



St Thomas More Language College

URN: 151008

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

22–23 January 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

What the school does well

- The school's mission statement with its motto: 'Serving God. Striving for Excellence', are lived out fully by staff and pupils on a daily basis.
- The school's chaplaincy provision is comprehensive, well-planned and strategic in design.
- Catholic social teaching is fully alive in this school and leaders have ensured that it permeates all aspects of provision.
- Leaders within the religious education department have a clear and inspiring vision for the subject and the development of pupils' personal faith.
- The school enables the children to confidently be active participants and leaders in the prayer life of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further promote pupils' creativity, critical thinking and levels of independence.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to experience retreat.

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

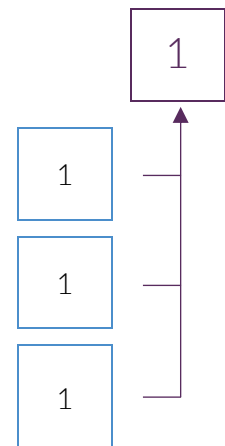
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The Catholic identity and mission of St Thomas More Language College permeates the community and ensures a rich environment where all can act as witnesses to the love of God. The daily life of the school is firmly rooted in faith and tradition. The school's mission statement underpins every action and decision made by staff and leaders. Pupils have a clear understanding of the foundations underpinning the school. Staff and leaders embody the school's Catholic identity, acting as exceptional role models, making teaching relevant and ensuring that it is brought alive for pupils. This results in pupils being consistently secure that they are being formed through the teachings of the Gospel. One pupil stated that the Catholic life of the school 'wraps around you,' indicating that it has had a significant impact on the understanding of human relationships and dignity. One staff member reported that the Catholic life is 'authentically witnessed and integrated into the day-to-day life of the school'. St Thomas More is a warm and welcoming community with positive relationships seen throughout the school. Both pupils and staff reflect that the school community is a family. Pupils are flourishing in this environment.

The school is a community with Christ at its heart and there is a strong emphasis on nurturing all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Staff provide the highest standards of pastoral care, removing barriers and enabling all pupils to thrive. The school welcomes pupils from diverse backgrounds and takes the opportunity to celebrate this rich diversity. Form tutors are supported in their pastoral care by a team of pastoral and academic leaders (PALS) and an inclusion manager. The relationships, sex, and health education provision is rooted in the teachings of the Church and continually evaluated and improved, especially following clear feedback from pupils. The school's chaplaincy provision is comprehensive, well-planned and strategic in design. A wide range of high-quality opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils results in a holistic education that is supporting pupils to discern their unique vocation. This would be enhanced by further opportunities for retreat. The school makes extensive use of artwork, icons and statues to celebrate its Catholic identity and to promote high-

level thinking and discussion. Regular access to the Chapel and local parish church provides a wonderful environment for pupils to explore and develop their faith.

The head teacher is inspirational in his commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school and is well supported by leaders and governors. The Catholic curriculum is coherent, and the implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* is progressing as planned. School leaders have embraced Catholic social teaching and, together with the Gospel, this frames the direction of the school. This enables pupils to articulate the importance of Catholic social teaching in their daily lives. A full curriculum audit of connections to Catholic social teaching has taken place resulting in a shared commitment to this across the school. The school has fostered excellent relationships with parents who are fully supportive of the way the Catholic life and mission has been shaped by leaders. One parent stated that 'the school has been a pillar in my child's Catholic life,' and another, 'my children grew up with the presence of God in their everyday life.' Parents are provided with structured guidance each week on how they can support their child's learning and faith development at home. Governors are knowledgeable and firmly committed to the school. Self-evaluation and monitoring are conducted rigorously through a range of activities. Leaders actively welcome pupils to evaluate all aspects of provision. This results in an impressive review process with pupils maturely making contributions to the development of the Catholic life of the school. Professional development and new staff induction effectively support staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

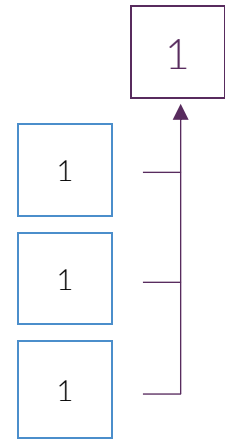
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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' religious knowledge is strong and they are confident in their articulation of this. They are able to make links between their learning in religious education lessons and their everyday lives. This results in pupils being highly engaged in their lessons. They are reflective learners and committed to doing well and 'striving for excellence'. Pupils enjoy evaluative activities, as well as discussion and debate, and they are given space in religious education lessons to do this. Pupils frequently cite religious education as one of their favourite subjects, and they have excellent relationships with their teachers. They clearly enjoy the subject and as such, their behaviour is excellent, and they make very good progress. This is demonstrated clearly in their exercise books and pupils are able to articulate where they have done well, and how they can improve. Pupils demonstrate good levels of creativity, critical thinking and independence and leaders are focused on ensuring that this is promoted fully through lessons and homework. Outcomes in religious education are significantly above other core subjects, especially at grade 5. Progress when measured against the planned curriculum remains high. Year 11 students have confidence in the support that they are being given by religious education teachers.

