

STMS newsletter December 2017

Dear Parents

Ofsted Report.

I finally have the privilege of attaching a letter from the Lead Inspector in our recent Ofsted inspection. Many people expect a full report but when you are a good school, we receive a one day Section 8 Inspection by one inspector. Their intention is simply to determine whether or not the school continues to be good. If it is considered to be better than good or if there are concerns the school is no longer good, they return to complete a full, 2 day, Section 5 Inspection, within 7 days, with 2-3 inspectors.

I say this because for many of you, you may find the letter, (not a report), quite brief and very general in tone. I'm afraid that is the nature of this type of inspection. However, I have to say that despite the general nature of the report, it is one of the most positive inspection letters I have read and paints an incredibly strong picture of our school, one which we are immensely proud of.

Many people have asked: 'Are we outstanding?' And well, in short, no we're not, and I do hope people are not disappointed by that.

St Thomas More's is a fantastic school, one which the parent responses to the questionnaire demonstrated that our community is hugely proud of and the amazing education their children receive. I have very high expectations of our children, our staff and our community and I am always looking for ways to improve. That's why the governors and I self-evaluated the school as a 'Good' school and not quite outstanding yet. It's why we are relentless in finding ways to better ourselves and it is why the inspector was so impressed by our self-evaluation and our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, our outcomes, the pastoral support, the support for vulnerable groups such as SEN children and Pupil Premium pupils, the strength of our vision and the commitment of leaders at all levels, the attitudes of pupils and the quality of curriculum and learning.

One phrase used by the inspector during the inspection stands out in my mind and will do for many years to come. She said "what strikes me about your school is that you never waste a minute with your children and you constantly strive to adapt and meet the needs of every child". Sadly, because of the nature of the report, comments like that are not quoted but we are delighted that something which is central to our work and our drive to improve was recognised so vividly as she went from class to class.

May I finish by thanking you for your support to me and my colleagues during the process and the overwhelmingly positive responses to the questionnaire. St Thomas More's is a fantastic school, one we are all very proud of and one I am privileged to lead as headteacher.

Performance League Tables

Performance league tables are certainly not to be relied upon as an indicator of the quality of a school and I have seen this year's performance data presented in various formats, each of which places us in a different position. However it was wonderful to see that in the League Table of the Top 15 Schools in Portsmouth produced by the Portsmouth News, St Thomas More's was ranked 3rd out of all the school in the wider Portsmouth area and 1st among Havant schools. Well done to all the teaching staff for their role in achieving this fantastic result.

If you would like to look at the table in more detail, you can do so at:

<https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/education/here-are-the-best-and-worst-performing-primary-schools-in-the-portsmouth-area-1-8293720>

Nativity Events

Firstly I want to begin by thanking you for your support at all of our Nativity and Carol events over the past week. I think we have quite possibly seen the best selection of Christmas plays and services ever from pre-school to Year R , Key Stage 1, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6.

Craft Fair

Last week we had our Christmas Craft Fair. All the classes put huge effort into the making of goods for the Fair this year and through your generosity made a huge profit. This will all go to the PTA to fund projects for the school. Thank you for your support and for making it such a special community event.

Year 5 CD for the Homeless.

The Year 5 children decided to record a CD of Christmas Songs but instead of giving the money to the PTA some of their profits will be given to the homeless in Portsmouth. Thank you also to all those parents who contributed to our Hope for the Homeless: Rucksack Appeal. We had lots of donations which was gratefully received by the young people at St Michael's who organised the appeal.

Christmas Carol Singing

Various choirs have been out and about bring Christmas cheer to the sick, the elderly and to busy Christmas shoppers. At each event they managed to bring a smile to many, many people at what can be a stressful time of year.

End of Term Assembly

On the last day of term, Thursday 21st December, we will have our usual end of term assembly. Please feel free to join us for that.

Christmas Mass

I also hope all our families can make a special effort to join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day. The Times of masses are listed below.

Congratulations

I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Lindley is expecting her second child which is due around April. We will let you know in the new year how we intend to cover the 2 days she currently works in Year R and I am sure you will want to join me in congratulating her and wishing her all the very best.

