



ST THOMAS MORE
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
PROSPECTUS

**2017
2018**

Striving for Excellence

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OTHER AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

Governors Admissions Policy	contact us
OFSTED report 2013	contact us

“Regis Servus Dei Prius”

Born in 1478 the son of a lawyer, Thomas More attended St Anthony's School in London. After reading law at Canterbury College, Oxford, he qualified as a lawyer in 1501. His first marriage to Jane Colt produced four children. In 1510 he was appointed under-sheriff and Member of Parliament for the City of London. After Jane's untimely death, Thomas married Alice Middleton, a young widow with a daughter of her own.

Dispute with the King

Because Henry VIII and Katherine had no living male heir, the King applied to the Pope to have his marriage annulled. The Pope was unwilling to grant a divorce and the proceedings for annulment dragged on. By this time Henry's new love, Anne Boleyn, was already expecting his child. Henry took matters into his own hands, separated the English Church from the Church in Rome, styled himself supreme head of the Church in England, instructed his Archbishop to grant the divorce and then married Anne Boleyn.

Sir Thomas More, as he was by then, privately disagreed strongly with Henry's actions, believing it was impossible for the English Church to make laws which were inconsistent with the laws of the Church in Rome. In 1532 he resigned from office and refused to attend the coronation of Anne in 1533. In 1534 the Act of Succession declared that Anne's children rather than Katherine's, would succeed Henry. All Members of Parliament were required to take an oath accepting the Act, including the clause which asserted that the Pope had no power to interfere in the affairs of England. Neither More nor Bishop Fisher could accept this, so they refused to sign the Act. They were condemned to life imprisonment and had to forfeit their goods.



Martyrdom

Despite attempts by the King to make him change his mind, More refused to sign and was tried under the new Treason Act. One of Anne's relatives committed perjury and declared that More had publicly denied the right of the King to the title of the Supreme Head of the Church. The guilty verdict was passed and for the first time Sir Thomas More spoke his mind and stated that the Parliament of England had no right to make a law which disagreed with the law of Christ's Church. More was taken back to the Tower to await his death.

On July 6th 1535 Sir Thomas More was brought to the place of execution at Tower Hill. The King had forbidden More to make a speech before he was beheaded. However, he announced to the crowd that he went to his death for his faith in the Holy Catholic Church as 'the King's good servant but God's first'.

Canonisation

Thomas More was beatified in 1886 and canonised on May 19th 1935. His feast day is celebrated on June 22nd.



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Thomas More Catholic School is the founder member of the St Thomas More Partnership of Schools, a Multi Academy Trust. We provide for the educational needs of 11 -19 year old pupils from West Gateshead and Northumberland.

Number of pupils on roll:	1509
Number of pupils in Years 12 and 13:	300
Target number of pupils for Year 7 in 2016-2017	235

HEAD TEACHER : MR. J. PARKINSON

DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS : MRS. A. MOORE (CURRICULUM)
MR. N. WOOD (PASTORAL)

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS : MR J. HAYES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St Thomas More Catholic School is to develop each member of the school community so that everyone involved can reach their full potential in the light of the teaching of Christ and the values portrayed in the Gospels.

PRINCIPLES

Our catholic school is committed to achieving excellence in all that it does. The following principles govern the way that we operate:

The Catholic Faith is at the heart of what we do. Our Christian principles provide a well understood moral code by which we operate. Opportunities are provided to further the spiritual development of the community at whatever stage an individual is.

Our school is a civilised place: there is an atmosphere of mutual respect; members of the community are well behaved, display good manners and work for the common good. Our school experience should be an enjoyable one. This requires the provision of the highest possible quality learning environment.

Our pupils have access to an engaging, flexible curriculum that is relevant to their needs and to those of the wider community in order to equip them to take their places as productive members of society through the provision of the necessary knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

Our school has high expectations in all areas, including: aesthetic, physical, social, moral and academic. There is a belief that all pupils can succeed, whatever their individual circumstances.

