



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School

School Address: Eskrick Street
Halliwell
Bolton
Lancashire
BL1 3JB

Head/Principal Mrs Abigail Fielden

IQM Lead Mrs Chloe Conroy

Assessment Date 12th November 2025

Assessor Mrs Janine Appleton

Sources of Evidence:

- Parent voice activities
- Learning walk with Headteacher and IQM Lead
- School files of extensive evidence organised into each criteria for all eight elements.

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher and IQM Lead/Achievement for All Lead
- Senior Leadership Team
- Group of Teachers
- Group of Learning Support Team – Teaching Assistants and Admin Team
- Members of the Governing Board including Chair of Governor, Staff Governor, Community Governor and Parent Governor
- Pupil Wellbeing Team
- School Council



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Overall Evaluation

Inclusion is at the heart of everything that St Thomas CE Primary School does. All stakeholders are committed in the belief that they are a 'community united in love and learning, where all can lie'. The school is oversubscribed and as a 45 place per cohort school, with 366 pupils currently on role, classes are structured in a mixture of single year and mixed year classes. Each academic phase has 3 classes, 2 single year group classes and 1 that is mixed aged of 2 year groups. The school has invested in providing 4 teachers for each of these groups of 3 classes enabling opportunities for targeted focused teaching and smaller numbers of pupils.

The school is located in a community that is rich in diversity with most pupils (86%) coming from diverse backgrounds. Almost 70% of pupils have English as an additional language and all stakeholders, including pupils, recognise the challenges and exciting opportunities that this offers. Language support for all new arrivals with limited or no English language is in place from the day of admission ensuring that new pupils are supported to develop their sense of belonging and lost learning time is prevented.

Attendance is comparable to national averages however, school leaders work with determination to ensure that all pupils are in school, accessing learning as often as possible.

Last year there were 8 fixed term suspensions with 0 permanent exclusions. However, St. Thomas' School is continually driven to ensure that the school experience of all is appropriate, engaging and meets individual needs to prevent pupils presenting behaviour that falls below school's high expectations. During the Inclusion Quality Mark assessment, no incidents of inappropriate behaviour were observed and pupils spoken too responded with pride for their school, sharing that they feel safe and happy. The key to this success is underpinned by mutual trust, respect and care.

School works within a network of 7 schools who collaborate on school development projects that stem from shared priorities and self-evaluation processes. This enables leaders to support and challenge progress on school improvement initiatives.

Walking around school it is impossible not to observe the high-quality learning environment. Every space has been carefully developed to exemplify aspiration, inclusion, learning and successes. One example of this is the location of a large world map which identifies the diversity of the families and pupils who make up its community.

Leaders ensure that the school environment is accessible to all, to achieve this ramps have been added around school and spaces are well resourced and organised.

'Let your light shine', is a vision that permeates across all aspects of school life exemplifying pupils and adults' commitment to learning and personal growth. One parent reported that, 'School really cares for children, and all the staff are friendly to everyone'.

School staff talk with confidence about the positive impact that the work that they do around pupils' mental health and wellbeing is having an impact and celebrate this whilst continuing to look for additional initiatives that they can add to support pupils further. One member of staff said, 'children love being here, we do all that we can to support children and their families'.



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The safeguarding team meet weekly to ensure that all children, especially those with vulnerabilities are being provided with an appropriate curriculum and support. In addition to this the school's SENCo works to enable teachers and additional adults to adapt learning opportunities to meet every pupils needs.

Pupils' achievement and progress is carefully tracked and monitored to ensure that there is success for all. Timely analysis of progress and interventions supports high expectations of learning and behaviour.

The induction of new staff members is a well thought out, embedded, supportive process with clear handover provided and information on school's curriculum and safeguarding procedures carefully provided. This along with pre-contract time spent in school supports new employees' readiness when they join the school team with a comprehensive view of school, its systems, policies and processes. This ensures that consistency across school is not hindered when new members join the school team. Currently St. Thomas' has 3 apprentices working in school. All had clear induction and feel supported and invested in.

Those who join St. Thomas' School staff team remain for significant periods of time and say that this is due to high expectations, the strong team led approach and a shared culture of reciprocal support in the best interests of the pupils and their families.

All staff are encouraged to lead their own professional development and are supported to take part in training programmes. School staff also shared that they are encouraged to apply for progression opportunities and to lead upon their ideas and initiatives.

