

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS 2024




Ofsted
Good rating



St Thomas More Catholic School
God's servant first

"ASPIRE NOT TO HAVE MORE BUT TO BE MORE"



St Thomas More Catholic School

Welcome to
St Thomas More
Catholic School

“Leaders and staff are ambitious for their pupils and are implementing strategies to help pupils to know and remember more.”

(Ofsted 2022)

WELCOME FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Thank you for your interest in applying for this post at St Thomas More Catholic School.

A recruitment pack is enclosed. I would encourage you to view the school website at www.st-thomasmore.walsall.sch.uk and visit us to truly experience the unique atmosphere of our special school community. Please contact Miss S White (P.A. to Headteacher) on **01902 368798 ext. 1004** or email vacancies@st-thomasmore.walsall.sch.uk and she will be happy to arrange an informal visit.

There is very much a team ethos at St Thomas More, with a culture of openness and transparency. Colleagues are encouraged to work in a collaborative fashion, putting forward new ideas and discussing issues openly. This has contributed to significant and sustained improvements in results in recent years. This determination to succeed and improve standards and outcomes for the well being of our students was demonstrated recently as our school was recognised as 'good' by Ofsted.

The school is popular – we are always oversubscribed beyond our admission limit – and well respected in the local community. We have a committed workforce, with the highest expectations of themselves and students. The school is fortunate to have a proactive and supportive Governing Body with a diverse range of skills and experience. We are further supported by additional guidance provided by both our Diocese and Walsall LA.

Mrs S M Bowen

Mrs S M Bowen,
Headteacher

"This school is totally committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its children and young people. All its staff and volunteers are expected to share in this commitment and to make every reasonable endeavour to ensure that its recruitment and selection standards are met. A copy of the school's Child Protection Policy is available on our website."

ST THOMAS MORE

Thomas was born in London on the 7th February, 1478. He attended St Anthony's School in London, one of the best schools of his day, and as a youth served as a page, the first stage of training for knighthood, in the household of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of England (and future Cardinal). Morton is said to have thought that Thomas would become a "marvellous man."

Thomas went on to study at Oxford University, where he spent two years mastering Latin and formal logic, writing comedies and studying Greek and Latin literature.

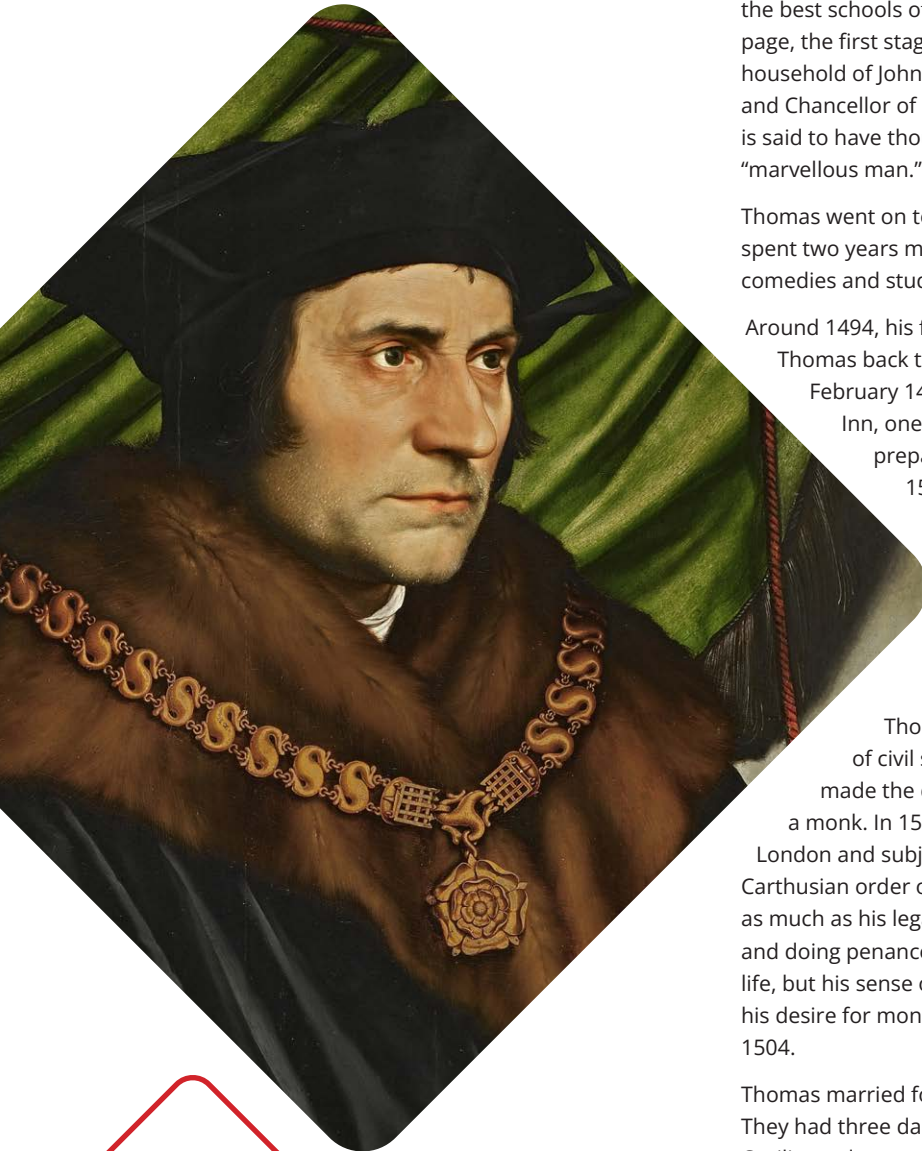
Around 1494, his father, a prominent lawyer, brought Thomas back to London to study common law. In February 1496, Thomas was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, one of England's four legal societies, to prepare for admission to the Bar, and in 1501 he became a full member of the legal profession. Thomas managed to keep up with his literary and spiritual interests while practising law and he read devotedly from both Holy Scripture and the classics.

