



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

URN: 138354

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

05 March 2026 – 06 March 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

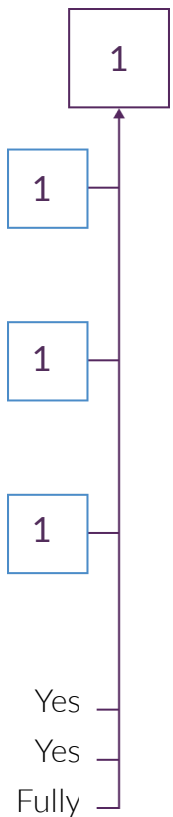
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- St Thomas More has a strong Catholic ethos where the mission is clearly lived out by staff and pupils, creating a joyful community rooted in respect, kindness and welcome.
- Pupil behaviour and engagement are exemplary, with pupils showing pride in their learning and enthusiasm for school life.
- Religious education is of high quality with strong leadership, resulting in a well-sequenced curriculum and secure pupil knowledge.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to school life, with pupils actively and reverently participating and leading prayer experiences.
- Strong and committed leadership and governance ensure that Catholic life, religious education, and prayer and liturgy remain central to the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen pupils' theological understanding of Catholic social teaching by ensuring that opportunities for charitable action are more explicitly linked to scripture and the teachings of the Church, enabling pupils to articulate the faith foundations that underpin their actions.
- Developing enrichment opportunities for pupils, to include retreats and reflection experiences to deepen engagement with their faith and learning.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

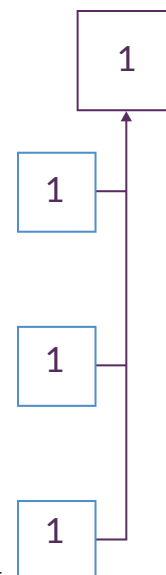
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Pupils at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School live out the school's mission statement, 'We follow Jesus as we learn, play and pray together'. They understand that this means trying to follow Jesus in all aspects of their daily lives. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour and consistently show outstanding manners and respect towards one another, staff and the wider school community. They speak enthusiastically about being part of St Thomas More and clearly express that they feel loved and valued within the school community. One pupil explained, 'nobody gives up on you at our school', while another commented, 'everyone is kind and respectful, and we don't judge each other'. Pupils recognise that they are valued as unique individuals made in the image and likeness of God. This is reinforced through a striking display of pupils' photographs celebrating the dignity and uniqueness of every child. There is clear evidence of the school's commitment to living out the teachings of Jesus. As one member of staff reflected, 'Our school is a place where kindness, gentleness and respect are shown every day'. The school purposefully develops pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching through assemblies, curriculum learning and pupil leadership groups such as the Chaplaincy Team and Eco Committee. Pupils show a strong commitment to supporting those in need and speak proudly about their fundraising for local and national charities, including Letchworth Foodbank, Cafod and Garden House Hospice Care. They also show initiative by leading their own fundraising activities, such as making and selling loom band bracelets. As this work develops, there is scope to deepen pupils' understanding by helping them make clearer links between their charitable actions, scripture and the teachings of the Church.

The school is a welcoming and joyful community where Christ is clearly at the centre. Parents

value this sense of community. One parent commented, 'The school demonstrates a strong commitment to Catholic life and mission... there is a genuine sense of community and shared purpose among staff and pupils.' Staff are strong role models and maintain a clear Christ-centred focus in all that the school does. The most vulnerable members of the community, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are valued, nurtured, and fully included in all aspects of school life. Pupils also value the school's chaplaincy provision, with the Year 5 Chaplaincy Team showing enthusiasm and commitment as role models for younger pupils. The school meets all diocesan requirements for the teaching of relationships, sex and health education.

Leaders and governors are committed to delivering the Church's mission and the bishop's vision for Catholic education. Catholic social teaching informs leaders' decisions, ensuring that the most vulnerable are prioritised and well supported. The headteacher works tirelessly to build strong relationships across the community and is described by many as an 'inspirational faith leader'. Staff are treated with dignity and respect, and they speak warmly of her compassion and commitment to their well-being. Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school and see themselves as 'critical friends', offering both support and challenge to ensure the Church's mission remains central to school life. They speak confidently about the strengths of the school's Catholic life and mission and the priorities for further development. The headteacher works closely with the diocese and diocesan adviser, making good use of guidance and professional dialogue to continue strengthening the Catholic life of the school.

Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

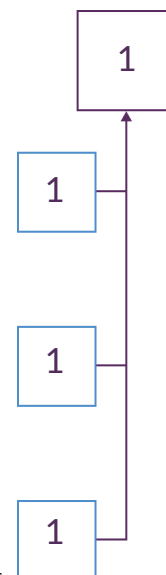
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils' books, along with discussions with pupils, show that they are developing secure knowledge and understanding in religious education. They make good progress as they know more, remember more and apply their learning with growing confidence. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to access the curriculum successfully and make good progress alongside their peers. Pupils demonstrate strong religious literacy and are increasingly confident when using key vocabulary to talk about their learning. They contribute thoughtfully during class discussions and are keen to share their ideas. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and recall prior learning through strategies such as quizzing, knowledge organisers and partner discussion. These approaches help pupils to consolidate their learning and build securely on what they already know. Behaviour in religious education lessons is outstanding. Pupils are focused and eager to learn. They show high levels of concentration, enabling them to produce work of a consistently high standard. Work in pupils' books is well presented and reflects the pride pupils take in their learning. Pupils are also given opportunities to express their understanding in a variety of ways, including through art, drama and role play, which further enriches their learning and engagement.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and deliver lessons with confidence. This is supported through well-planned professional development led by the headteacher and the religious education leader. Staff value the training and guidance they receive and recognise the expertise of school leaders in this area. One member of staff commented, 'I feel that my

subject knowledge, particularly within religious education, has developed significantly. This means that I feel confident when teaching this area of learning.' As a result, religious education is clearly valued and recognised as a core subject within the school. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and encourage them to think more deeply about their learning. Feedback in pupils' books helps them recognise what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve. As a result, pupils are able to talk confidently about their learning and understand how they can develop further. Providing enrichment opportunities would deepen further pupils' engagement with their faith and learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory and that it has full parity with other core subjects. The religious education subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject and works closely with staff to plan a well-sequenced curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge over time. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of scripture, Church teaching and the liturgical year, enabling them to develop both knowledge and personal reflection. One parent commented, 'religious education is taught to a high standard, and the leadership has ensured a noticeable step-up in the quality of the work the children produce.' Monitoring of religious education is thorough and purposeful, and leads to clear improvements. Governors and staff contribute to the school's self-evaluation, ensuring that there is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and the areas identified for further development. The religious education leader provides regular updates to the governors, enabling them to have a clear understanding of developments within religious education, including the implementation of the new religious education curriculum. Governors can speak confidently about the strengths of the subject and the priorities, helping to ensure that religious education continues to maintain a high profile within the life of the school.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

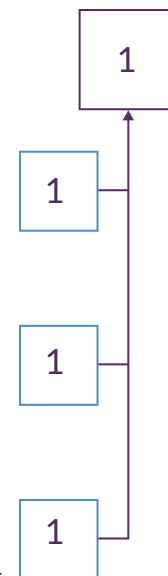
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupils at St Thomas More engage fully and reverently in a range of prayer and liturgy experiences, showing respect and growing understanding. They articulate an awareness of the importance of prayer in their daily lives. Pupils are given opportunities to pray in a variety of ways, including through scripture, reflection and song. They spoke about how 'singing is praying twice', recognising the importance of music as a meaningful form of prayer. Pupils value the opportunity to work with one another and with adults to prepare prayer and liturgy. They plan and lead these opportunities confidently for their peers and show a clear understanding of their purpose. Pupils are also given support to evaluate prayer and liturgy; this feedback helps to inform future experiences. Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school with a well-established pattern of daily prayer embedded across the school day. Scripture is carefully chosen and reflects the seasons and themes of the Church's liturgical year; this helps pupils to deepen their understanding of the Gospel message. Pupils are introduced to the richness of the Catholic tradition through a variety of forms of prayer and devotion, including the Rosary. They are also encouraged to respond through spontaneous prayer, which helps them to express their faith. Staff are positive role models for the children and speak confidently about leading prayer and liturgy. Their skills were observed during class prayer where pupils were fully engaged and encouraged to participate and lead. St Thomas More provides well-maintained spaces for prayer and reflection. The pupils are proud of the prayer room and prayer garden, where they can take part in a range of prayerful activities, including Stations of the Cross. These spaces are used meaningfully, for example, when pupils marked the canonisation of St Carlo Acutis by tying ribbons to the trees. Parents and governors are invited to join the school community for a range of worship opportunities.

These occasions are valued and well attended, as seen in the large turnout for the Year 3 Lenten assembly. The school's prayer and liturgy policy provides guidance for staff and includes a range of age-appropriate prayers. Leaders ensure that the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church is given high priority. This is reflected in the school's annual plan of provision for prayer and liturgy. Holy days of obligation and the seasons of Advent and Lent, and other significant feasts, are well planned for and celebrated. Leaders, staff and pupils greatly value the faith leadership provided by the parish priest, who is a regular and visible visitor to the school. His involvement strengthens the spirituality of the community. The headteacher and religious education leader are knowledgeable and have a wealth of experience, providing clear leadership for prayer and liturgy. Through their direction, prayer is thoughtfully planned and embedded within the life of the school. Staff are well supported and feel confident in leading worship. Leaders and governors ensure that prayer and liturgy are appropriately resourced within the school budget so that prayer spaces across the school remain welcoming and well cared for. Monitoring of prayer and liturgy is planned and purposeful. Leaders regularly observe worship and carry out pupil and staff voice. This data is used to identify key strengths and inform next steps, ensuring that prayer and liturgy continue to develop within the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138354
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193400
Full postal address of the school	St.Thomas More RC School, Highfield, Letchworth, SG6 3QB
School phone number	01462 620670
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Stephanie Gavin
Chair of Governors	Mrs Joanna Chrysandreas
School Website	www.strcjmi.herts.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Amanda Dowling Lead

Hayley Gallagher

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement