

Inspection of a good school: St Thomas More RC College

Town Lane, Denton, Manchester M34 6AF

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 June 2022

Outcome

St Thomas More RC College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Thomas More Roman Catholic College is a calm, welcoming community founded on mutual respect for all.

Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe. Pupils appreciate the positive relationships that they forge with staff. They feel valued as individuals and trust staff. Pupils celebrate differences between people. They do not tolerate discrimination. Pupils are confident that leaders will quickly act to address any incidents of bullying.

Pupils have pride in their school. They take good care of the quiet and calm classrooms, corridors and social areas. Pupils behave sensibly and have fun during social times.

Leaders' expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour are high. Pupils live up to these expectations and achieve well across a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy their learning without distraction. They are punctual to lessons.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities outside of lessons. These activities broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. For example, pupils take part in a wide range of sports and drama clubs. They are keen to contribute to their local community through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Parents and carers are particularly supportive of the school.

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

Leaders have thoughtfully redesigned the curriculum so that pupils can build on what they already know. The curriculum is broad and suitably ambitious for all pupils and has the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at its heart.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn and in which order it should be taught. These curriculums are well organised. They include

opportunities for pupils to remember, practise and build on what they already know. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects. They ensure that pupils revisit their learning regularly. Pupils achieve well in many subjects. Teachers typically check carefully for any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use this information to adapt their teaching so that pupils can gain or recover any learning that they have missed or forgotten. Teachers are proficient in selecting appropriate activities that develop pupils' subject knowledge.

Pupils can apply new learning to increasingly sophisticated concepts and ideas in most subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not help pupils well enough to make connections between their learning. This hinders pupils' progress.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify and help those pupils who find reading difficult. Leaders have placed a clear emphasis on developing pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge in lessons. This helps these pupils to access the wider curriculum.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and effectively. Teachers adapt how pupils access learning so that these pupils can learn the same ambitious curriculum as others in the school. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) are well supported and able to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. All pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, are fully included in the life of the school and achieve well.

Pupils behave well during lessons. Movement between lessons and at lunchtime is particularly calm. Pupils self-regulate their behaviour and conduct well.

The personal development programme prepares pupils well for their future in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the features of healthy relationships, including consent. They understand the negative impact of prejudice on others. Leaders ensure that careers guidance is well established across all years. Pupils move on to appropriate destinations at the end of Year 11.

Governors hold leaders to account successfully for the quality of education in the school. Leaders take account of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. They have ensured that staff are clear about the dangers that pupils may face. This includes when pupils are online. Staff are vigilant and alert to the signs that may indicate that pupils are at risk of harm. Adults report concerns about pupils in a timely manner and leaders follow up on these concerns appropriately. Leaders work effectively with external partners to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about issues such as peer-on-peer abuse and consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not help pupils to make connections between their learning. This hinders their progress through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers enable pupils to deepen their understanding by making links between what they know.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106271
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10204451
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	781
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Enderby
Headteacher	Huw Brophy
Website	www.stmcollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic school and is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's most recent section 48 monitoring inspection took place in June 2019.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils aged 11 to 16 with autism spectrum disorder needs. There are currently 18 pupils on roll.
- A small proportion of pupils attend alternative provision at one registered provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, a representative from the diocese and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, mathematics and English. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. They met with the leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included some free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

David Hampson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Kelly

Ofsted Inspector

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