change and a strong feeling of moving in the right direction with the many changes to staffing. This is an opportunity to re-invigorate our drive to improve any aspects of the school that are not yet outstanding and for a reality check in terms of how far our current evaluation of where we are reflects our values and our shared vision. The school is judging itself to be between the Good grade and the Outstanding grade because the school is stronger than the grade descriptors for Good however there are still some inconsistencies holding us back from the Outstanding grade.

How can I influence the direction of the school?

As a school, we are open to ideas and suggestions from parents and from children. If you would like us to consider your views or ideas as we are planning for the future, please get in touch by sending an email to a.truby@st-tc.co.uk or send something through in writing. Later in the Summer Term, we hope to hold some events for parents to talk about the changes to the National Curriculum and how our school plans to implement this from September 2014 in order to provide an excellent education for all children.

If you would like something specific to be considered within a particular class, please get in touch with the relevant class teacher by emailing enquiries@st-tc.co.uk with the subject of the email, 'FAO: Mrs X' and the member of staff will take your views on board.

Strengths and Areas for Development: Our Self-Evaluation in the four key areas

Achievement - Our Self-Evaluation Grade: Good-Outstanding

- The numerical values may not be relevant to many parents however the comparison between the school's performance and national performance is a good way to see how well the school is doing.
- Overall, children enter the school below where they are expected for their age then make outstanding progress during their year in Reception so that most children achieve the Good Level of Development. This is where the Department for Education would like all children to be at the end of Reception. In our school, 73.3% in 2012 and 2013 achieved this level compared to 52% of children nationally. This reflects the strong teaching in this part of the school.
- Progress across Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) has now improved and pupils now make good to outstanding progress and attain significantly above pupils nationally with an overall average points score of 17.3 compared to the national of 15.8, with particularly strong attainment in mathematics, where our average points score was 18.2 compared to the national average of 16.1.
- Pupils in all classes make good or outstanding progress in all subjects and the targets we set in our school are higher than in most other schools.
- The achievement of pupils for whom the Pupil Premium provides support is rising rapidly due to accelerated learning. The school receives additional funding for children who are in care, entitled to Free School Meals or previously looked after. We use this money to help those children to make faster progress or to access things that may not otherwise be accessible to them. A large focus of the work we do in this area is to build children's self-esteem using a range of innovative approaches, such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming.
- The vast majority of pupils make at least good progress across the school with many making outstanding progress because of the strong teaching in the school.
- Progress in English is at least good across the school and is outstanding in mathematics. The teaching in mathematics is our strongest area in the school.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above average for the last two years with an average points score of 30.4 in 2012 and 30.3 in 2013, compared to the national average of 28.3 and significantly above average in mathematics 31.2 in 2013, compared to the national average of 28.7. The school was 5th in the Sheffield primary schools league tables in 2013.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress from their starting points as a result of the carefully tailored curriculum and the high level of expertise within the school. Smaller steps of progress are shown through a system called B Squared and this is linked to teachers' planning.
- Children enter the school below where they are expected to be and most leave the school above or significantly above pupils nationally therefore progress from entry to leaving the school is outstanding.

Next Steps

- To ensure that all teaching is consistently outstanding so that every single child makes outstanding progress every day in school.
- To develop a relevant and meaningful assessment system in the world without levels, which is understood by children, parents and school staff.
- To identify gaps in children's learning as early as possible and to become even more effective at addressing those gaps rapidly so that children can progress at the same rate as their peers and not fall behind.

Quality of Teaching - Our Self-Evaluation Grade: Good-Outstanding

- The school management team carries out in depth monitoring of teachers' planning, marking, feedback, classroom environment and what is happening in the lessons on a weekly basis. This is used to help teachers to develop and to highlight any weaker areas where support may be needed.
- Weekly monitoring shows that much of the teaching over time is outstanding, particularly in maths, leading to rapid progress.
- A minority of teaching is not good and this is being addressed through the robust appraisal policy.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils and this is seen in the high quality planning (consistent across the school) which has a high impact on learning for all groups and ensures that support staff are also clear about expectations.
- Through the school's consistent approach to Assessment for Learning, teachers systematically check pupils' understanding throughout lessons e.g. through checkpoints, structured talk and high quality questioning with a strong impact on learning.

- Weekly monitoring shows that the teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum; the school is currently bringing up the standard of teaching in foundation subjects to match English and maths.
- The school's innovative and exciting approach to learning ensures that all pupils are engaged in learning, highly motivated and there is a strong learning culture. Pupils are also keen to apply themselves outside of lessons, e.g. attendance at a wide range of clubs / out of hours provision.
- Weekly monitoring shows that marking is consistently strong in English and improving in mathematics due to the school's high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically to this.
- Time and resources are used effectively across the school to maximise progress and all approaches are based on current research; e.g. Sutton Trust, Numbers Count and daily accelerated learning time.
- Teachers and headteachers from many other schools locally and from other parts of the country frequently visit our school to learn about our successful approaches to teaching and learning.

