CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

URN: 147017

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

30 September–01 October 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

3

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	Partially

Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has not fully addressed all previous areas for improvement because leaders and governors have not taken effective action to improve the rigour and accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation of religious education at all levels since the last inspection.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- St Thomas More is a welcoming, joyful, family school with a clear mission and a strong Christ-centred Catholic identity.
- The pastoral care of staff, pupils, and families is prioritised. Staff are committed to supporting pupils and their families in times of need; everyone is valued and made to feel special.
- Leaders and staff are positive role models for the pupils going above and beyond in providing for their pupils.
- Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the *Religious Education Directory*.
- Pupils respond reverently to prayer and worship in an authentic, heartfelt, and spiritual manner.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the rigour and accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation of religious education at all levels.
- Ensure pupils take an active leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching and can clearly articulate their understanding of the theology that underpins these actions.
- Routinely provide opportunities for families and the parish to be included in the school's prayer life.

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

2

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

Pupils experience a joyful, welcoming community at St Thomas More, rooted in its mission statement, 'Christ is the centre of our school community where we live, love and learn together'. Pupils know, celebrate and live this mission daily. One parent comments typically, 'There is a light that shines from St Thomas More School out into our families and community'; others report that pupils have a brilliant understanding of 'being Catholic'. Pupils are proud to belong to their school family, feel safe and secure, and participate fully in opportunities to celebrate their faith. Consequently, they are happy and understand that they are deeply valued, cared for and loved by God. The Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) Ambassadors articulate their contribution to the school's Catholic life and mission and its impact on their faith. One describes their role as 'to spread kindness and God's word'; another values going 'deeper into my faith and become more like Jesus'. The Mini Vinnies are not yet sufficiently active in participating in and contributing to the school's Catholic life and mission. Consequently, their role and contribution are not well understood or valued by all pupils. Pupils enjoy participating in charity work, considering other people's needs near and far, for example, through their support of Father Hudson's Caritas and Cafod. They respect others, demonstrate good manners and generally behave well in lessons and around school. They understand the importance of caring for others and God's world. However, their understanding of this in terms of Catholic social teaching principles is not secure, and they cannot explain how these underpin their charitable actions.

Staff are strong role models for pupils through their mutual service and support; one comments, 'We are one body with Jesus at the heart of all that we do'. New staff describe feeling welcome from arrival and quickly become part of the school family. Pupils value the close sense of community, where they are individually known and loved and receive personalised support

when needed. Pastoral care is very strong, with great care ensuring all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, receive the support they need. Teaching about other faiths and religions helps pupils develop a strong understanding of different beliefs. The environment is distinctively Catholic indoors and outdoors, providing an attractive space to work, learn and pray. Chaplaincy provision at St Thomas More does not yet enable all pupils to recognise their own unique vocations or provide sufficient opportunities for them to deepen their spiritual and moral development. Relationships and health education (RHE) is taught in line with diocesan requirements; this provision supports pupils' emotional and spiritual wellbeing, enabling them to thrive.

Leaders and governors are committed to the Church's mission in education and view the development of the school's Catholic life and mission as a core leadership responsibility. School policies clearly reflect the school's Catholic identity and mission. Leaders and the newly appointed parish priest share a commitment to strengthening school–parish links. Parents and carers are welcomed into school and the parish church to participate in Catholic life. The whole school regularly attends a midweek parish Mass. Leaders and governors respect staff's dignity and ensure they are cared for. Leaders prioritise staff training, including diocesan and multi-academy company (MAC) opportunities. The support provided to staff helps them feel confident in their roles and know where to seek further help when needed. Governors, though few, are committed to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, providing some challenge and support. However, leaders and governors do not yet monitor and evaluate specific aspects of Catholic life and mission with sufficient rigour to demonstrate clearly the impact of their well-planned improvements.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

Pupils develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education through the religious education curriculum. Pupils confidently explain what they have learnt and demonstrate secure recall of the knowledge identified in the curriculum. Pupils approach religious education lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils make good progress in remembering more by regularly recalling their prior learning in lessons. Deeper thinking reflections, such as how being part of God's family through baptism might be challenging for some people, help pupils to make progress by doing more with their knowledge as well as developing their oracy. For example, older pupils discuss the challenge of following Jesus whilst recognising human imperfection; other pupils reflect deeply on Creation through artwork and develop their ideas using technical religious vocabulary accurately. Pupils benefit from having a strong pupil voice in lessons, discussing their learning and articulating their knowledge with confidence and clarity. In classes where lessons proceed at an appropriate pace, pupils work independently and creatively, taking initiative in their learning. Most pupils take care of their religious education books and produce good-quality, well-presented work. Overall, pupils' attainment in religious education is higher than their attainment in other core subjects.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, particularly when teaching the new curriculum. Teachers plan lessons well and lead learning confidently, drawing on a good understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding during lessons. Teachers value religious education and communicate this effectively to pupils, making good use of diocesan resources to support their lessons. Teachers generally use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and adapt their explanations in response, though is not always the case, meaning some pupils' learning is not consolidated before they move on to new learning. Teachers give pupils time to reflect on their learning, enabling in-depth discussions and