Our school is an inclusive place. The skills and experience of the staff are valued and utilised in the attempt to achieve excellence; no group of pupils is discriminated against. We will always care for the individual whilst being mindful of our responsibility to the whole school community.

Our school is an organisation that reflects on what it does with a view to achieving constant improvement and development.

Our staff are central to the school's success. There are opportunities for staff to develop their skills throughout their career; they are supported and valued in their work.

Teaching and Learning are the core activities. The provision of the highest quality classroom experience is of paramount importance. As a part of this experience learners are encouraged to take intellectual risks to enhance their learning, to develop the skills necessary to become autonomous learners, and to take responsibility for their learning.

Learners are encouraged to develop lively enquiring minds, the ability to question and the ability to argue rationally, in order to cope with the demands of a complex, fast changing modern society.

Our school is committed to the development of educational practice through the development of partnerships with others in the wider community.

Our school accepts its responsibility as a member of its wider community. Developing links with parishes, the local community, other educational establishments and other partners in order to further the wider educational aims of the region.

The parents of pupils at the school are encouraged to be involved in their child's education and have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to support their child at school.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

"INVESTING
IN YOUNG
PEOPLE

INVESTING
IN THE
FUTURE"



There are many different things that we, as a community, want from our school: we want our children to be successful academically; we want them to develop good moral attitudes, indeed we want them to fulfil their potential in many different ways.

Here in St Thomas More Catholic School, we aim to give our pupils the best possible chance of doing this. In the school's most recent OFSTED inspection, in which we were again graded Outstanding, the opening sentences reads: "St Thomas More School provides pupils with high quality education, linking outstanding academic achievement to splendid personal development. An exceptionally strong Christian ethos pervades the school" (October 2013).

This success is due first and foremost to the strong Christian ethos which pervades our school, binding people together and encouraging everyone to give their best, and to strive for excellence, within an ordered and disciplined atmosphere. It was particularly rewarding to have this aspect of the school graded Outstanding by the Diocesan inspectors.

We have a long tradition of excellent examination results going back many years and in June 2016 results were no different. Year 11 pupils posted another fine set of results. Our overall headline figure of 5+ A* - C with English and Maths was badly hit by changes to the grade boundaries of one of the subjects leaving us at 80% which is still a strong result for the school, but not where we expect it to be. Our Year 13 also performed excellently with over half of the grades at A2 being A* to B with one of the best ever points per entry in all qualifications score. What was particularly encouraging to see were the very high numbers of pupils getting their first choice of university.

There is no doubt that one of the main factors behind the continued excellent achievement of this school is the very high standard of the behaviour of the pupils. OFSTED also commented that "Behaviour is almost always impeccable. Pupils conduct themselves in a very mature manner in class and when moving around school at breaks and lunchtimes. They are polite and helpful and really respect their teachers."

As a school we have always been determined to give pupils the best possible educational experience. This is reflected in the positive attitudes towards lessons that pupils show. This was confirmed by OFSTED who judged the quality of Teaching and Learning to be outstanding.

We pride ourselves on the level of pastoral care given to all pupils. There are excellent relationships and mutual respect between pupils and between staff and pupils. Indeed, our pupils say that they enjoy coming to school! We invest heavily in individual support and guidance for pupils, we assess pupils' progress regularly and report this progress to parents at 10 week intervals.

Of course there is so much more to St Thomas More Catholic School than excellent examination results, central though these are to our success. Over the past few years the School has been recognised in a number of different ways. We were the first school to be awarded Specialist School status in the North East. We have collected a range of specialisms over the years; starting with Technology, Leading Edge (via Beacon School), Training and Vocational. In June 2011 we were named as one of the first tranche of Teaching Schools; one of the first group of fifty secondary age Teaching Schools in the country. As a school we are always looking to develop still further. In January 2014 we became the founder member of the St Thomas More Partnership of Schools Multi-Academy Trust and in March 2014 we welcomed our first primary school, Sacred Heart Byermoor to the trust. In April 2015 we welcomed St Matthew's Primary School, Prudhoe.

