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**St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School - Bedford**

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**Context of the school**

St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School is a member of the St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust (SFAAT). The trust comprises four schools that collectively provide an all through Catholic education to the Bedford community. Originally an upper school providing education from Year 9 and including a Sixth form, St Thomas More has, since September 2014, opened its doors to a small number of Year 7 and Year 8 students. These numbers are anticipated to rise following the decision by the Local Authority to reorganise schools from three to two tier in September 2017. As a faith school serving the Bedford community its catchment area is large with students attending from a number of feeder schools across the town.

The school is rightfully proud of its successes which amongst others include being in the top 100 most improved schools in the country (DfE, 2013), graded Outstanding (OFSTED, 2011), graded outstanding (Diocese of Northampton, 2011) and the award of Teaching School Status (National College, 2011). All of these and other awards demonstrate the school's sustained commitment to the provision of high quality education opportunities for students and staff alike.

The school uses its Pupil Premium funding to provide wide ranging and comprehensive support to those students with entitlement. Whilst the gap has not narrowed as much as the school would like, the reasons for which become clear later in this report, it continues to strive for this ideal against the backdrop of outstanding education for all of its students.

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**Targeting the funding from the outset—responsibilities of the Leadership Team**

The school serves a community where 55.1% of students attending are from minority ethnic backgrounds, more than double the national average (25.6% in 2014). Similarly the proportion of those attending whose first language is not believed to be English is double the national average (School 28.8%, National 14.4%).

“When students join the school in Year 9, they do so having reached standards that were below national averages in the national tests they took at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 11, the standards they reach in their work are above average”.

*(Ofsted Inspection 2011)*

The proportion of students attending the school with entitlement to the Pupil Premium is below national average (School 22.7% National 28.5% in 2014). At the last spring census in January 2015 there were 152 (24%) students in the main school in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

The school received a Pupil Premium grant of £131,400 in 2013 – 14 and £125590 in 2014 – 15 to support those students eligible to receive the funding. The proportion of students who have special educational needs or disabilities supported by school action are in line with the national average (School 10.3%, National 10.4% in 2014) and the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) is below national average (School 3.9%, National 7.3% in 2014). There are a significant number of these students who are entitled to receive Pupil Premium support.

The school has identified the key priorities for the funding to:

- Raise the attainment and progress of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium so that their performance compares favourably with other non-Pupil Premium peers.
- Address the inequalities in education of students from low income families and raise their attainment.

The rationale for spending the Pupil Premium funding is underpinned by the provision of outstanding teaching and learning opportunities for all students. The funding is used to give priority to and tailor the opportunities available to those with entitlement to meet their specific needs and ensure that those in receipt of the Pupil Premium improve their levels of attainment and progress thereby closing the gaps with their non-pupil premium peers. Spending is based on an annual Intervention Plan designed to meet the needs of those students with entitlement. Whilst some interventions are funded year on year and are intended to improve student achievement in core subjects such as English, maths, RE and Science some of the funding is used to support students' access to opportunities which promote engagement with learning, improve confidence and raise aspirations. These include supporting students to access extracurricular provision, university visits and workshops for parents to encourage positive working partnerships between school and home. Intervention Plans are based on desired outcomes for students. These are reviewed annually to determine what's working well (WWW) and even better if (EBI) and adjusted as necessary to meet the needs of the targeted students.

Whilst the school has a distributive leadership team, one member of the team has overall responsibility for steering the effective use of the Pupil Premium funding. The current senior leader was new to post in September following the retirement of her predecessor.

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### **Intervention to improve achievement in English/Maths**

RoL 2014 Table 3.1.1 shows that the prior attainment of pupils at KS2 on transition is significantly below national in years 9, 10 and 11 but especially so for Years 9 and 11. Whilst the percentage of pupils in the middle prior attainment band is broadly in line with national figures, there is a slightly larger percentage of students in the lower prior attainment band and a smaller proportion in the upper prior attainment band compared to national for most years.

As part of the overall Intervention Plan the English, maths, science and RE departments provide costed plans to improve the GCSE outcomes for the Year 11 students in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

#### English

In 2015 students were entered for either GCSE or iGCSE. 28 students with entitlement to Pupil Premium were entered for GCSE and 12 for the iGCSE. The courses are very different in their approach with the speaking and listening element of the iGCSE playing to the students' strengths. Following analysis and evaluation of the results the majority of the students with Pupil Premium entitlement will be taking the iGCSE in 2016.

Planned intervention to improve English included both Saturday and holiday sessions some of which were provided by an external provider. Those students in receipt of the Pupil Premium were invited first and given priority to attend the sessions. Three mock exam sessions were arranged for Saturday mornings and those with Pupil Premium entitlement were specifically invited. Contact with parents positively encouraged a large turnout. Up to 150 students attended the Saturday sessions.

Student feedback indicated that they would prefer sessions to be run by their own teachers. Overall these sessions helped to create a 'can do it' belief compared to previous years.

Pupil Premium monies were also used to fund a trip for those with entitlement to Poetry Life and the provision of texts and exam practice materials from past examinations.

Whilst much of the funding appears to focus on Year 11, interventions span all years and include support from Learning Support Assistants (LSA's) in both English and maths lessons. In English the LSA works with small groups in the classroom. The LSA communications booklet ensures that work is planned and helps to increase effectiveness.

The borough intervention programme provides funding on a termly basis to provide 1:1 tuition to selected students for 10 sessions each across KS3 and KS4.

The Pupil Premium is used to fund the augmented remuneration of a literacy coordinator whose work spans all year groups with a focus on literacy across the curriculum. The Accelerated Reader programme operates across the school and literacy leaders (Year 12) are involved in a peer reading scheme with Years 7 and 8. All students in Years 7 to 9 have, as part of their timetable, a library lesson to support reading.

### Maths

The maths department employ a similar strategy to English for Year 11 students, running a Saturday school and holiday revision sessions in February, Easter and May. The main focus is on the C/D borderline students many of whom have entitlement to the Pupil Premium funding. Examiner workshops have also been funded using the Pupil Premium, one aimed at the more able, A\* - A and two aimed at C/D borderline. These proved very popular and it is hoped to repeat it again this year. Those with entitlement to the funding are given first opportunity for places. For those students in receipt of Pupil Premium who are not targeted by any other means there are lunchtime sessions available on Mondays where maths staff are available to provide additional support.

Students in receipt of the Pupil Premium receive a free revision guide and a resource pack containing past papers and revision style questions. Additional in-lesson support funded from the Pupil Premium is provided to work alongside class teachers to address identified underachievement.

Pupil Premium monies are also used to fund improving outcomes for those with entitlement in other subjects especially science and RE. The Head of science reported that Pupil Premium funding had been used to provide holiday workshop sessions to help prepare students for their examinations. Students were given priority invitations via letters to parents to engage their support. The uptake was good with 22 out of 30 students with entitlement attending both sessions. In addition funding was used for the provision of workbooks, past papers, 'MyGCSEScience' subscription and the Science Live trip.

### Leadership Recommendations:

- Critically examine the apparent disproportionate focus on Year 11 with a view to supporting more equitably those students with entitlement in years 7 to 10.
- As the school moves rapidly to a two tier structure ensure that there is a focus on literacy and numeracy in years 7 & 8 to overcome the identified underachievement at an earlier stage. Make use of Year 7 catch up funding to support those who are below age related expectations. Seek an opportunity to liaise, where possible with feeder Primaries and support their efforts to get their pupils to an acceptable national standard.
- Consider the students' preference of being taught by their own teachers for interventions and the implications and impact such a move would have on staff commitment.
- Continue to ensure that individual intervention work of LSA's is measured and recorded as evidence of what works well.
- Develop peer coaching amongst staff and LSA's to further promote the good practice being employed.
- Consider extending the use of LSA's across other subject areas as progress 8 measures become a key success indicator.

