

St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 105820

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

13–14 February 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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.
- The school has responded fully to areas of improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The committed headteacher, supported by a dedicated staff team and governing board, ensures that Catholic life and mission are given high priority, resulting in a community rooted in its mission and faith.
- The pastoral care of staff, pupils, and families is prioritised. Staff are particularly committed to supporting pupils and their families in times of need.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability (SEND) make good progress in religious education due to the support given by adults, and adaptations to the curriculum. They are also fully included in all areas of Catholic life and mission and the school's prayer life.
- Religious education is well led by a passionate and committed subject leader who ensures staff are well supported to improve the quality of learning in religious education.
- Catholic social teaching has a prime place within the whole school curriculum.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide all pupils with a range of appropriate opportunities to deepen and challenge their thinking in religious education so they become more religiously literate.
- Leaders need to develop a policy for prayer and liturgy that is accessible and understood by staff, which includes a prayer progression document showing how pupils' skills should increase as they move through school at different ages and stages.
- To broaden the range of opportunities and forms of prayer, increasing opportunities to include creative and artistic skills to enhance pupils' experiences of prayer.

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2



Pupils understand and clearly express the school's mission statement. Children talk confidently about how they love, learn, and live with Christ. The school community live this out by demonstrating their commitment to following the teachings and example of Jesus. St Thomas More is an inclusive community, welcoming all and striving to meet the needs of everyone. Pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching is good as they are given opportunities to put their faith into action, and reasons for doing so are made clear to them. The use of the Cafod animal characters has been an effective tool in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the principles. Pupils' commitment to living out gospel values is recognised in the weekly St Thomas More award, which is shared in celebration assembly. Pupils raise money for charities, such as Spring Hill Hospice with their fundraising reindeer run, St Joseph's Penny, Cafod, and collecting food donations for the Caritas Cornerstone Centre. The pupil leaders organised a Macmillan coffee morning and toy collection and can articulate that they 'are living like Jesus and following in his footsteps'. Pupils engage positively in the opportunities for pupil leadership roles, such as the growing in faith together (GIFT) team, Caritas ambassadors, and the enthusiastic and newly established Laudato Si' group, who are working towards organising initiatives such as litter picking and a used toy sale, demonstrating their commitment to being stewards of God's creation.

All staff confidently articulate the school's vision and mission. They are deeply motivated to want the best for pupils and parents, offering care and support to those in need within the community. There is an embedded culture of welcome for all those who join the school. School is fully inclusive and pupils acknowledge that 'no-one is treated any differently and everyone is welcome in our school'. The school has a clear focus on fostering a supportive community,

where everyone is valued. The deputy headteacher, who supports children accessing provision in the sunshine room, along with all staff, provide the highest levels of love and care for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs or disabilities and pupils who are most vulnerable. Staff are excellent role models for pupils. Relationships are built on a foundation of genuine love and care which bear witness to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Christ is at the centre of the school. Pupils clearly articulate the school's values and how they shape their everyday lives, with one pupil commenting, 'we all have a mission in life and that's to look after each other'. The mission file newsletter provides opportunities to explore faith at home. The school environment reflects its Catholic mission. Classrooms have attractive and relevant displays and prayer foci, reflecting the Church's liturgical seasons. This supports pupils in developing a sense of belonging and Catholic identity.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the school's mission and ensure this is at the heart of everything they do. Leaders go the extra mile to put themselves at the parish's service, for example, by providing support for the sacramental programme, which was previously led by the established parish priest. Governors are committed and ambitious for the school. More established governors on the board have a good knowledge of the school. Leaders have provided training, particularly for new staff, allowing them to contribute fully to the school's Catholic life and mission. Leaders and governors ensure relationships, sex, and health education is faithful to the Church's teaching and is planned and taught well. Governors have a high regard for the staff's commitment to the school. Parents are positive about the Catholic life and mission of the school and value the care staff give to the wellbeing of all pupils. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities that enhance the engagement of parents in supporting the schools' mission, and strengthening the partnership between home and school. The headteacher and governors show a commitment to the wellbeing of all staff. Staff commented on the positive support they have for each other. Leaders support new staff with a team approach for their professional development.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

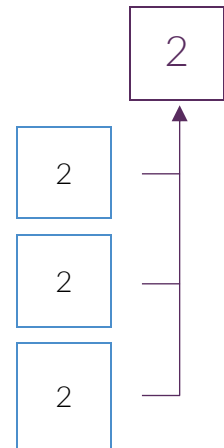
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education lessons; their behaviour is good, and they are engaged and motivated in lessons. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding, and skills because they progress sequentially through the content of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* using the *Come and See* scheme to deliver this. They demonstrate and articulate prior knowledge confidently because all teachers ensure that prior knowledge is re-capped in lessons. Consequently, most pupils progress in knowing and remembering more, and their attainment is good overall. Assessment of what has been learnt takes place in each unit of work, with cold and hot tasks informing the teacher’s judgement. Work in religious education books is presented to a good standard. There is a good quality and quantity of work produced in all classes that is comparable with other subjects taught within the school. The school marking and feedback policy has been revised and staff use this to identify and share with children the next steps in their learning. Pupils recognise the importance of learning about other faiths and cultures, understanding that this prepares them well for life in a multicultural society.