Next Steps

- A minority of teaching is not consistently good and this is not good enough for the children at our school. This is being addressed through the school's appraisal policy.
- The children's learning comes before anything else therefore any teaching that is not up to the school's standard is eradicated quickly. Where a teacher is not responding to the support given, tough decisions have to be made.
- The school will introduce a new curriculum in September 2014 and this will be an opportunity to redefine the way we think about and tackle underachievement of our pupils.
- Further information about our approach to the new curriculum will follow during the Summer Term 2014 and there will be an opportunity for children, parents, staff and governors to shape this through their input.
- The lunchtime provision is not yet at the same standard as the other aspects of the school both in the dining room and outside. This is a key area that is being addressed.
- The outdoor provision at lunchtimes will be addressed during Summer 2014 and the dining experience will be addressed during the academic year 2014-2015.

Behaviour and Safety - Our Self-Evaluation Grade: Good-Outstanding

- As a result of the school's exciting approach to learning, e.g. through inquiry, an innovative curriculum and the high priority given to metacognition, pupils demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm towards learning and a thirst for learning with a strong impact on their progress.
- Where teaching is consistently good to outstanding, pupils' attitudes to learning are of a high standard however, where teaching requires improvement in a minority of cases, learning behaviours are less positive.
- Staff, pupils and the vast majority of parents are unreservedly positive about both behaviour and safety [recent governor survey]. A minority of parents do not feel that the school deals effectively with behaviour and the school is working hard to ensure that the high standard of behaviour and mutual respect between pupils can be seen at all times of the school day.
- The school is developing its provision for pupils at lunchtimes through young leaders leading the activities and this is leading to improvements in behaviour outside lessons.
- Pupils' pride in the school is shown by their excellent conduct around school, for example entering assembly with reverence toward the 'gathering'.
- The school takes a proactive approach to anti-bullying therefore pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying therefore it is very rare. Where bullying is reported, Mrs Wileman, the Learning Mentor, follows this up in depth and works with the children to resolve any issues and to give them appropriate strategies to use.
- The school's positive behaviour management approach and commitment to the Read, Write Inc strategies lead to an exceptionally positive climate for learning.
- The daily Bubble Time provision and small group interventions support pupils in managing their own behaviour choices successfully. The school is developing cognitive behavioural therapy programmes to ensure that every child leaves the school with the ability to manage their own behaviour safely.
- Safeguarding arrangements and pastoral care are exemplary and ensure that all pupils feel safe at school.

Next Steps

- The school has very high expectations of its pupils in relation to their behaviour and this is one of the reasons why parents choose St Thomas of Canterbury however, in a very small minority of lessons, behaviour is falling short of the school's standards therefore this is being addressed with the teachers concerned to ensure that they use only the most effective, proven approaches for promoting positive behaviour.
- The positive behaviour policy needs to be fully embedded to ensure that it is applied consistently across the school.

- All teachers need to place a high priority on teaching effective learning behaviours through a whole school systematic approach and this will be developed throughout 2014-2015.
- The rate of pupils' attendance at school is a significant concern and this is lower than it should be due to the persistent absence of a small number of pupils, who are losing out on the high quality teaching because they are not at school. The school is working hard to address this and has increased the rigour with which this is monitored and followed up. The school needs to show that this has improved by the end of the academic year.
- Punctuality for a small number of pupils is a serious concern and this group of pupils is regularly missing chunks of teaching, resulting in a negative impact on their progress. The school is tackling this and some parents may be taken to court because they are persistently failing to get their child to school in time to start their lessons.
- To work with Maria Collins-Donnelly, a renowned clinical psychologist, to develop specialist programmes to support pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour or find it difficult to communicate how they are feeling so that all pupils leave the school being able to make appropriate choices because they have a strong emotional toolkit to draw upon.