Staff speak positively about the support that they provide for each other and are generous with their time to listen and coach. Leaders who create this culture are always available if support is needed, either professionally or personally.

School leaders actively seek out the needs of the staff who work at the school and respond to issues or concerns in a solution focused way. An example of this is the staff suggestion box that is located in the staff room and the development of washing facilities that can be used for staff members who pray.

The Governing Board is sensitive to the importance of staff wellbeing and support school leaders in regular reviews of how this can be enhanced. The chair of the Governing Board understands their role in supporting the wellbeing of senior leaders including the Headteacher.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in three years' time.

Assessor: Mrs Janine Appleton

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

J. McCann

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

'Let your light shine' is the vision that is lived daily at St. Thomas' CE Primary School. From arriving at the attractive reception area and the warm welcome received by the Admin Team, any visitor appreciates that this is a place of belonging and care.

Discussions with school leaders and the wider staff team evidences that St. Thomas' CE School actively seeks out engagement with recognised external agencies as part of its rigorous school improvement processes. Leaders use this engagement to audit current strengths and identify next steps in provision for its learners, staff and wider community. This effective school improvement and curriculum development approach ensures a broad, balanced and relevant offer for pupils.

Pupils spoken with shared that at St. Thomas' School, 'we are supportive and kind to each other and let our light shine every day'. They talked about how proud they are to be in a school where there 'is no bullying or fighting'. They said that although everyone was successful in school, 'when we stand out, we get rewards.' All pupils spoken with could share recognitions that they have received and this celebration of successes was also evident in all classrooms and throughout the school environment.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to contribute to their inclusive environment through a number of leadership roles. They are proud of their leadership of the school and shared that they looked for roles with responsibilities because they 'wanted to make the community better and to help the school'. One member of the School Council shared that they, 'wanted a big role to help'. They know that their voice is listened to by school leaders and could articulate examples of where their ideas had been implemented. Due to this they are empowered to be creative. The Student Council shared that their next plan is to introduce a diversity day where pupils and staff could come to school wearing clothes that represent their heritage and culture.

Pupils are empowered to lead the learning and support others through a wide range of leadership opportunities, such as Head Boy and Girl and their Deputies. There are also a number of Ambassador roles, both curriculum and pastoral focused.

Wellbeing Ambassadors are clearly identifiable and able to support their peers as they wear a different coloured school jumper. They are trained and given supervision by a named adult to ensure that they have the emotional support that they need to do this role well. These young leaders also carry bags of resources that can be used to assist pupils in the playground who may be in need of their support.

A brightly coloured Buddy Bench is located in a prominent position. Funds were raised to enable this initiative, and it is now located in the playground so that if a pupil needs a friend they can sit and wait, as all pupils know to go and talk with them or Wellbeing Ambassadors step in to support.

Pupils new to school have a clear induction process to support their feeling of belonging to their new school. At St. Thomas' School, no pupil feels left out and unheard.

Cultural capital is built through a wide range of curriculum enrichment opportunities including educational visits, lunchtime and after school clubs. Pupils reported that the Little Voices drama club and football sessions are particular favourites.



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St. Thomas' has a particularly intuitive initiative that enables all pupils to have similar enriching experiences. To ensure that this is embedded in the school offer leaders have worked with pupils to create the 11 before 11 initiative where pupils can archive goals, such as a holding a leadership role and learning to swim, across their primary school education. Pupils who achieve this are awarded with a framed certificate in a special celebration event. This initiative ensures that all pupils are given rich experiences regardless of their personal circumstances.

Consideration is given to recognising the achievements for all and consideration has been given to children who always display positive learning and citizenship of their school ensuing that these pupils are also recognised.

Staff gain from professional development opportunities. They feel valued and their successes are celebrated. Members of the Teaching Assistant team shared that they appreciated the way that National Teaching Assistant Day is celebrated.

Inclusion is overseen by the Achievement for All Leader who by working with all school staff, ensures that belonging and challenge across St Thomas' School is clear and organised.

Regular Change Meetings ensure that all school staff are empowered to use their voice to share ideas for continual school improvement. When an idea is brought to school leaders this is always considered, and feedback is given through phase meetings. This is greatly appreciated by staff and their commitment to the school is high. There is little staff movement with many staying with the school for long periods of time.