Teachers plan lessons that are appropriate to the phase they are teaching for mixed age classes. Teachers feel that they are well-supported in developing their knowledge, understanding, and delivery of lessons. High priority is given to religious education lessons, which all start with a prayer, emphasising the significance of the lesson to pupils and providing opportunities for their moral and spiritual development. Teachers have considered how learning can be presented using creative approaches such as art and drama. The variety of approaches to learning have assisted in lessons being motivating for most pupils. Work in religious education includes a variety of written tasks, including prayers, letters, and responses to questions. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support all pupils in their learning. This is particularly evident for pupils with additional needs who are effectively included in learning. Questioning,

scaffolding, and independent work is adapted to ensure that they learn well too and make good progress from their starting points. When teaching is good or better, lessons are appropriately paced and adaptive, resulting in good progress being made. This is evident through discussions with pupils and in books. Staff use praise well and this motivates pupils to do their best. When targeted feedback is clear and linked to learning objectives, pupils demonstrate greater understanding, and this challenges them to think more deeply. However, there are inconsistencies in this area and some pupils are unsure about what they need to do to make progress. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully, with pupils' knowledge and understanding being developed. It is in these lessons that pupils are also given time to reflect and extend their thinking, allowing them to consolidate their learning.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the *Directory* requirements and that all classes cover the required content. Religious education is given the same status as other core subjects, and leaders ensure it is resourced effectively. The religious education leader's determination to continue to improve the provision of religious education is evident. Her monitoring reflects some of the improvements made. She attends professional development opportunities and feeds back key points in staff meetings. Class teachers know that they can come to her for support and advice, which she readily gives. The subject leader is beginning to share more detailed information on monitoring findings with governors, ensuring they know the subject's achievements fully. This will give them strategic input into development plans, which can then be carefully monitored.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Prayer and liturgy are central to school life, and praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Pupils' attitudes towards collective worship are reverent and positive; pupils engage well in prayer and are respectful. Pupils enjoy and value the opportunity to lead prayerful experiences across the school. However, their involvement in evaluating different types of prayer and liturgy is not yet fully realised, meaning they do not always know how to improve their leadership. Pupils understand the relationship between prayer and action, as demonstrated through support with various charitable and fundraising activities over the year. Pupils have their own prayer books, which they use to write traditional prayers and their own reflections. On some occasions, prayer times include more question-and-answer sessions rather than allowing for longer periods of spiritual reflection and a loving encounter with God. Pupils talk confidently about the liturgical year and the associated colours linked to the Church's seasons. Pupils are willing to undertake liturgical ministries and have taken responsibility for reading and serving during school and parish Masses.

Staff are committed to developing the spiritual life of pupils, and governors recognise the efforts of staff in supporting the formation of pupils. Planned prayer and liturgy form part of a regular programme of routine gatherings, including the celebration of Mass, assemblies, and class worship. Seasonally appropriate Bible passages are carefully chosen by staff, which enhance the quality of their provision. Staff and pupils plan and lead classroom-based prayer and liturgy well. They understand the elements and use the model of 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' effectively. Pupils would benefit from experiencing a wider range of ways of praying, and further development for spontaneous prayer, and prayer in different places within the school environment. Staff are models of good practice and know how to help pupils to understand and reflect on their faith. During acts of worship, staff encourage pupils to apply

what they hear to their own lives and experiences. The school is developing spaces that can be used for contemplation and prayer outdoors, and the GIFT team are excited to put their ideas into action. Parents are keen to support their children's prayer life and would relish further opportunities to attend prayerful experiences in school.

Leaders have ensured the 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' structure for prayer and liturgy is used consistently throughout the school ensuring there is structure to liturgies. As this is now embedded, older pupils would benefit from expanding and innovating prayerful experiences. Leaders and governors offer regular opportunities for staff training and liturgical formation from the diocese and other partners. Although all staff recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and are good role models for pupils, leaders do not yet have a strategy for building on pupils' liturgical skills and knowledge as they progress through school to give them more ownership of prayer. Leaders ensure sacraments, holy days of obligation, and other essential feast days are well catered for with prayer and liturgy. The school seeks to work well with the local parish and have enjoyed a collaborative school and parish relationship. Leaders and governors are committed to prayer and liturgy, allocating resources effectively. Self-evaluation for prayer and liturgy occurs and is beginning to be evaluated by governors regarding how it feeds into strategic improvement planning.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105820
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3543319
Full postal address of the school	Evesham Road, Alkington, Middelton M24 1PY
School phone number	0161 643 7132
Headteacher	Joanne Butterworth
Chair of governors	David Flint
School Website	http://www.stthomasmorererc.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Annemarie Bell
Jemma Stuttard

Lead inspector
Team inspector

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