Over the last few years we have worked hard to improve the school environment. We have so far renewed 60 % of the school building. The next phase of the school's redevelopment will be the original 1967 building and hopefully this will happen in the next couple of years.

The work of the classroom continues to extend into high quality extra curricular activities. A large number of pupils are able to participate in school teams covering a wide range of different sports. There is also a strong commitment to music and drama with regular concerts and drama evenings. Our contribution to the life of the community through, for example, the Sixth Form Programme, provides a splendid example of Christianity in action. Our pupils are enthusiastic and prolific fund raisers for Catholic Care North East, CAFOD, for the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul and for the work of overseas missions. The nation's growing awareness of the peoples and cultures of Europe is reflected in our programme of international visits and exchanges.

With firm guidance, clear purpose, the vast array of talents of pupils and staff and continued support from parents, I am confident that St Thomas More Catholic School will continue to make a major contribution to the life of our community.

Jonathan Parkinson
Head Teacher

CHILDREN WHO FEEL VALUED

In a school of over 1500 pupils, it is important that each individual feels secure, confident and valued. Our pastoral system is designed to do just that.

On entry to our school, each pupil is allocated to one of four houses: St Bernadette, St Catherine Laboure, St John Fisher or St Therese. Working under the general co-ordination of a Head of House, each teacher has pastoral responsibility for a group of around 30 pupils. Through a planned pastoral programme, the tutor addresses the social and emotional needs of pupils and supports their learning and development.

Progress in learning is also enhanced by a system of target setting supported by a team of Pastoral Mentors who ensure that each individual is provided with the necessary help to achieve their potential.

Essential to the valuing of the individual is the system of PRAISE, whereby pupils are awarded merits for academic and social achievement set against a background of healthy inter-house competition.

Contributions to the life of the house and therefore the school, be they physical, mental or spiritual are also recognised through the PRAISE system ensuring that the achievement of each pupil can be acknowledged irrespective of academic ability.

“INVESTING
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SPECIAL NEEDS

The School's provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) aims to:

- Create an environment where SEN children feel welcome and where their special needs are addressed
- Integrate pupils with special educational needs into the full life of the school
- Seek to minimise, as far as possible, the educational disadvantage that results from special educational needs
- Seek to make the necessary provision to maximise the performance of special needs pupils

Our SEN pupils do well. About 28 of the most recent Year 11 leavers had been on the SEN Register. Almost all of the 28 have either returned to our Sixth Form or have started courses at local colleges. We are very proud of this achievement and their commitment to continuing education.

A copy of the SEN arrangements can be obtained from the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The spiritual dimension is of fundamental importance to the life of our school. In addition to timetabled Religious Education lessons, each session of each day begins and ends with an act of collective worship. This may take the form of a School or House assembly or a short act of worship conducted under the guidance of the pastoral tutor or class teacher as appropriate. Each member of staff is committed to the development of the Catholic ethos of the school. The Governors remind parents of their right to withdraw their children from religious education and worship. Parents are also reminded, however, that the school exists to provide a Catholic/Christian education for its pupils and therefore parents are expected to be in sympathy with its aims and objectives.

SEX EDUCATION

Education on sexual matters will include both the moral and physical aspects of this topic and will be covered in Religious Education and Biology lessons where appropriate, in a suitable context and within the general religious and moral attitude of the school. It provides knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. It encourages the acquisition of attitudes which allows pupils to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. Parents may withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education provided.

PARTNERS IN LEARNING

The influence which home and school each has on the development of a young person cannot be overstated. Personal values, balanced judgements and a sense of proportion all have their roots in the early years. The partnership between parents and school is vital if common goals are to be achieved. Our guidance system is designed to supplement that offered by caring parents. We trust that values are shared at both home and school as we seek to do our best for our young people.