Next Steps:

- To develop the role of the newly appointed Pastoral Leader to work with teachers and support staff to ensure that there is measurable continual growth in the wellbeing and personal development of all pupils.
- To continue to embed adaptive teaching in all classes ensuring an appropriate curriculum for all pupils.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

The Headteacher talks with passion and care about the pupils and families who are part of the school community and this ethos permeates across all adults who are equally committed to the inclusive culture, ensuring that there are high expectations.

The school leadership team has a structure that is designed around inclusion, and the Inclusion Leader is responsible for leading on Achievement for All. Leaders shared that the St. Thomas' is a 'happy place' and understand that school is also a safe space for some pupils and their families.

The school is located in an area surrounded by rows of terraced houses and recognises its responsibility to support its neighbourhood. Local residents are encouraged to engage with its school by inviting them to school events and teaches its pupils to care for their local community via activities such as litter picking, which they are very proud to do.

It is important to school leaders that those that work in the school are cared for and happy also. Leaders value protected leadership time and ensure that teaching staff have the resources that they need to do their job well, this includes the recent acquisition of new laptops and tablets across school.

There is a detailed training log evidencing that all who work in school access regular safeguarding and child protection training but are also invested in through a range of professional development opportunities. Leaders ensure that they are open and transparent around communicating decision making, with minutes of leadership meetings being shared, stating actions agreed so that all school knows of initiatives and progress.

Policies are adapted regularly when there is a change in practice or national guidance. Supported by the Business Manager, leaders apply for different funding streams to develop the internal and external environment and school staff have a shared vision of how to continue enhancing internal and external areas into the future. This is having a very positive impact on the school experience of pupils, and they are enjoying their new sports and wellbeing areas. Funding has recently been gained for floodlights to enable pupils to play later during winter months.

Teachers and Leaders say that the investment of 4 teachers for each 3 classes is not only having a positive impact on pupil progress but also on staff wellbeing and workload. Planning is shared across the team of teachers, and the careful use of high-quality schemes ensure that planning is not onerous. Teachers also value that some staff meeting time is allocated to planning alongside professional development opportunities.

All staff spoken with say that school leaders are supportive and ready to help. They are accessible and keen to listen to ideas and problem solve any concerns. For example, leaders have adapted working hours to enable staff to manage work-life balance.

Regular Change Meetings ensure that all school staff are empowered to use their voice to share ideas for continual school improvement. When an idea is brought to school leaders this is always considered, and feedback is given through phase meetings. This is greatly appreciated by staff and their commitment to the school is high. There is little staff movement with many staying with the school for long periods of time.



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Staff appreciate the considered introduction of the use of AI to support reducing workload and understand the measured approach that is being taken to ensure that pupils and staff are safeguarded around the implementation of this developing technology.

When spoken to Governors articulated that the school is 'a big family' and that they are welcomed into school and feel part of the family. They attend school events and other opportunities to be in school. The capacity of the governing board is enhanced by a programme of training and upskilling, for example they have recently participated in professional development on effective monitoring visits in partnership with school leaders.

Governors are knowledgeable about school priorities and are currently engaging school leaders with the development of foundation subjects' curriculum. They pay particular attention to supporting school in measuring the progress made by pupils who benefit from Pupil Premium funding or who have additional needs. However, they are keen to track the progress of all pupils in school and shared their understanding of recent school improvements in the writing.

Induction is provided to new members of the Governing Board to ensure impact. They understand their role in supporting school and that this includes both listening and being a critical friend. They also recognise that they are able to offer an objective perspective on school initiatives and impact, understanding that they can contribute ideas and provide challenge around accountability and outcomes.

Governor effectiveness is attributed to clear roles and responsibilities based upon experiences. They meet regularly with linked school leaders to ensure that they are knowledgeable and can provide appropriate challenge. This knowledge is then fed into committee meetings enabling the Governing Board to have understanding of school priorities, actions, and impact.

Next Steps:

- Governors to continue to provide challenge to school, building upon their effectiveness as school improvement partners. Newly developed roles linked to areas of the curriculum and time spent with school leaders will effectively inform the board of school improvement progress over time.
- School leaders will ensure that all pupils, including those with additional needs, those for whom English is an additional language or those who are disadvantaged in any way are able to fully access learning. This will be done with evidence based successful adaptive teaching and inclusion strategies.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

St. Thomas' CE Primary school rightly pays keen attention to building cultural capital. This is evidenced by their 11 before 11 initiative, which through goals that are co-constructed with pupils outlines experiences that St. Thomas' expects each child to achieve before they end their primary phase career. Each pupil who achieves this is awarded a framed certificate when they transition from primary to secondary school.