Thomas found himself torn between a life of civil service and a monastic calling, and he made the decision to work towards becoming a monk. In 1503 he moved to a monastery outside London and subjected himself to the discipline of the Carthusian order of monks, participating in monastic life as much as his legal career would allow. Praying, fasting and doing penance would stay with him for the rest of his life, but his sense of duty to serve his country overcame his desire for monasticism, and he entered Parliament in 1504.

Thomas married for the first time in 1505 to Jane Colte. They had three daughters, Margaret, Elizabeth and Cecilia, and a son, John.

After the death of Jane in 1511, Thomas went on to marry Alice Middleton.

In 1516, Thomas published the book for which he is most well-known, *Utopia*, a work of fiction about a pagan and communist island on which social and political customs are entirely governed by reason.



Utopia covered such far-reaching topics as theories of punishment, state-controlled education, multi-religious societies, divorce, euthanasia and women's rights, and the resulting display of learning and skill established Thomas as a foremost humanist. Utopia also became the forerunner of a new literary genre: the utopian romance.

“The King’s good servant, but God’s first.”

In 1517 Thomas entered the King’s service, becoming one of Henry VIII’s most effective and trusted civil servants, acting as his secretary, interpreter, speech-writer, chief diplomat, advisor and confidant. Henry heaped many honours on Thomas; in 1521 he was knighted, in 1523 he was elected speaker of the House of Commons and, in 1529, Thomas was made Chancellor of England.

Thomas’ luck began to turn when, in the summer of 1527, Henry wanted his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled on the grounds of her having failed to produce a male heir, thus freeing him to marry Anne Boleyn. When Pope Clement VII, holding firm to Christ’s teaching on the indissolubility of marriage, refused to annul their valid marriage, Henry broke all ties with Rome, declared himself Supreme Head of the Church in England, divorced Catherine, and married Anne.

In 1532 Thomas resigned the chancellorship. Seeking to avoid a public conflict with Henry he stayed away from Anne’s coronation. However, in March 1534, the Act of Succession was passed requiring an oath to be sworn acknowledging the children of Henry and Anne as legitimate heirs to the throne, and renouncing “any foreign authority, prince or potentate.” Thomas was a man of enormous personal integrity and refused the oath, essentially refusing to accept the King as head of the Church of England, which Thomas believed would belittle the power of the Pope.

Thomas was sent to the Tower of London on April 17, 1534, and pressured for the next year to give in. Thomas gave no answer beyond declaring himself a faithful subject. In July, 1535, he was tried by a kangaroo court, accused by false witnesses of treason, found guilty and beheaded on the 6th July. Just before his execution he declared himself “the King’s good servant, but God’s first.”

