

St Thomas More Voluntary Catholic Academy

Address: St Thomas More Road, Hull, HU4 7NP

Unique reference number (URN): 144101

Inspection report: 10 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Generally, pupils achieve well. In 2025, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 was close to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. In a small number of areas, such as the multiplication check in Year 4, pupils achieve less well. However, attainment in these areas is mostly improving. Pupils are typically well prepared for their next stage in education.

Pupils demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the school's curriculum. They draw on their existing knowledge when learning about new topics or in discussions. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently explain their learning in humanities when discussing ancient Mayan civilisation and the advantages of different farming techniques.

The school has focused on ensuring that pupils secure strong knowledge of the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. In the main, this has been effective and is reflected in the school's phonics screening check outcomes being in line with the national average over time.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken steps to reduce rates of absence. This work has had a positive impact, both overall and for groups of pupils. The attendance of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are otherwise disadvantaged, is in line with national averages. The school's work to identify and remove barriers to regular attendance has resulted in reductions in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders maintain careful oversight of trends in attendance, intervening appropriately to support pupils where required.

Pupils behave well in school. They are friendly and considerate of one another. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff reinforce the importance of positive behaviour and manners regularly through the school's 'STM way'. This establishes commonly understood expectations for all. Generally, pupils respond well to these and display positive attitudes to school. Leaders' actions have strengthened the school's culture and reduced the frequency of sanctions, such as suspensions.

Incidents of bullying, discrimination or other acts of unkindness are rare. When these do happen, the school takes them seriously and addresses these incidents effectively. As a result, pupils have confidence in the school to act in their interests.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school, with support from the trust, has taken steps to strengthen its curriculum. Leaders have considered carefully what pupils need to know and in what order. As a result, the curriculum is well designed and sequences learning appropriately. This helps pupils to build knowledge securely over time. Leaders keep the curriculum under regular review. Actions to improve the curriculum and teaching, such as the school's development of a

revised approach to writing, are informed by leaders' secure understanding of the quality of provision.

Teachers have sound knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Leaders provide training to develop staff expertise in how to teach individual subjects. The school has established an agreed approach to teaching. Mostly, staff implement this well, drawing on the training they receive. There remains some variation in how skilfully and consistently staff use these strategies, including in relation to how staff adapt their teaching so that pupils achieve as well as they can.

The school ensures that pupils who have gaps in their basic knowledge and skills, such as early writing or mathematics, receive extra help to catch up. This help is informed by an accurate understanding of what pupils know. Over time, staff help pupils to narrow these gaps. This helps pupils to access the school's curriculum with greater success.

Early years

Expected standard 

The school has developed an appropriate curriculum for children in the early years. This considers the different starting points of children in Nursery and Reception Years, across the different areas of learning. Leaders assess children's starting points, working with families and other professionals, to ensure that children are supported right from the start of their time at school.

Most children make secure progress during their time in the early years. Those who start during the Nursery Year achieve well. The school supports children with additional barriers or lower starting points, especially those who begin school later, to catch up effectively, including by working with wider services. However, in some aspects of their learning and development, they require further support in key stage 1 to close these gaps fully.

Staff promote children's development of language and reading well. They model the use of vocabulary effectively, supporting children to use new language in their own speech. Phonics teaching is effective and prepares children for their learning in Year 1. This contributes positively to the school's phonics screening check outcomes.

Staff target children who need further support effectively through planned, adult-led activities. Sometimes, when children choose their own activities during mixed-age provision, staff interactions are less effective in ensuring that these children catch up rapidly.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school has systems in place that support the identification of any barriers to learning that pupils may have, including special educational needs and/or disabilities. Training enables staff to recognise pupils who require additional support and to follow school procedures to secure this. Leaders work effectively, including with external agencies and families, to ensure that pupils who face challenges have these identified accurately. Staff generally use the information from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans or 'pupil passports' effectively to structure their teaching so that all pupils can access their learning. The school supplements this with targeted additional support, such as in reading, that helps pupils to catch up.

A small number of pupils study a bespoke curriculum. This is well considered and meets their needs. This helps these pupils to progress towards the targets identified in their EHC plans. The school has appropriately considered the next steps in these pupils' education.

The school's strategies to support disadvantaged pupils are informed by leaders' understanding of the school's context and relevant research. There is a clear rationale for the approaches taken by the school. In some areas, such as attendance, these are having a positive impact. In others, this is at an earlier stage. The school has not yet fully evaluated the impact of some strategies.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school is led with integrity. Leaders and staff have pupils' best interests at heart. In collaboration with the trust, school leaders have made a number of considered changes in recent terms, informed by an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. These strategies have had a positive impact on staff practice and pupils' experiences of school. A small number of these approaches require more time for the full impact to be evident. The school's systems for evaluating its work, such as the impact of additional funding, require refining to better guide leaders' strategic decision-making.