One of these 11 goals is to learn to swim, and this is supported by a swimming pool that is placed on the school site for 6 weeks annually, enabling all children between Year 2 and Year 6 the opportunity to learn to swim.

School regularly applies for different funding streams to support the development of the school environment. There have been extensive improvements made to the external environment and all areas are well utilised and enjoyed by pupils.

Each subject leader has a Subject Leader Booklet with an overview of the curriculum, subject priorities, relevant data, and impact noted through school self-assessment processes. These are shared with Governors ensuring that the Governing Board have effective knowledge of priorities and progress. There is also an annual progress and impact event where leaders and governors work together to evaluate the effectiveness of school's improvement work over the past year and set the priorities for the coming year.

Curriculum development is overseen by the Curriculum Leader so that challenge and progression is effective. Teachers consider previous learning to plan for next steps whilst ensuring that time is built in to provide recap opportunities that embed knowledge.

Curriculum Ambassadors work with subject leaders to enable them to gain the learners perspective around curriculum development. For example, Reading Ambassadors are promoting the use of the library and Science Ambassadors are supporting adults in the running of Science Clubs.

High quality schemes support consistency in curriculum delivery and teachers' professional development, and significant time has recently been given to the development of foundation subjects ensuring that there is increasing challenge built into progression.

School adopts a 'keep up, not catch up' approach to curriculum design using feedback at the point of learning to ensure that learning is deep and can be recalled aiding next steps. Vocabulary is explicitly taught and extended through knowledge organisers used in learning and shared with parents. Challenging class texts develop a love of reading to all pupils, and a new reading area is being carefully created in school for all pupils to access. Speech and language sessions are provided for Early Year's pupils who start school with underdeveloped speaking skills and an Attention Autism learning approach is utilised for pupils who have additional needs. Learning then is built into parent events such as parent reading picnics where families can see the progress that their child is making.

Each week a Secret Student is chosen and if they rise to all of school's learning and behaviour expectations all of the class enjoy rewards. This is proving to be a great driver for self-motivation. In addition to this, different levels of achievement are recognised with are rewarded with different, scaled badges worn with pride. Pupils also enjoy the number



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of additional after school clubs that are available such as music lessons in recorder, guitar, choir, and samba.

External agencies are included in curriculum delivery providing aspirational talks during Careers Week and wider curriculum delivery. For example, professionals are invited into school to share their working experiences, including the fire brigade, the police, mountain rescue, and dental nurses.

Children talked with enthusiasm about the curriculum that they access. They were keen to share their learning about the great fire of London and their experiences of learning how to play the drums. They shared how much they enjoy the end of year festival of celebration to recognise the achievement of all pupils' milestones and know that from this new targets are set.

Next Steps:

- Through their new roles linking to curriculum areas improve further Governance oversight of school improvement priorities to offer school leaders effective support and challenge.
- Continue to provide structured training for subject leaders including peer observations and challenge.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

St. Thomas' CE School has developed a curriculum that is creative and adaptive, ensuring that it is able to respond to the needs of all pupils. Every space around the building, both internal and external, is well utilised to give pupils a learning offer that will prepare them well for their life in the future.

Each area of the school environment is well maintained and cared for modelling diligence and attention to pupils. The outdoor environment has gain from significant development over recent years with the addition of a sports area and spaces dedicated to wellbeing. The inviting and well-resourced Early Years outdoor area encourages free flow in learning from indoors to outside. More recently planters have been added to the external walls enabling plants to grow and improve the aesthetics of the environment.

Teachers are supported well in providing high quality, progressive learning experiences for pupils and they are provided with a laptop and iPad with keyboard along with a dedicated space for planning and collaboration around learning. In addition to this every child in Key Stage 2 has access to an iPad which they take with them throughout the day and there are sufficient technological resources available to younger pupils as they learn.

Pupils spoken with could explain steps taken in their learning and identified recalling previous learning before moving on to acquiring new knowledge, which is a valuable part of knowledge acquisition. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in learning and shared that 'learning is fun, we gain more knowledge every day.'

Pupils learning is organised into coherent groupings that lead from where pupils learning is at and progresses forward. The use of Pupil Premium funding is carefully considered and its impact upon pupil outcomes is tracked by the leader who oversees it.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants value the wide range of positive recognitions for children for both academic and pastoral successes. They also appreciate that a number of these came from their suggestions and that their ideas are listened to. One recognition that is visible around school is a gold jumper, which is presented to the chosen star of the week as recognition of hard work and effort. They then wear the jumper for the following week before passing it to the next chosen pupil. Similarly, pupils with improved attendance are awarded a St. Thomas' Teddy Bear that sits on their table to as a reminder of successes.

There is purposeful attention given to aspiration and future careers. An annual Careers Week is a highlight of the school year, and pupils are exposed to many possible options. Local agencies join school in promoting possible future career pathways and parents are also invited into share their talents.

NEST is a partner Nursery that supports learners with additional needs. Skilled Speech Therapist work alongside St. Thomas' Early Years' pupils in providing essential early speech therapy support.

School leaders recognise that introducing AI will be a valuable tool to support teaching and learning and staff wellbeing. They also recognise that safeguarding care and checks needs to be considered during the introduction of AI to St Thomas' systems and processes. To ensure that appropriate security consideration is given to the use of AI



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there has been substantial policy reviews and staff training undertaken. Parents are also encouraged to work with school as AI is introduced to help families' internet awareness at home. This will continue to be a priority of the school over the coming years whilst the full impact of AI is understood.

Next Steps:

- Expand weekly NEST (Speech and Language) sessions for identified pupils and increase capacity so that more pupils are able to access it.
- Following the development of a new reading area in school launch the area and monitor its impact upon reading and pupils love of reading.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Development Matters is used as a tracking system for children who learn in the Early Years. This closely monitors the 7 areas of learning for each child to ensure appropriate support is put in place and outcomes are used to inform planning for future teaching sequences.

As pupils progress through school Let It Shine targets are developed alongside each pupil and shared with parents. Pupils are keen to say that school adults help them to know that they are doing well in their learning and what the next steps in progress are. When asked they responded that, 'teachers help us a lot and take the time that we need.' They also said, 'we all learn from our mistakes', showing that they understand that mistakes are an important part of a learning journey. They know that they are doing well though a range of age-appropriate methods which are consistently applied across school.

Pupils feel proud when their progress and achievement, both pastoral and academic, is recognised by school but articulate clearly that they strive to do their best because they want to learn and be the best that they can be, recognitions are valued and enjoyed but are not the motivation for hard work.

Subject leaders are supported to ensure that the curriculum offer is aspirational and appropriate. They monitor the development, implementation and impact of the pupils learning in order to support all teaching staff continue to build upon pedagogy. Leaders at all levels meet to analyse pupil outcomes and plan next steps. These clear targets and planned interventions to close gaps in knowledge are implemented in the curriculum and shared with the Governing Board so that challenge and accountability is monitored.

Aspirational targets are set for every pupil, encouraging all staff to have high expectations of what a child can achieve, and school data shows that continual work to raise standards in writing and reading is reaping positive outcomes. During discussion, staff said that they love to see the children grow.

All school adults appreciate that verbal feedback is an essential aspect of pupils' learning to check on progress and understanding. Adults also use live marking and same day responsive intervention to support the consolidation of learning and ensuring that all children move forward in each learning opportunity.

Expected outcomes for learning during each lesson are available with an accompanying emoji system which enables older pupils to give feedback on learning to their teacher. Pupils also peer assess learning, providing in the moment feedback to uplevel work. A marking ladder is used by pupils in literacy to self-assess their progress.

Summative assessments support tracking achievement over time and pupils have opportunities to apply their learning. For example, pupils have regular extended writing opportunities and reading assessments are used to evaluate skills acquired. This leads to the termly targets and any required intervention is planned and implemented that will support the progress of all.

A number of formalised assessment and tracking systems are used by school leaders to effectively monitor the progress of pupils and these will feed into a new cloud-based assessment recording system which has recently been introduced to track and monitor



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the progress of pupils in all areas of the curriculum which, will provide school with data rich evidence of the impact of teaching.

Next Steps:

- Embed the newly introduced assessment system to track pupil progress across all subjects.
- Further develop school's assessment framework and reporting templates to align with curriculum objectives for all subjects and phases.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

St Thomas' vision is to be a place where staff, Governors and parents can work together to ensure children receive an inspiring and engaging education. It aims that with opportunities underpinned by Christian values each pupil is enabled to become a lifelong learner and aspire to high standards of achievement in all aspect of life.