Bad weather opening

We have had some quite wintery weather lately and lots of schools elsewhere in the country had to close. At St Thomas More's we will only close as a last resort when there is a risk to safety of children, families or staff. Should we have to close, we will post a message on our school website and on Facebook. We will text message all families so please check that you contact details are up to date at the office. Finally we will inform local radio stations so stay tuned for any messages related to our school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lohi Naraya". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Church News

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Church, Leigh Park

Christmas Eve

10am Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

6pm Mass

Carols at 11.30pm followed by Midnight Mass

The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, 25th December 10am Mass

St Joseph's, Havant & Ss. Thomas of Canterbury and Thomas More, Emsworth

Christmas Eve

9am Mass at Ss. Thomas, Emsworth for 4th Sunday of Advent and no 11 am Mass

6 pm Vigil Mass with Carols, Ss. Thomases, Emsworth

11.30pm Carols followed by Midnight Mass at St. Joseph's, Havant

The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, 25th December

9 am Mass at Ss. Thomases, Emsworth

11am Mass at St. Joseph's, Havant and no evening Mass

St Patrick's, Hayling Island

Sunday 17th 6 pm Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve 6 pm Family Christmas Mass (followed by Mince pies)

Sunday 24th 11.30pm - Midnight Mass

The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, 25th December

10am Sung Mass

ITEMS FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Time	Event
Thursday 4 January 2018	08:45 -3:15	INSET day
Friday 5 January 2018	08:45 -3:15	INSET day
Monday 8 th December	08:45 -3:15	First day back after Christmas break
Monday 23 July	08:45 -3:15	INSET day

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester T 0300 123 4234
M1 2WD www.gov.uk/ofsted



11 December 2017

Mr Colin Flanagan
Headteacher
St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School
Hooks Lane
Bedhampton
Havant
PO9 3DR

Dear Mr Flanagan

Short inspection of St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Havant

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide clear and ambitious leadership. You are determined that every pupil will succeed and that they will leave St Thomas More's feeling that they have achieved more than they had ever expected. The leadership team, including governors, have a clear and accurate view of what the school does well and what could be even better. Parents value your leadership.

Pupils enjoy coming to St Thomas More's. They are polite, well behaved and confident. They find learning is fun and enjoy aspects of school life like trips, the choir and the annual nativity play. The spoke about how friendly their school is and how 'this school encourages you not to leave anyone out'. You and your team have created a caring school. As one parent commented, 'The school is encouraging and nurturing, and has pupil welfare at its heart.'

The previous inspection report highlighted several strengths, including the good progress that pupils make from their different starting points, the high expectations that teachers have, and the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils to their work.

You have maintained these strengths. At the time of the last inspection you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that work is always hard enough for the most able pupils. You have taken some effective action to address these areas. Through high-quality evaluation, you have ensured that the drive for improvement in teaching is at the centre of everything you do. Most-able pupils are challenged appropriately.

Provisional results in writing at the end of Year 6 in 2017 indicate that attainment at the expected standard exceeded national averages. However, the proportion of pupils who attained greater depth in writing was below the national average. You recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that more pupils make accelerated progress in writing to achieve the higher standards. You have also rightly identified that further accelerating the progress that disadvantaged pupils make should be a key priority for leaders in the immediate future.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. Staff are vigilant in following up any welfare concerns they have about a child. As a team, they understand the specific risks associated with your local area.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They demonstrate a strong knowledge of the different types of bullying. They say that bullying does not often happen, but when it does, 'It will get sorted straight away.' Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and are confident that there is always someone to talk to should they have a problem.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. You want nothing but the best for your pupils and intervene swiftly when teaching is not of the high standard you expect. You provide effective professional development for staff and, as a result, teaching skills are continually improving. Middle and senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They provide good advice and challenge to staff. Classroom observations indicate that the most able pupils are usually challenged in their work. Teachers constantly ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils could tell me how to improve their work and they showed me many examples of where they have effectively done so.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to write at length and for a purpose, often linked to a high-quality text. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, pupils were describing a Victorian Christmas tree. They were confidently using conjunctions in their writing to extend sentences. Their phonics knowledge was secure. Pupils know how to improve their writing by identifying next steps from a first attempt. Pupils' books show that they write clearly and fluently to reach expectations that are at least in line with those expected for their age. However, teacher assessment shows that not enough pupils are reaching the higher standards in writing in key stage 2.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and accurate. They responded swiftly to the disappointing key stage 1 results in 2016. In 2017, the key stage 1 reading, writing and mathematics results were above national averages for pupils attaining the expected standard, as well as for those attaining a greater depth. School development planning is focused on the correct areas. Governors have a good understanding of the school's challenges. They know the school well and have a good grasp of the school's performance information.
- You have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils in your school. You allocate pupil premium funding to agreed priorities and have carefully analysed the impact of work in this area. Assessment information shows that current interventions are mainly effective, especially for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2. However, you have rightly identified the need for a sharper focus across the school on the use of the funding to raise attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- an increasing proportion of pupils are working at greater depth in their writing by the end of key stage 2
- they refine the use of additional funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely Lea

Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, speak to pupils and look at their work. We also assessed the quality of pupils' work in books. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to pupils about their school. I considered 98 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the accompanying free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also considered. I spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. I examined a wide range of documentation, including your self-evaluation and improvement planning, pupils' progress information, monitoring records and policies.