There are specific ways in which we would ask the support of parents:

- Regular and punctual attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their best
- Parental support in ensuring that homework is completed satisfactorily and on time helps ensure effective delivery of the curriculum
- Membership of the St Thomas More Association offers parents and teachers the opportunity to co-operate in social and fund raising events for the general good of our school. All parents and friends are encouraged to support our charitable and fund raising efforts as we seek to fulfil our Christian Mission

Approximately every ten weeks parents will receive a short report of their child's progress and they are encouraged to support their child in forming future targets. Once per year there is a more extensive academic report followed by a parents' evening.

IN THE CLASSROOM

KEY STAGE 3

In Year Seven pupils are banded according to their ability, although the bands are not considered final as Year Seven is generally a diagnostic year. All pupils follow a common curriculum and their progress is carefully monitored so that banding can be adjusted at any stage. Students with specific learning difficulties are taught in smaller groups.

At the beginning of Year Eight pupils are banded according to their ability. In the subjects of English, Humanities, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Modern Languages pupils are placed into sets determined by their ability.

Year Nine sees a continuation of this organisation, leading to Key Stage 3 teacher assessment during the Summer term.

The importance of a good start to a pupils' secondary education is central to the work we do at St Thomas More. We firmly believe that by setting the right culture for learning at the start of a child's secondary education we are laying the foundations for future examination success. We work very closely with our primary colleagues to ensure we have a clear understanding of our pupils' achievements and build on these from day one. A key part of our curriculum at Key Stage 3 aims to develop pupils' learning habits, this is referred to as STM Learning, it is here that we embed the habits that put our pupils in good stead for their future academic studies.

Pupils study a range of subjects during Key Stage 3 including:

English	Design Technology
Chemistry	Physical Education – inc' Dance
Mathematics	Information Technology
Physics	Art
Religious Education	Music
French and German	Geography
Biology	Drama
History	PHSE and Citizenship

In common with most Comprehensive Schools, St Thomas More provides a broad curriculum for all with an increasing element of personal choice offered as pupils become older.

Each department offers a range of courses that are adapted to suit the varying abilities of pupils and uses a variety of teaching styles to suit the objectives of the lesson. During the course of the school week 25 hours are spent on departmental teaching and a further 2hr 20 mins on pastoral duties and PHSE.

Careers Education is an integral part of the school's pastoral programme and is delivered across all year groups. Action Plans are introduced in Year Seven and concluded in Year Eleven with an individual interview with a Connexions Personal Assistant. In the summer of each year, Year Ten pupils are given the opportunity of a work experience placement as an introduction to the world of work. The school is delighted to acknowledge its strong links with industry and commerce, essentially with the local employers through whom the majority of work experience placements, including those undertaken during Year Twelve are arranged.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KEY STAGE 4

Pupils in Key Stage 4 build on the skills and habits developed in Key Stage 3. All pupils in Year 11 are currently working towards their core GCSE subjects including the new GCSEs in English and Mathematics. These will be graded 9 – 1 (9 being the highest grade), replacing the A* - G grades. All other subjects will be graded in this way from 2018.

All pupils study the following GCSEs:

Religious Education	Double Award Science or
English Language	3 Separate Sciences
Mathematics	

Pupils then choose either Route A or Route B.
Pupils also study Physical Education.

Following KS4 most pupils choose to return to school to pursue Sixth Form Courses which lead to qualifications at GCE Advanced Level, and National Vocational Qualifications.

ROUTE A

Pupils who choose this route select a vocational course (below) and two further GCSE subjects.