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### **Examination, analysis and removal of barriers**

In-school progress predictions for Year 11 (Tracking Point 4 – May 2015) were comfortably exceeded for both expected and more than expected progress for English by both students in receipt of the Pupil Premium and the others despite the current progress at the time of the tracking point being several percentage points lower. For maths the current progress at the time of tracking point 4 closely resembled the final outcome for expected progress for both those with entitlement to the Pupil Premium and the others with no apparent further gains made in the lead up to the final exams.

Discussion with the Head teacher and the Head of maths revealed an issue with the marking of the maths papers this year resulting in a good number being remarked and an unusually high proportion of them being awarded higher marks.

This unfortunately did not translate into higher grades but did result in the exam board conducting a high level investigation into the marking of the papers.

Many of those affected were at the C/D borderline but also those in receipt of the Pupil Premium which not only affected the figures for expected progress but also the headline 5A\* - CE&M and the potential to close the gap this year. The school's own internal investigation has concluded that the school, particularly the maths department, did all that it could be expected of them for all of the students but is disappointed for those students who were so close to achieving higher maths grades.

Percentage of pupils making expected and more than expected progress in English and Maths								
	English 2014		English 2015		Maths 2014		Maths 2015	
	Expected Progress	More than Expected Progress						
Disadvantaged pupils	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20.5</b>
Other pupils	71	33	85	47	70	23	71	23
In School Gap	-19	-15	+4	-14	-28	0	-27	-3
National Others	75	35	74		71	33	72	

2015 saw a closing of the gap compared to 2014 for both English and maths. Most impressive is the percentage of students making expected progress in English with 87% of all students making expected progress. Nine out of ten students in receipt of Pupil Premium made expected progress from their starting points. This phenomenal achievement exceeded the expected progress of other students nationally in 2014 by 15%. The same success was not shared in maths but there was a 4% closing of the in school gap in expected progress between those students in receipt of the Pupil Premium and the others. There is little change in the in-school gap for those making more than expected progress for both English and maths. The expected progress of the non-disadvantaged students attending St Thomas More exceeds that of others nationally for English and is similar for maths.

Percentage of pupils achieving 5A* - C including English and Mathematics (RoL 2014 validated)									
	2013			2014			2015 School data		
	School	Nat. other	Nat. Gap	School	Nat. other	Nat. Gap	School	Nat. other	Nat. Gap
Disadvantaged pupils	<b>50</b>	67	-17	<b>35</b>	62	-27	<b>33</b>		
Other pupils	66		-1	56		-6	60		
Within school gap	-16			-21			-33		

Overall compared to 2014 the headline 5A\* - CE&M results improved by 3% despite the disappointing maths results. Over the last three years the in-school gap in achievement between students in receipt of the Pupil Premium and the other students in the school has widened and is similar to that last seen in 2012 (-31%). It should be noted, however, that the percentage of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium at the school gaining 5+A\* - CE&M is close to that for other students with entitlement to the funding nationally in 2014 (36.5% PP, 64% others).

<b>Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 value Added 2013 - 2015</b>									
	<b>2013</b>			<b>2014</b>			<b>2015 School data</b>		
	<b>School</b>	<b>Nat. other</b>	<b>Nat. Gap</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Nat. other</b>	<b>Nat. Gap</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Nat. other</b>	<b>Nat. Gap</b>
<b>Disadvantaged pupils</b>	<b>1031.2</b>	983.7	<b>47.5</b>	1018.0	977.8	<b>40.2</b>	<b>1034.7</b>	975.9	58.8
<b>Other pupils</b>	1023.1	1005.6	17.5	1025.5	1007.8	17.7	1034.0	1008.8	25.2
<b>Within school gap</b>	8.1	-21.9		-7.5	-30.0		0.7	-32.9	

Value added from Key Stage 2 to 4 is consistently ahead of national year on year when compared to other disadvantaged students nationally and underlines the Ofsted observation during its inspection in 2011 that students make outstanding progress from their starting points. Current data demonstrate that this is clearly still the case. Moreover the school is adding value for all of its students.