Leadership and Management - Our Self-Evaluation Grade: Good-Outstanding

- The school's leadership team is highly focussed on moving all aspects of the school to consistently outstanding so that all pupils reach their potential.
- All members of staff as well as governors are highly ambitious for the pupils and promote a culture of challenge in order to continually improve.
- Governors rigorously hold the school to account for all aspects of the school's performance through robust appraisal systems supported by in depth weekly monitoring.
- All approaches to teaching and learning are now based on the latest research such as the Sutton Trust which underpins the professional development to ensure that teaching is consistently good with much outstanding.
- The school's innovative curriculum provides a balance of subject areas and promotes a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning and have a positive impact on pupils' all round development.
- The school provides a wide range of out of hours learning opportunities, including excellent sporting opportunities which have a very positive impact on all pupils' self-esteem.
- The highly focussed accelerated learning programmes have secured improvement in achievement for pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- The school is continually developing strategies for engaging with parents and this remains a high priority.
- The school provides strategic support to other schools, e.g. the Headteacher is a Diocesan Leader in Education and an Ofsted Inspector which brings in additional income to the benefit of pupils at this school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils exceed statutory requirements.
- Highly effective governance of finances lead to carefully targeted use of resources.
- The school has been recognised by the Diocese and the Department for Education for its strength of leadership and its track record in school improvement.
- The Headteacher works as an Ofsted Inspector and has also been appointed by the Bishop as a Diocesan Leader of Education to provide much needed support to schools in difficulty. This is part of a business model which enables the school to strategically over-staff in order to further build internal capacity.
- Governors have been praised by the Diocese for the innovative, forward-thinking approach they have taken towards capacity building and school to school support. This places St Thomas of Canterbury School in an even stronger position.

Next Steps

- To continue to strategically overstaff in order to provide the school to school support which is needed in the system.
- To develop middle leadership in order to have maximum impact at all levels.
- To continue to develop the collaborative approach across the Umbrella schools to provide a distinctively Catholic Education for our pupils.
- Although the vast majority of parents are extremely positive about the work that the school does, the Governor Survey indicates that a small minority of parents do not have faith in the school's ability to provide a good education to their children.
- The school is working hard to address any aspects which are not yet outstanding and to work closely with parents to explore way to resolve any issues. For example, Mrs Hutchings is carrying out consultation meetings with parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities to look at how we can work more collaboratively to provide high quality learning experiences for all children.

The Overall Effectiveness of the School - Our Self-Evaluation Grade: Good-Outstanding

- The school recognises that some aspects of the school are currently 'good' with much that is already 'outstanding' however we will continue to drive all aspects of the school to the highest level and eradicate any areas that are not yet consistently good.
- As a result of the highly effective approach to teaching and targeted use of resources, children enter the school below that expected of them and leave the school above and significantly above pupils nationally therefore progress from entry to leaving the school is outstanding.
- As a result of the school's effectively planned curriculum, all groups of pupils benefit from high quality learning experiences and leave the school well prepared for secondary school. [Positive feedback from secondary schools].
- The school is recognised for its excellent practice based on latest research and, through a strategic over-staffing model, provides a range of training and support. The school has developed a business plan to bring in significant additional income for the school through the external work it is doing which benefits the pupils in our school and enables us to build our leadership capacity, ultimately resulting in more of the teaching in the school being judged as Outstanding.
- One day per week, the Headteacher spends supporting schools in difficulty through the Diocese. [HMI/Ofsted have acknowledged the high quality of this].
- Other key members of the school's management team also provide tailored support to other schools, e.g. improving teaching, raising achievement, SEND and tackling underperformance.
- The school has created a framework which links assemblies, acts of worship in class and cross-curricular opportunities to promote SMSC, which is outstanding. [Section 48 Inspection Nov 2013].

Next Steps

- The school is very close to judging itself to be outstanding however there are still inconsistencies which are being quickly addressed to ensure that the standards are high across the board.
- To further embed the outstanding Catholic Life of the School through the development of in school chaplaincy and more creative approaches to liturgy and collective worship.
- The Local Authority is no longer placing pupils in the school's Integrated Resource which has been a strength of the school for many years. This reflects changes nationally to ensure that pupils are catered for within their local school by improving the provision for pupils with statements across the board and not just in schools like ours with a specialism.
- Funding to support pupils with Special Educational Needs at our school has been severely cut therefore the school needs to be more creative in how we meet the needs of all pupils without the level of staffing we have had up to now. Funding does not reflect the number of hours on a child's statement and the school will need to prove how much support a child needs in order to apply for additional funding.
- The school will be moving towards using specialist teachers in more cases than teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils are taught by the best qualified staff.
- As the historical specialism in providing for pupils with complex needs is phased out due to the Integrated Resource, the school will need to redefine itself with specialism in other areas such as outstanding teaching in mathematics, training for other teachers and leadership of teaching and learning.
- To increase rigour and depth in science and in foundation subjects (history, geography, art, music)
- All teaching needs to be consistently outstanding so that all pupils make outstanding progress and reach their full potential in all areas, particularly in the teaching of Religious Education which is a key part of being a successful Catholic school.
- Judged to be outstanding by Ofsted and become a primary teaching school as part of the Teaching School Alliance.
- To create provision for 3-4 year old pupils within the school by 2015-2016.
- To become a world-class school.