Thomas was beatified in 1886 and canonised by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935.

OUR PATRON SAINT

Thomas More has been adopted as the patron saint of many schools and organisations all over the country. He is an ideal patron and there are four main reasons for this.

1. Thomas was a renowned scholar and his love of learning led to him writing his book, Utopia, which gives his personal vision of an ideal society.
2. Thomas was a father of three daughters and a son, and was a strong advocate of education, particularly education for women which was very unusual at the time.
3. Thomas was a brave man with great integrity. He refused to sacrifice his principles even for the King hence his declaration that he was “the King’s good servant, but God’s first”.
4. Thomas devoted his life to the service of others: he was an educator, a lawyer, a religious man and a parent, before he was called to serve his country and King, reaching the highest political office before his spectacular fall from grace.

One of the missions of our school is for us to serve others and Thomas More sets us the perfect example to follow.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education is at the heart of all we do at St Thomas More Catholic School, enabling all children to discover their own sense of spirituality.

Our Catholic faith is paramount and we aim to introduce all pupils its fundamental tenets, while respecting and valuing differences between other denominations and faiths.

We believe that such focus gives all children a stronger moral compass and helps to instil compassion, tolerance and a desire to work for the greater good.

Religious Education is a compulsory part of the curriculum throughout school. At Key Stage 3 we explore the meaning and structure of the sacraments and lives of significant figures in the Catholic church.

“Religious Education contributes significantly to students’ spiritual and moral development. Teachers regularly and thoughtfully plan opportunities for this in their lessons.”

(Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report (CSI), November 2022)

Subsequently students study other religions, promoting greater understanding of different faiths and enabling wider exploration of contemporary social and moral issues. All students go on to take a GCSE qualification in Year 11. Sixth Form students study our core Religious Education course and are able to take an A Level in Religious Studies.

Our chapel offers a place of contemplation and prayer, and allows us to celebrate our faith in services across the liturgical year. Every day begins with prayer, and each year group gathers together weekly as a community for year assembly. There are year group Masses at the beginning of each academic year to celebrate the return to school, and at the end of each year to reflect upon our work and achievements. We run an extensive retreat programme which allows children to explore their spirituality.

In addition we organise a pilgrimage to Lourdes each year, where our older students help the sick and are inspired by the setting and its history.

We are proud to work closely with our local parishes to help the vulnerable in the community. Amongst many charitable endeavours, the school runs an active St Vincent de Paul Society, maintaining regular contact with the housebound and visit others who could benefit from support and prayers.

As a Catholic school we are committed to the delivery of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum which is both a legislated expectation and is aligned with Diocesan objectives. We used the materials provided by TenTen (a Diocesan approved bank of materials) in collaboration with the schemes of learning in RE, Science, PE and PSHE. This is further augmented by elements of our E-Safety, Safeguarding and Prevent materials.



CURRICULUM OPTIONS

We ensure all students gain a broad and balanced education from a wide choice of subjects.

From Years 7 to 11 students study the core subjects of Religious Education, English, Mathematics, and Science.

Their education is tailor made to their needs and aspirations, with additional support for those who require it, enabling them to develop the necessary literacy and numeracy skills.

We encourage students to specialise and study their options in depth but only after they have gained a strong platform across the arts, humanities, languages and sciences.

Before students make those vital choices, we offer one to one consultation to make sure their options are informed and match their longer term aspirations. Parents and carers feature strongly in this period of consultation.

As an 11 to 18 school, we ensure that options taken at Key Stage 4 are also available at A Level.

There is an extensive choice of subjects at A Level, with more options introduced to allow greater specialisation and preparation for university life.



FACILITIES

Originally opened in 1973, the school moved to a single purpose built development in April 2003. The 11,000sq ft site boasts some magnificent, contemporary facilities across its 25 acre site.