<b>Percentage Attendance 1st September – 31st August 2015</b>				
	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
Pupil Premium	95.5	94.2	92.4	95.3
Non-Pupil Premium	96.8	95.4	95.2	96.2

Attendance is above national average but examination of the school data for the last school year shows that those with entitlement to the Pupil Premium appear to be more at risk. The reason for this difference can be explained by the fact that a very small number of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium were persistently absent which skewed the underlying good attendance of the other students.

Attendance is monitored daily and contact with home is made on the first day of absence if the reason is not known. In circumstances when absence becomes an issue the school has procedures in place to support students and their families to encourage improved attendance.

#### Leadership Recommendations:

- Closely monitor and evaluate the progress data for all students not only those C/D borderline students who appear to be most susceptible to underachievement as Progress 8 measures become a key success indicator. This will not only require a continued intervention in English and maths, RE and science but other subjects too.
- Prioritise the follow up of absences for those in receipt of Pupil Premium especially those with a history of poor attendance. Continue to work with the families to identify and overcome the underlying reasons. Identify small steps of success and celebrate these appropriately.
- Publish the school's attendance policy on the school's website and publicise the school's attendance current and target attendance figures for the year ahead. Support this with a short guide for parents to promote good attendance.

### **Personalisation - how does Quality First Teaching meet pupil needs?**

From September the school has used the SISRA database to provide staff with live access to class level data enabling them to consider prior performance and plan teaching and learning as well as interventions. Staff are able to drill down into the data to track and plan for individuals and groups of learners such as those in their classes with Pupil Premium entitlement.

During visits to a number of lessons behaviour was consistently good underpinning the active engagement of the students with their learning. Students were able to articulate what they were learning and responded well to questioning by the teacher and working together in small groups to actively participate in their learning, share ideas and check their understanding. Previously completed work was marked up to date with examples of both peer and teacher assessment and feedback. Students were able to talk confidently about their progress and next steps required to improve.

During a meeting with students in receipt of the Pupil Premium they spoke extremely positively about the school, remarking on the usefulness of the marking and feedback they receive to help them improve their work. The students also described in some detail an impressive array of support available through departmental drop-in sessions and the Emmaus Centre where students are able to go for help to overcome barriers to learning. Such barriers described to me by the students were many and varied in nature and included access to ICT, pastoral problems linked to home and school and issues around completion of homework.

The school's improvement plan for 2015 – 16 reports that in 2013 – 14, 95% of observed lessons were either good or outstanding and the target for this year has been set to improve this figure still further.

Regarding performance the school is highly ambitious setting targets based on FFT20. The 5A\* - CEM target for 2016 is 64% a 10% increase on the 2015 results. Students' individual targets are also equally ambitious and provide the students and staff with challenges to meet. Commensurate with such ambitious targets 92% and 82% of students are forecast to make expected progress in English and maths respectively.

Teaching and learning and inclusion are two of the key priorities in the School Improvement Plan for 2015–16. The strategy is to build upon the provision of quality first teaching already evident and to ensure that disadvantaged groups including those in receipt of the Pupil Premium are encouraged through raising their achievement, engaging with parents, introducing and embedding a robust strategy for attendance and punctuality and encourage them to take advantage of the wide ranging extracurricular opportunities available.

The school operates a stepped rewards and consequences system to promote positive learning behaviours and attendance. Certificates are awarded and letters sent home to parents to celebrate achievements such as 100% attendance, academic progress and improvement. An annual Awards Evening celebrates the best achievements and includes awards for the most improved students and outstanding achievements. The consequence system like the rewards system is stepped and is in place to discourage behaviours which disrupt teaching and learning. Students view the consequence system as highly effective at managing behaviour and minimising disruption to lessons.

#### Leadership Recommendations:

- To enable students to meet ambitious targets ensure that lesson objectives and supporting resources include sufficient differentiation to challenge students of all abilities.
- Examine the setting arrangements to ensure that those in receipt of the Pupil Premium have access to the outstanding teaching and learning. Do the best teachers teach those groups with a higher proportion of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium?

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### Encouraging active Governor involvement

Whilst there is an overarching body for strategic leadership of the St Francis of Assisi Academy Trust which monitors the performance of all four schools within the trust, the school has an Academy Support Improvement Group (ASIG) which in effect is the governing body of the school. At its regular meetings data are presented to support the monitoring and evaluation role of the group. Minutes presented as evidence for this report showed clearly that attendance and exclusions and SEN and are regularly monitored and evaluated.

The school's website includes a Pupil Premium statement outlining the purpose of the funding and how it intends to use it to support entitled students. It sets out key priorities for spending and what it expects to achieve as a result. More detailed spending plans are published annually and linked to intended outcomes. However an evaluation of the effectiveness following implementation is not included.

#### Leadership Recommendations:

- Make sure there is a governor with a responsibility to ensure that the Pupil Premium funding is used to support those students with entitlement to the funding. This will include providing the appropriate support and challenge to ensure that the funding is spent effectively.
  - At the start of the school year evaluate the Pupil Premium spending plan against the intended impact to determine how effective it has been. Use the outcome from this process to modify, where necessary, the use of the funding for the year ahead.
  - Make sure that the actual impact of the funding on those with entitlement is published on the school's website.
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#### **Monitoring and evaluation - impact of spend and performance management of staff**

The Intervention Plan includes a broad range of costed interventions linked to intended impact. Logging of interventions for individual students can be used to create case studies to demonstrate how, by combining a broad range of interventions, students have been effectively supported. Tracking points throughout the year enable the school to monitor the current progress of students against their targets and predicted outcomes. 'Tracking Mondays' – meetings which link departmental and pastoral teams provide opportunities to discuss and find solutions to resolve matters affecting student progress. Analysis takes place at leadership level, departmentally and by year so that action to address underachievement can be agreed, effectively managed and coordinated to include both curriculum and pastoral support. Student progress is reported to the governing body via the Academy Support and Improvement Group (ASIG).

As a result of the school's coordinated approach to tracking and monitoring, it is able to respond rapidly to the many and varied needs of students to overcome barriers to achievement. Reading of sample case studies reveal the true extent to which the school will go to ensure that students are supported to achieve.

In one such example a student starting well in school in Year 9 needing no special interventions apart from close monitoring by his tutor, liaison with his mother and funding extracurricular provision to attend an after school cookery club, something in which he was very interested. During year 10 there was a notable deterioration in his behaviour which coincided with changes in his home circumstances. At one point the boy was going to be removed from school but his father was persuaded to accept a package of support including attending the 'Seeds of Change' programme one day per week funded using the Pupil Premium. Gradually he began to become more engaged with school. His behaviour and attendance started to improve and his father was also working better with the school. After an unsettled start to year 11 the boy worked well from the October half-term and ended up fully engaged with his GCSE studies and his future plans. Although he did not achieve all his targets grades he did very well considering the difficult time he had experienced at such a critical stage. He also gained a place at Shuttleworth College.

Regarding performance management FFT 20 data are also being used for appraisal purposes and for all target driven work in the school with a view to keeping aspirations high and challenge staff to work with young people on their outcomes.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) toolkit is used to inform best practice and ensure that the school explores and adopts cost effective and proven intervention strategies.

#### Leadership Recommendations:

- Evaluate the interventions funded by the Pupil Premium early in the school year to determine if the desired impact is being achieved.
- Review the current spending plans in the light of the evaluation of the previous year's impact and the needs of the students with entitlement.
- Explore the Family of Schools tools on the EEF website to examine how the school compares to other schools in the same family.

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## **Holiday provision with a clear purpose and attendance at extra curriculum activities**

As discussed previously the school offers extensive support at weekends and during the school holidays to students in Year 11 in the months leading up to their GCSE examinations.

As well as the Emmaus Centre where the students can seek support on a wide range of issues affecting their lives the school offers an extensive range of extracurricular activities. Students spoke enthusiastically about the range of activities available. One student commented "The school provides the usual range of activities plus others not commonly available in other schools".

### **Leadership Recommendations:**

- As the school moves to an 11 – 18 secondary school make use of the Transition Summer School funding available to support a one or two week programme for the new Year 7 students in order to minimise the impact of transition and give the students in receipt of Pupil Premium a confident start at their new school.
- Evaluate the attendance records for extracurricular activities and conduct a survey around participation to ensure that students in receipt of the Pupil Premium are being proactively included. Where costs issues are involved consider funding these for students.

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## **What does parental engagement look like for these pupils?**

The school values the role of parents as partners and offers many opportunities for parents to engage with the school. This is supported by the Learner-Home-School Partnership. As well as the usual information and parent evenings the school encourages parents and carers to communicate on matters which may critically affect their child's progress and achievement. The school believes that by working in partnership with parents barriers to achievement can be effectively managed and overcome to enable the student to thrive.

Recognising the importance of parents and the fact that over half of the students attending are from ethnic minority backgrounds the school offers parent workshops including subject evenings, revision strategies meetings, a Polish Parent Forum and an Afro-Caribbean evening amongst others. All of these provide opportunities for parents to engage with the school community and empower them to support their children in being successful learners.

The school is currently in the second year of The Achievement for All Schools Programme which is aimed particularly at supporting those students from disadvantaged backgrounds to raise aspirations and achieve. Parental engagement through structured conversations is a critical element of this programme.

The school has many examples including case studies which highlight how a strong school parent partnership is vital in providing a mutually supportive environment for students to succeed.

### **Leadership Recommendations:**

- Evaluate the impact of engagement with parents and mentoring of the students in the Achievement for All target groups and extend these practices to the wider school population giving priority to disadvantaged students.
- Assuming the form tutor is the main point of contact between home and school consider building in time on the calendar during the first half-term for tutors to contact all parents and carers to form positive links with them. Follow this up throughout the year with phone calls home to a small number of students each week with 'good news' messages. This strategy works particularly well for those students who 'fall beneath the radar' and rarely receive recognition for their achievements.

### **What's good practice?**

- The school has rigorous assessment and tracking procedures in place and uses them effectively to monitor student progress.
  - The school is able to respond rapidly to needs identified as a result of its regular monitoring processes.
  - Tracking Mondays enables a coordinated of response involving subject and pastoral support for the students and, if necessary, their families.
  - The school has a broad range of interventions available, both curricular and pastoral to respond effectively to the needs of students.
  - The school promotes and encourages positive working relationships with parents and carers through its Home School agreement and in addition recognises that families themselves sometimes need help and support to overcome barriers to successful parenting.
  - Access to the Emmaus Centre for comprehensive student support is recognised as a valuable asset by students.
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### **What's innovative practice and can be shared regionally and nationally?**

- The school knows its students and families well. It has highly effective tracking and monitoring processes in place which it uses strategically to identify and provide effective support to overcome barriers to progress.
  - The school offers a comprehensive support package for Year 11 students including extended learning opportunities on Saturdays and holidays as they prepare for their GCSE examinations. Students in receipt of the Pupil Premium are given priority to attend.
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**School: St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School**

**Coach: Adrian Jolly**

**Date: November 2015**

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