Pupils are happy, say that they enjoy school and that there is a wide range of enrichment activities building cultural capital for all.

Behaviour observed was very good and pupils spoken with reported that this was always the case, they feel safe in school and if anyone 'falls out' they say that they have been given the skills to sort it out or teachers will help them.

There are many reward systems in school that ensures that all pupils feel seen and valued. However, when asked pupils said that rewards and recognitions were important to them but was not their driver to strive to be their best; they do it because they want to help their school to be happy. They appreciate the weekly Achievement Assembly which promotes positive outcomes and attitudes towards learning collectively. This includes the winner of the Golden Jumper for pupils who have achieved well in all aspects of learning over the week. Recognition is given to a wide range of other achievements such as maths, reading and literacy.

The introduction of a new online communication system with parents which is used to celebrate pupils' successes and can easily be translated into many languages has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with school as they enjoy knowing that making good choices and hard work will be quickly shared with parents.

Attendance, which is always an area of priority for St. Thomas', is in line with national averages. Parents are kept informed of their child's attendance and any concerns are quickly identified and support put in place to work with families to gain improvement. Pupils are also aware of the importance of coming to school each day and enjoy receiving certificates and other rewards when they attend school regularly. A particular source of pride for pupils is the reward of receiving a St. Thomas' Teddy Bear which sits on their desk for a week if they recognised for attendance successes.

When spoken to pupils said that they had trusted adults in school to go to if they had any worries or concerns but also recognised that they were empowered to support themselves through self-help skills that are taught and the Wellbeing Ambassadors who are trained to help.

Pupils recognise that they are empowered in their school to be agents for change and school teaches them to care for their local community in activities such as litter picking, which they are very proud to do. They lead regular school assemblies and make podcasts for their peers and families on work around school priorities. When watching the pupils' podcasts the viewer cannot help but notice the confidence that they present with and the knowledge on their subject matter which they are able to share.

School staff model behaviours expected from pupils by using inclusive language and respecting every pupil's identity and background. Any form of perceived discrimination is challenged and managed. Each classroom had a reflection area that can be freely used by pupils who need a moment of quiet and there is a calming room that is used by pupils who



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seek support for their wellbeing. In addition, in Key Stage 2 a space is allocated for relaxation where pupils can work alongside the Personal Development leader to support wellbeing. In Key Stage 1 pupils have access to a sensory room to promote calmness.

Unstructured times are supported with a range of activities to meet pupils differing needs. There is a range of things to choose from both outside and inside school with clubs lead by school staff and all pupils enjoy greatly the therapy dog that visits school regularly to enhance the mental wellbeing of all.

Next Steps:

- Further develop structured lunchtime opportunities supporting positive pupil behaviour.
- Develop the newly begun staggard lunchtime schedule ensuring that all pupils can have a positive experience.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

'This is an amazing school', was a response given by a parent when asked about their view of St. Thomas' School. Other parents shared that 'my child learns so much at school' and 'everything is superb'. This positivity in response evidences that the commitment of all staff at St. Thomas' CE School has resulted in a high level of engagement from its families.

Parent support and engagement is always a priority at the school. All staff strive to recognise and mitigate any barriers in this investment of time and resources to support families, such as the recent introduction of a communication tool that can translate messages into a number of different languages, making accessibility for all easy. This addition to other, embedded, systems has strengthened communication between home and school. Pupils also value the communication between school and their parents sharing that they are proud when positive messages about their achievements in school, both academic and pastoral, are sent home.

Parents state that 'children thrive in their education' at the school and say that 'school and teachers provide good support'.

This vision is also noted through the challenging targets for learning which are shared with parents. Termly 'Let it shine' targets are co-constructed alongside pupils and these next steps in learning are shared with parents ensuring that home and schoolwork in partnership to guide learners.

Parents also value the opportunities that school offers them to be active members of the community. They enjoy being invited to join school events such as the harvest festival in St. Thomas' Church, which is located next to the school. A number of parents report that 'the school makes me, and my children feel welcome'.

One parent shared their view that there is 'constant support' given by St. Thomas' School and this view was echoed by members of staff who are parents of pupils and are now employed by the school. It is the positive and inclusive culture of the school that attracted them to their current posts.