Staff are well supported. Leaders consider the consequences of decisions on staff, including on their wellbeing and workload. Staff benefit from well-considered professional learning, including from the trust and access to national professional qualifications. This enables them to strengthen the knowledge and skills that they need to be effective in their roles.

Those with responsibility for governance understand and fulfil their roles well. They have the necessary knowledge and experience to provide scrutiny of the school's work as well as to support school leaders. Trust leaders strengthen this, contributing positively to the leadership of the school. Leaders at all levels are aligned in their vision for the school and to bring about further improvements for pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has established age-appropriate relationships and sex education and health education and personal, social and health education curriculums. Pupils study these during the school's 'wholeness' lessons. This helps them to develop an understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils have suitable knowledge of issues linked to equality or the fundamental British values. The school's curriculum encourages pupils to be respectful and kind to those who are different from themselves. Pupils respond well to this and are inclusive in their approach towards others. When required, the school adjusts how the curriculum is taught to support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with topics that they may find challenging or require additional help with.

The school supplements its curriculum with assemblies and external speakers, such as the police. These help pupils to learn about local risks that they may face in the community. This supports pupils to develop a healthy understanding of potential hazards and how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Pupils experience a broad range of opportunities that enrich their time at school. The school's minimum entitlement ensures that all pupils access a core set of experiences, including visits to the seaside in Year 1 and theatre visits in later year groups. These are well considered. Generally, leaders identify opportunities that extend or fill gaps in pupils' existing experiences. Beyond this, pupils participate in a range of clubs and performances. They enjoy these and make good use of them. Leaders track pupils' engagement with these. However, leaders could use this information more effectively to identify and target those pupils who would benefit from a greater level of involvement.

Pupils hold a number of leadership responsibilities, such as anti-bullying champions, within the school. These help pupils to develop their confidence as well as a sense of responsibility towards others.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending St Thomas More Voluntary Catholic Academy. They form strong and respectful relationships with their peers and staff. Their enjoyment of learning is reflected in the positive attitudes that they show. Pupils are welcoming and represent the school well.

The school is a friendly and inclusive environment. Leaders have re-established the 'STM way', which has strengthened the school's culture. Staff use this to teach pupils what behaviours are expected and how to make a positive contribution to the school community. This helps pupils to develop their character and confidence and to feel safe. On the rare occasions that bullying occurs, staff address this appropriately. The school's effective work to strengthen pupils' resilience has helped to improve rates of attendance.

Leaders have taken steps to improve the school in recent terms. This has ensured that pupils now study a curriculum that is effectively designed and suited to their needs. Over time, teaching of the curriculum has also strengthened. Consequently, pupils' experiences prepare them for the next stages of their education. On the whole, pupils achieve well. This is generally reflected in national assessments, where the school's results are mostly in line with national averages. Pupils who are further behind or face barriers to their learning have their needs identified accurately and are supported to catch up. Leaders have a secure understanding of those areas where improvements are still necessary.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that enhance their education. These include a variety of clubs at lunchtime and after school. Pupils enjoy these, either because they reflect their interests, such as dodgeball, or because they can learn new skills, as in coding club. They appreciate being trusted and given positions of responsibility, such as junior chaplains. They take these roles seriously, considering how they can use them to benefit others.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed changes in the school's teaching approach to ensure that these are implemented to a consistently high level across the school, in order to strengthen

pupils' achievement.

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently make well-considered decisions about how to use continuous provision in the early years to strengthen children's learning. This includes to close any gaps in children's knowledge through high-quality interactions.
 - Leaders should strengthen the school's systems for evaluating the impact of recent improvement actions so that these evaluations better inform future strategic decision-making.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rachel McEvoy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Laws.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders from the school and trust, including the CEO of the trust. The lead inspector spoke with members of the trust board. Inspectors discussed the school's work with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Middlesbrough. During the inspection, inspectors visited lessons across a range of subjects and year groups as well as speaking with pupils and reviewing samples of their work. They also spoke with other members of the school's teaching and non-teaching staff.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any providers of alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher began in post in May 2024.

Headteacher: Martin Ward

Lead inspector:

Thomas Wraith, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

David Roundtree, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Sergeant, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

204

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

210

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.60%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.39%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.18%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	65%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	36%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	36%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	55%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	55%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	45%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	68%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	36%	69%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	22%	67%	-45 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	78%	-16 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	55%	78%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	78%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	77%	-2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	45%	81%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	79%	-35 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	79%	-17 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.8%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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