- A state-of-the-art Learning Resource Centre
- A large Sports Hall
- Enhanced ICT provision
- Fitness suite
- Climbing wall
- A mezzanine library
- Goals
- High quality, contemporary classrooms with networked ICT
- Several ICT suites
- A dedicated Chapel

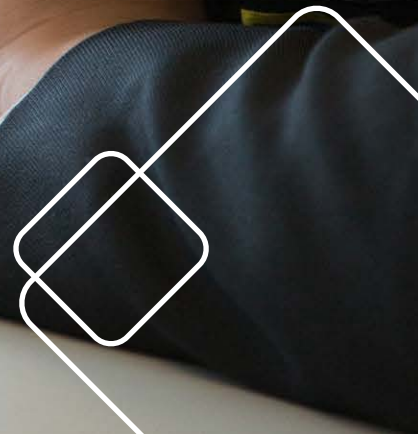
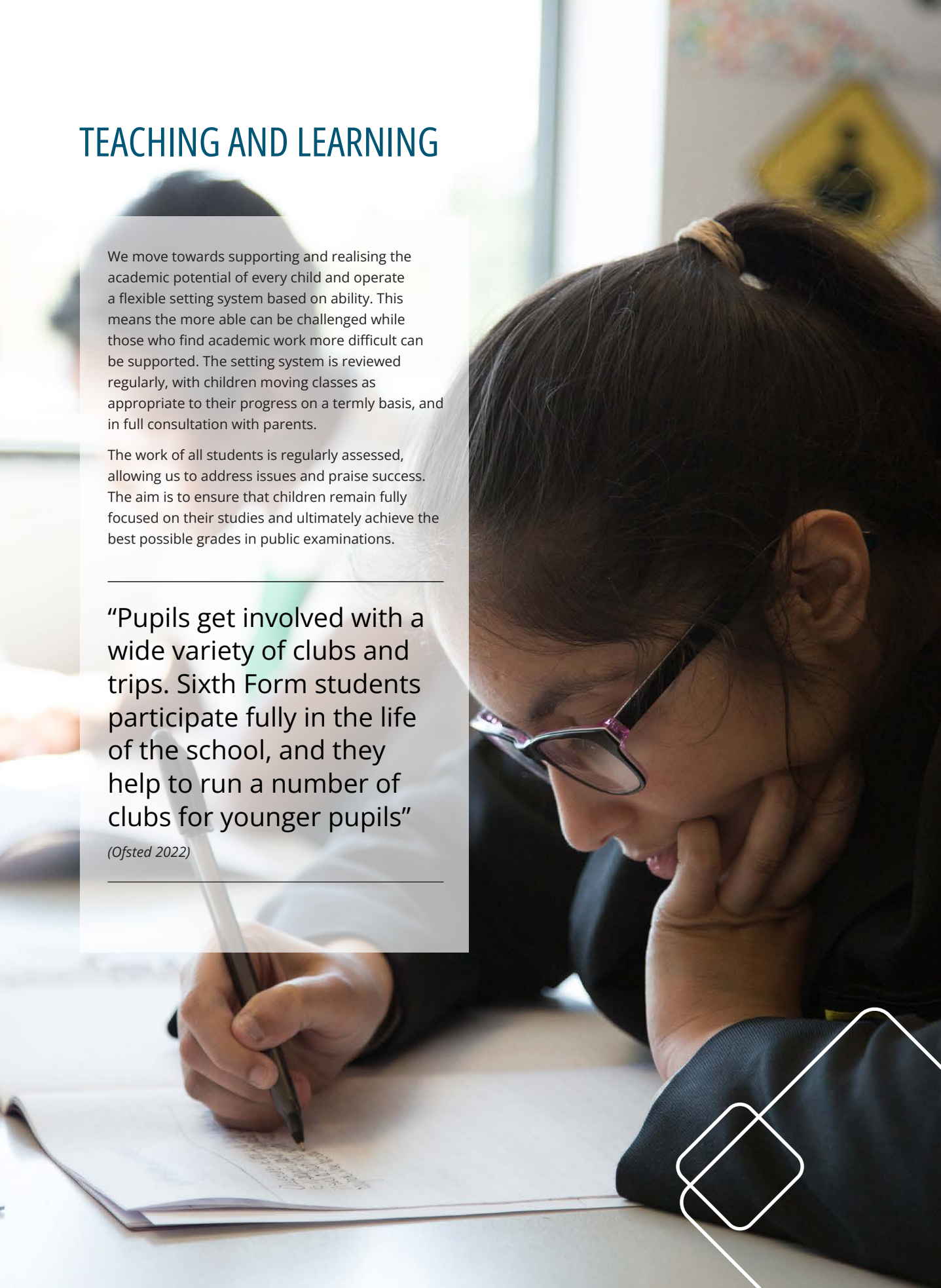
TEACHING AND LEARNING

We move towards supporting and realising the academic potential of every child and operate a flexible setting system based on ability. This means the more able can be challenged while those who find academic work more difficult can be supported. The setting system is reviewed regularly, with children moving classes as appropriate to their progress on a termly basis, and in full consultation with parents.

The work of all students is regularly assessed, allowing us to address issues and praise success. The aim is to ensure that children remain fully focused on their studies and ultimately achieve the best possible grades in public examinations.

“Pupils get involved with a wide variety of clubs and trips. Sixth Form students participate fully in the life of the school, and they help to run a number of clubs for younger pupils”

(Ofsted 2022)





PASTORAL CARE

St Thomas More Catholic School is a popular and successful school that attracts a large intake. We celebrate being the largest school in the Birmingham Catholic Diocese. In September 2023, we welcomed 243 new Year 7s, and we had 1500 students on roll. This means it is all the more important we ensure each child is known, and valued.

Form Tutors are the children's first point of contact and are trained to listen to problems, understand concerns and be empathetic. We know happy children work hard.

Importantly the Form Tutor, Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year that students meet in Year 7 progress with them up to Year 11, building positive relationships based on trust and support, and allowing them to get to know each individual pupil. Our Pastoral setting system means that children mix across the full year and work with everyone in their year group.

“The level of pastoral care provided to all community members is excellent. It is a living expression of the school's mission and contributes significantly to the happiness and well-being of all”

(CSI)

Students are further supported by a team of non-teaching staff. This includes the St John Vianney Centre Manager, Behaviour Management staff, our Safeguarding and Attendance leads, our Lay Chaplain and First Aid staff. In addition we work with outside agencies to ensure children get expert advice and support when necessary.

Students are encouraged to accept and learn about responsibility. Each form elects their own Form Captain, and Vice Form Captain and each year group elects their own School Council members. The School Council, aptly named Utopia in respect and recognition of Patron Saint, St Thomas More, has an important role in decision making with many valuable suggestions about school life.

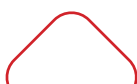
We encourage our senior pupils in Year 11 to volunteer. Students in Years 12 and 13 are called upon to be role models and provide a friendly ear to the younger children, with a formal link between Sixth Form students and Years 7 and 8 helping the transition from primary to secondary education.

Each Year Group has a number of students who have volunteered to lead spiritual matters, helping to prepare Masses, assemblies and form prayers.

“Worship is a core feature of the school's Catholic Identity. There is a natural daily pattern of prayer, which always compliments the prayer life of the Church”

(CSI)

Visitors are impressed by our student's good manners, orderly behaviour and consideration for others. These values are underpinned by our behaviour code and STM Values which are intrinsically linked to and founded on Gospel Values. We operate a strict dress code and believe children should be proud of their appearance and make a good impression with the wider community.



SPORT

St Thomas More Catholic School has a rich sporting life offering a wide range of team and individual sports. The school runs year group teams in football, netball, cricket, athletics, rounders, cross country and trampolining and offers a wide range of other sports including volleyball, tennis, handball, table tennis, dance, basketball and climbing.

We have a state-of-the-art multi facility sports hall and fitness suite with a superb climbing wall, extensive, well-maintained playing fields and tennis courts with priority use of the GOALS football pitches situated on our 25 acre site.

We aim to promote a life-long love of sport and a passion for fitness, good health and nutrition, introducing children to as many different opportunities as possible, and offering expert coaching and guidance for those with special talent.

The physical education department currently takes students to a range of professional sporting events including championship football games and tennis at Wimbledon. We also provide ski trips to European destinations.





MUSIC, ART AND DRAMA

St Thomas More Catholic School has a vibrant cultural life providing opportunities for our talented young musicians, artists and actors above and beyond the curriculum.

Many children have gone on to make their mark in Britain's world class creative industries.

Our musicians perform regularly both in school and the community. We have special lunchtime and after-school groups including choir, keyboards and concert rehearsals. There are additional lessons available across the orchestra with specialist experts offering tuition in strings, woodwind, brass, guitar, vocal, drum kit and keyboards.

Our dramatists have the use of a fabulous theatre, and stage regular classical, musical and modern productions. We run both lunch time and after school clubs to support GCSE and A Level examination classes and to plan and rehearse productions.

We support our art and design students not just in lessons but with an art club, Saturday and summer schools, and by working with local artists. We regularly visit top galleries and take part in community projects. Our students have progressed to many of the country's leading art colleges.



