

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thomas More Catholic School

Russell Hill Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 2XP

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

Thomas More Catholic School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are courteous and respectful here. Teachers provide support and guidance to help pupils to succeed in their studies and wider personal development. Trusting professional relationships encourage pupils to report any concerns they may have and staff act swiftly to resolve them.

The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum that enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well in a range of qualifications. Pupils' starting points are well identified, and the curriculum typically builds securely on what pupils know.

Pupils are routinely taught about the importance of respect and tolerance of other people. They are made aware of people's different characteristics and what the law says about treating all people with fairness. In turn, pupils typically treat one another with kindness and respect. Bullying is rare and pupils report that they are safe and feel comfortable here.

The school encourages pupils to extend their learning and develop their wider interests. For example, all pupils in Year 10 who study French visit Paris and those studying Spanish visit Madrid to practise speaking the language and experience local culture first hand. The school organises a range of clubs that are generally well attended by pupils, including book club, chess, swimming and sports clubs. The school helps pupils to take up responsibility, including as members of the student-voice group, for example.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school provides a well ordered curriculum, within and between subjects. This enables pupils to build on prior learning securely. For example, pupils in Year 10 wrote convincingly about war poetry in English, drawing on their history study in Year 9 of the realities of war for soldiers who lived during the First World War.

Regular training supports teachers to develop secure subject knowledge. They present information clearly, breaking it down into manageable chunks, with a focus on the key concepts that pupils should remember. Teachers provide pupils with work that encourages them to recall and apply what they have learned. On the whole, pupils, including those with SEND, develop a secure understanding of what they have been taught.

Typically, teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils about how to improve their work which enables pupils to gain confidence and accuracy in future tasks. However, on occasion, when pupils' understanding is not checked carefully, misconceptions and misunderstandings in pupils' knowledge are sometimes missed. These gaps make it difficult for pupils to understand some of the more complex concepts later in the curriculum.

The school provides all pupils with opportunities to read well-chosen literature regularly. Pupils engage well with reading, read with fluency and accuracy and talk about texts with interest. Leaders are systematic in identifying pupils who may be at the earlier stages of reading. They provide an ambitious and well-structured programme of support to those pupils who require it to catch up.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND promptly. They plan well-focused additional support carefully that meets the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders share guidance with staff about how to support pupils' individual needs in the classroom. However, leaders do not systematically check that these strategies are being well delivered in lessons. Occasionally, when staff are unfamiliar with the information that leaders provide about pupils with SEND, they do not make some of the school's planned support available to pupils with SEND during routine lessons.

Clear routines and expectations help pupils to make the most of their time during lessons to focus on learning, free from disruption. Where pupils need support with meeting the school's high expectations, they are provided with a range of help and guidance which helps them to do so. The school supports pupils to attend regularly.

Pupils are encouraged to make healthy and safe choices for their physical and mental health. They are taught to recognise the signs that indicate whether a relationship is healthy or not. The school provides information, advice and guidance which prepares pupils well for study and work beyond school. The school provides effective advice, information and guidance to support pupils in their next steps.

Leaders have made realistic evaluations of the school's work and its effectiveness. They have taken effective action in areas of the school's work where they have identified that further improvements could be made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not systematically check how well the planned support for pupils with SEND helps them to learn the planned curriculum. Occasionally, teachers are less confident than they might be about which approaches might best support pupils with SEND to be successful. As a result, pupils with SEND are occasionally not provided with all the support that is intended. The school should ensure that planned support is in place across the curriculum and check how well this is working for pupils with SEND.
- In some instances, teachers do not check pupils' understanding systematically. Where this is the case, misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed before they move on to new content. As a result, pupils do not secure some key knowledge well enough to apply it to new learning and to recall it confidently later. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding systematically so as to identify and address misconceptions swiftly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	101821
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10345752
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	627
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Mushens
Headteacher	Maryssa Dako
Website	www.tmore.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes to leadership since the school's last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- In September 2024, the school suspended its sixth form. At the time of the inspection, the school had no Year 12 or 13 students on roll.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was carried out in January 2024.
- The school uses one provider of registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body, the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vikram Gukhool

Ofsted Inspector

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