Teachers demonstrate a profound sense of responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of pupils, with one teacher stating that they aim to enable pupils to 'live the full experience of the faith.' This commitment provides the opportunity for pupils to link their own faith to their learning in religious education lessons. Teachers have a high level of confidence, and they are supported by resources which are created by the specialists and leaders in the department. These are then skilfully adapted for their respective classes. Teachers employ a variety of pedagogical approaches in the classroom, resulting in high levels of engagement. They demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education which results in consistency of practice and opportunities for modelling of expectations. Teachers are skilled in building on previous learning to ensure more rapid progression. Planning is linked to assessment and therefore lessons consolidate pupils' understanding. This was seen in the reflection lessons for Year 11 following mocks. Revision seminars also take place that are co-planned with pupils and reflect their needs. Teacher questioning is highly effective. At GCSE, with teacher rotation and joining of

classes, all pupils get to experience this. Praise and feedback actively contribute to pupils' enjoyment of religious education and the progress they make. This results in pupils and staff reflecting that religious education lessons are a joyful experience.

With the headteacher as line manager, and subject leader as a member of the senior team, there is clear leadership for the faithful implementation of the *Directory*. In Key Stage 3, it is being implemented via the model curriculum so that topics are covered in a spiral and narrative approach. At GCSE, Catholic theology is taught in Year 10, with Judaism followed by revision and review, in Year 11. This results in students having a firm foundation and ability to make connections between content in a meaningful way. Leaders have an inspiring vision for religious education which includes both academic excellence, as well as an opportunity for a genuine relationship with Jesus and the development of pupils' personal faith. Leaders including governors are clearly able to articulate the strengths of the department and identify next steps with a sharp focus. Transition activities are strategically planned by the subject leader, and the challenge of pupils joining from a wide and diverse range of primary schools is recognised and planned for. Leaders take responsibility to provide enrichment activities very seriously. There are well established links with organisation such as Candle Conferences and visits from local rabbis. The religious education department takes the lead on a Holocaust survivor descendent visit, ensuring that there is a religious education focus.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

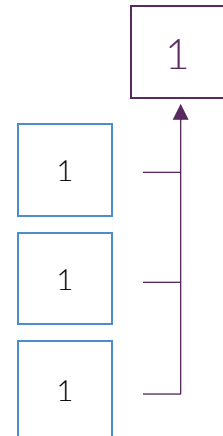
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 clearly understand that the prayer life of the school is central to everything, continuously referring to assemblies in their lessons and demonstrating personal impact. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the rich and varied prayer life of the Church. The use of scripture is a strength, and several pupils referenced scripture outside of prayer times. A whole school theme, linked to the liturgical year, is shared with all members of the community. Pupils leading the assembly for that week then collaborate with their form tutors to make it personal and appropriate for their peers. The school enables the pupils to be active participants and leaders of prayer. The level of pupil participation and independence is exceptional. In a Year 9 assembly, pupils confidently led the assembly and related the previous Sunday's Gospel to their lived experience. A parent stated that 'My child helps in reading the Gospel to all her friends and the school as a whole, which makes me so proud that the ethos of the school is put into practice.' Pupils are encouraged to include their home languages in prayer and liturgy, and they value this opportunity.

Prayer and liturgy permeate every part of the school. It is carefully planned so that pupils get to experience the richness of each liturgical season. There is a well embedded schedule for daily prayer, including daily Mass. The inclusion team prepare appropriate resources so that all pupils can understand and participate. During Lent, the pupils take part in different forms of worship, such as lectio divina and stations of the cross. During Marian months, the rosary is prayed and there are opportunities throughout the year for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Pupils have the opportunity to hear a range of scripture throughout the week and have time to reflect on how it is relevant to their own lives. Creativity flows through the prayer and liturgy with pupils encouraged to write their own prayers, as well as spiritual poems and music. At a Mass to mark the Jubilee year, pupils shared their poems and prayers on the theme of the Prodigal Son. Pupils are rewarded for creativity by having poet, prayer and music laureates. The school provides its pupils with a range of beautiful prayer spaces.

Leaders have a clear understanding of how to foster a rich prayer life in the community. Through high quality leadership and resources, both staff and pupils are confident in leading meaningful

prayer. There is a clear and rigorous staff induction programme to support new members of staff, including an opportunity to experience a 'narrative Mass'. School leaders are highly skilled and ensure that progression in prayer and worship is continuous. Leaders have ensured that the liturgical year is embedded in the school calendar. All holy days of obligation that fall within term time are celebrated with a Mass as well as the Feast of St Thomas More. The Chaplain ensures that pupils can access the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Appropriate training is included in the annual cycle. It is clear that prayer and liturgy are fully embedded in the school's monitoring schedule; leaders have identified strengths and continually look at ways to improve. They fully include pupils in this self-evaluation process, and this results in a very responsive approach to improvement and high-quality provision.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas More Language College
School unique reference number (URN)	151008
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2074681
Full postal address of the school	St Thomas More Language College, Cadogan Street, London, SW3 2QS
School phone number	02075899734
Headteacher	Trevor Papworth
Chair of governors	Pierre Lecat
School Website	http://www.stmlc.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Saint John Southworth Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Jo-Anne Hoarty	Lead
Fearghal Nash	Team
Andy Lewis	Team

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