"Students and Sixth Form are well supported in preparing for university or training by a caring and professional team of staff."

(Ofsted 2022)

SIXTH FORM

The Sixth Form is a vibrant, exciting community which challenges students to realise their academic potential while offering new opportunities for leadership, endeavour and service.

Our Sixth Form students members are drawn from both our Year 11 cohort and from our neighbouring secondary schools.

Students are closely monitored and supported so they can achieve the best A Level and Level 3 qualifications, allowing them to progress to leading universities and long term job opportunities.

There is a specialised team of staff dedicated to mentoring our Sixth Formers who can help them realise their potential.

Students meet as a form group everyday and on a regular basis have one to one meetings with their form tutor to discuss both academic progress and personal development.

We offer a wide range of academic and vocational courses with opportunities for students to improve their mathematics and English grades if necessary.

We have outstanding facilities with purpose built study areas and state-of-the-art technology with staff always on hand to help and advise.

It is a welcoming community and those who have joined from other schools speak of the easy transition and how quickly they integrate and begin to get the most out of Sixth Form life.

Students are expected to take on greater responsibility and accept leadership roles within the wider school community, thus making sure younger children feel secure and supported.

Sixth Form students are our ambassadors and represent the school in a wide range of activities and sports teams. They can also express themselves through the performing arts, growing in self-confidence and learning new skills.

Many courses, including geography, technology, and history allow students to go on trips abroad. All students engage in a programme of voluntary service both inside and outside of school, and those who choose can work with the sick on our annual Lourdes pilgrimage.

Such is our commitment to prepare our students for the world of work that, in addition to a period of work experience in Year 10, now students in Year 12 also complete work experience. In this instance students' work experience is carefully selected to reflect our students' current programme of study and their preferred career choices.



PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

A strong bond between home and school is an essential part of life at St Thomas More Catholic School. We endeavour to inform and fully involve parents and carers. In writing, we provide detailed reports across the academic year.

Written reports are supported by Parents' Evenings, where parents can meet with class teachers to discuss in detail their child's progress across all subjects and plan ways to improve academic standards.

Further advice is offered to parents at specialised Curriculum Evenings where parents are provided with information about how they can best support their child's learning.

We publish our newsletter 'More News' fortnightly, and regularly post updates to our website, Facebook page and X (Twitter) feed. These communications celebrate the success of individual students and keep parents informed of forthcoming events.

ACTIVITIES

We have introduced numerous joint parent and child activities so we can get to know each family better. Over time these have and in certain cases still include:

- Theatre visits
- The 'Harry Potter Experience'
- Parent and child study skills workshops for students in KS4 and KS5.
- Parent and child workshops on the positive learning journey for Year 11
- Apprenticeship information sessions for students in Years 9-13
- ICT and mathematics courses
- Summer school
- Employability skills
- Anti-bullying workshops
- Parental invites to attend Year Group and Day Retreat Masses



CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE

St Thomas More Catholic School aims to develop responsible young citizens ready for the challenges of university life and the working world. We place great emphasis not only on academic rigour but on the development of life skills.

We retain strong links with local industry and commerce and want our pupils to know what will be expected of them when they progress.

We run a wide range of enterprise events, challenging students to create potentially successful products and services, work as part of a team and make informed decisions across all areas of production, promotions, supply and service.

We have a careers library with up-to-date information about relevant skills, qualifications and opportunities both locally and nationally.

Careers advice is delivered at both Key Stage 3 and 4 with one to one discussions pertinent to individual ambitions and abilities.

Year 10 students benefit from two week work placements and make a hugely positive contribution to our local partners, while gaining a valuable insight into the world of work.

All Year 11 students are offered practice job interviews with local employers and are advised about the professional presentation of job applications and curriculum vitae.



“St Thomas More Catholic School offers a full, inclusive welcome to all. The relationships between staff and students are characterised by Gospel values, which the Headteacher inspirationally demonstrates at all times.”

(CSI)



“Pupils behave well in lessons. They settle quickly to their learning and are usually keen to participate in their lessons, answering questions and completing written tasks. There is a positive and respectful school culture.”

(Ofsted 2022)

“Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their spiritual beliefs through engaging with school displays and activities in form time and assemblies. Pupils have frequent opportunities to engage with different views, beliefs and opinions.

They show tolerance towards all members of their diverse school community.”

(Ofsted 2022)



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