discernment, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers recognise the contribution of religious education to pupils' moral and spiritual development and provide time for reflection in lessons. Pupils recognise that staff make lessons engaging and enjoyable. Pupils are motivated during their lessons and report that they like the new way of teaching religious education; one Year 4 pupil describes the Discerning Disciples curriculum as challenging, fun and interesting. Staff follow the school's marking policy, provide verbal feedback and give some pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning, though this is not consistent throughout the school. Additional adults are deployed to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Leaders ensure that the religious education curriculum develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other core subjects in resourcing, timetabling and staffing. Leaders are fully committed to securing regular, high-quality staff training in religious education. The most recently appointed religious education subject leader receives training and provides professional support and training to staff implementing the new curriculum. Teachers feel well supported in planning and teaching religious education, which they do well. Leaders support staff, including those new to teaching, very well; consequently, staff are committed to securing good outcomes in religious education. Senior leaders engage with the diocese and the MAC to support their professional development in religious education. However, leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is insufficiently informed by high-quality, accurate monitoring and analysis. Consequently, they do not use it to identify priorities or plan strategic action for subject improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

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

Pupils participate regularly in prayer as part of everyday school life. Pupils are prayerful and responsive during worship, participating with deep reverence and respect. All pupils have opportunities to prepare classroom prayer and undertake prayer ministries. A 'gather, listen, respond, mission' framework is used throughout the school to ensure consistency. Pupils undertake ministries confidently, appropriate to their age, preparing and explaining the prayer focus and proclaiming the Word of God. In celebrating the Guardian Angels, pupils demonstrate their understanding of different ways of praying through listening to liturgical music and reflecting on scripture; for example, in Reception, pupils place a feather close to their hearts as a symbol while reflecting on the closeness of their guardian angel, whilst other Key Stage 1 pupils were encouraged to share guardian angel prayer cards at home. Most pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and know the traditional prayers of the Church, which they demonstrate spontaneity in using. However, pupils are not yet confident in articulating how prayer and liturgy influence, and are influenced by, the curriculum and the wider life of the school. Appropriate to their age and development, pupils reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy and explain what these mean to them and how they can influence their actions.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of this school. Planned prayer and liturgy form part of regular school gatherings, including assemblies and classroom celebrations, alongside regular opportunities to celebrate Mass. There is a daily pattern of prayer that reflects the rhythm of the Church's prayer life and celebrates significant moments in the school's life. The headteacher and staff are committed to the school's prayer life and act as good role models for pupils. The prayer progression document effectively supports staff in developing pupils' confidence to participate in prayer and liturgy. All classes have well-maintained and cared-for prayer areas with age-

appropriate artefacts, prayers, and artwork. Staff carefully prepare the environment for prayer, creating a space conducive to meaningful reflection. Staff have good relationships with parents and the parish. However, their use of using parents and the parish to further develop pupils' prayer life is limited.

Leaders and governors ensure that the prayer and liturgy policy is accessible, well understood and consistently applied by staff. Leaders prioritise the development of staff skills and confidence in prayer and liturgy, alongside the progressive development of pupils' participation as they move through the school. Leaders' detailed planning ensures that prayer and liturgy remain central to school life. Leaders and governors provide a wide range of opportunities for liturgical celebrations throughout the year. The school calendar is planned around the liturgical year, and time is set aside weekly to celebrate the Eucharist. The school community celebrates holy days of obligation and other significant feast days, including the feast of St Thomas More. Senior leaders are knowledgeable and skilled in planning and leading prayer and liturgy, sharing their expertise effectively with staff. Training develops staff knowledge of prayer and liturgy. Staff demonstrate high levels of commitment and set a positive example through their leadership and participation. Leaders work together to ensure that prayer and liturgy are of a consistently good standard throughout the school. Leaders encourage staff to gather and share their faith as part of their formation. Leaders have recently begun to collate pupils' evaluations and feedback when reviewing the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. However, a systematic cycle of self-evaluation, in which all relevant stakeholders contribute meaningfully to evaluating prayer and liturgy, is not yet embedded.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147017
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	330 2201
Full postal address of the school	Horse Shoes Lane, Birmingham, B26 3HU
School phone number	0121 743 3289
Headteacher	Mark McLoughlin
Chair of governing board	Katherine Marston
School Website	www.sttommor.bham.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2022
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Krystyna Bickley	Lead
Christina Hall	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