School is aware and sensitive to the needs of its community, one example being around payments for pupils' enrichment learning opportunities, as a number of support and payment options are offered. Another example is that some support staff are able to act as translators and this is a valuable resource for both school and families.

The school's Breakfast Club is popular having a high take up and is offered to families free of charge ensuring that children can have a secure and positive start to the school day. In addition to this all children receive an additional breakfast, such as a bagel as school begins which enables learning to start without any pupil feeling hungry.

This commitment to the inclusion of parents in St. Thomas' begins before children reach school age. Messy Church and Tiny Tots play sessions supported by school staff offers opportunities to get to know families early and build positive relationships quickly. These activities also allow families in the local community to get to know each other, both strengthening community bonds and preventing any feelings of isolation.

Parents are provided with further, embedded opportunities to enhance the school's curriculum offer by sharing their skills in school, they provide cooking experiences and



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henna designs during learning activities that aid pupils learning about their community and the world.

This sharing of skills is reciprocal, as a range of parent workshops and adult learning opportunities are available through the school such as Parenting courses and ESOL classes. Partnership with inclusion services is used effectively to support parental inclusion.

Next Steps:

- Embed Class Dojo as a parental communication system that ensures effective home-school communication for families with English as an additional language.
- Relaunch coffee mornings with a structured wellbeing programme with targeted parent friendly themes.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

When arriving at St. Thomas' CE school visitors are welcomed with a smile and a warm greeting by the adults who work within the school office. This makes any visit to the school a positive one. Parents report that the 'school is very welcoming' and this stems from the culture of care and inclusivity.

There is a supportive Governing Board who are knowledgeable about the school and are keenly interested in the strategic actions and outcomes of school improvement, initiatives and successes. They know the school well and enjoy being active members of the school community, attending events and having involvement in school improvement processes.

The school is located in an area surrounded by rows of terraced houses and recognises its responsibility to support its neighbourhood. Local residents are encouraged to engage with its neighbours by inviting them to school events such as summer fairs and festivals and teaches its pupils to care for their local community via litter picking, which they are very proud to do.

St. Thomas' is an active member of their local family of schools which liaise to share effective practice and learning approaches that have shown success. School leaders value this partnership and recognise that schools working together enables success for all.

Good links with the local mosque are embedded; pupils visit and mosque leaders come into school to work with classes. This is part of a rich range of external visits that add depth to the curriculum, build cultural capital and add to the life experiences of all pupils.

There are very strong links with St. Thomas' Church, which is located next to the school. This partnership enhances the school experience for pupils as the land around the church is utilised for pupils to access such as areas for wellbeing and a new multipurpose sport area. Pupils also attend the church as a whole school community each week to celebrate and build upon their already strong sense of belonging. The school choir enjoyed a role in the celebration of the church's 175-year anniversary and also provides joy and entertainment to older generations when they sing in a local care home.

Tiny Toms and school led Toddler Groups for local families which is a key driver for building positive relationships with families with young children in the community. These activities are well attended and strengthen community links and partnership.

Pupils also are sensitive and supportive of school neighbours and do regular litter picking and communications with families who live around school. They also enjoy opportunities to take part in local school sporting events enabling them to meet and play with pupils from other schools in the locality.

Pupils feel a sense of belonging to St Thomas' and a number of them are welcomed back to do work placements when they are older and the school has excellent relationships with external agencies who have long term involvement with St. Thomas' School. To support the curriculum enhancement the local library and museum provide a wealth of current and interesting books and resources that are linked to all areas of learning.

The school makes good use of the local community to enrich the curriculum. This includes the local Music Service who support in the delivery of the music curriculum and external coaches who assist with the delivery of physical Education. Other local agencies enhance



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pupils' leadership growth and personal development by providing empowerment experiences and nurture support.

Pupils are proud of their support of schools around the world. They have a particularly strong relationship to a school in South Africa for which they hold fundraising events. In 2024 a member of staff visited the school to help build a football pitch and raise money for the children there. Links have continued and pupils shared that they are proud to support peers from another country.

School has highly effective links with the Secondary Schools that St. Thomas' pupils will transition to. Detailed induction activities are planned to support a smooth and seamless process. Where needed additional, bespoke transition programmes are planned if a child has any anxieties about moving school.

Next Steps:

- Establish a formal Parent Teacher Association group to support school fundraising and enhance further community engagement.
- Maintain regular communication and collaborative projects such as establishing regular virtual meetings with the linked Soweto school.