Vocational Courses

Art and Design	Health and Social Care
Business Studies	Information Technology (DIDA)
Engineering	Sports Studies

KS4 OPTIONS

ROUTE B

Pupils select four GCSE's:

Route B: Option 1

Geography	History
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Route B: Option 2

French	German
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Route B: Options 3 & 4

Two Other Subjects

Art and Design	Business Studies
Drama	Geography
Music	History
Dance	German
Physical Education	French
Engineering	Health & Social Care
Textile Technology	Food Technology
Product Design	Computer Science
	ICT

Route A: Option 1

Geography	German
History	Computer Science
French	

Route A: Option 2

One Other Subject

Art and Design	Business Studies
Drama	Geography
Music	History
Physical Education	German
Engineering	French
Textile Technology	Health & Social Care
Product Design	Food Technology
ICT	Computer Science

THE 6TH FORM

At St Thomas More Sixth Form, we pride ourselves on our commitment towards providing the best opportunities possible for our pupils Post 16.

A comprehensive range of Advanced Level courses is available:

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Design and Technology –
which is normally 2 options including textiles
- Engineering
- English Language
- English Literature
- French
- German
- Geography
- Health & Social Care
- History
- ICT
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Music
- Music Technology
- Philosophy and Ethics
- Physics
- Physical Education
- Psychology
- Theatre Studies

A brochure outlining Sixth Form opportunities is supplied to all pupils in Year Eleven, or by contacting the School Office.

We have high expectations of all our pupils, regardless of background or academic ability, and strive to ensure that individuals reach their true potential.

Two Year National Qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, Extended Diploma):

- BTEC Sport & Exercise
- BTEC Engineering
- OCR Business
- OCR Health and Social Care

Applied A & AS Level Qualifications (equivalent of up to 2 A Levels)

- Art & Design
- Information Technology
- Science

National Vocational Qualifications Level 2

- Health & Social Care
- Business
- Engineering



AN ENRICHED CURRICULUM

Although the essence of what is taught is to be found in the classroom, we offer pupils a comprehensive range of extra curricular activities designed to enrich learning.

Opportunities abound to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, either for the sheer joy of playing or in friendly competition. Our school has an enviable record of county and national sporting honours. Our sports provision includes football, cricket, athletics, netball and badminton with a strong emphasis on team games. Individual sports offered outside normal school time include football, athletics, rugby, badminton, netball and basketball.

We have a range of playing surfaces, Sports Hall, Gymnasium and Dance/Drama Studio. Specialist Physical Education staff hold formal coaching qualifications in football, cricket, badminton, swimming, volleyball and netball, with individual qualifications in skiing and trampolining. Our sports hall is a full sized facility capable of offering a greater number of indoor sporting activities to our pupils e.g. short tennis, table tennis, cricket, five-a-side football, badminton, basketball, judo, hurdles, climbing wall and high jump. This facility will also enable increased community use of our provision. In addition the Fitness Centre is available at a much reduced price to members of the Sixth Form.

A wide selection of clubs and societies, many of which are led by teaching staff at lunchtimes as a personal contribution to the well-being of pupils, offer the chance to develop personal interests and to enjoy the full community life of the school.

An example of some of the clubs:

Athletics Club, Basketball Club, Football Club, Netball Club, Rugby Club, Drama Club, Senior and Junior Choirs, Orchestra, Jazz Band, String Group, Guitar Club, Maths Club, Folk Club, Badminton Club, and Table Tennis Club.

A recent and exciting development in the pastoral programme encourages each pupil, under the guidance of a co-ordinating teacher, to take full advantage of the many opportunities available within and outside school to participate in a range of activities designed to enrich the life of the individual. Through a regular process of recording and review, these experiences contribute to the overall development of our pupils.

An imaginative programme of educational visits and exchanges to the French and German speaking countries of Europe is specifically designed to enhance foreign language learning.

Closer to home, each pupil is able to participate in our popular programme of outward bound weekends which offer challenge, excitement and a great deal of pure fun!

Many societies and activities are supported financially by the school and we do encourage parents and friends to support our various fund-raising efforts through which these necessary funds are augmented.

St Thomas More School has a growing reputation for the excellence of its public performances. Our performing arts productions combine the very best of music, drama and dance supported by technical support which is second to none.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The wearing of school uniform is compulsory. Blazers must be purchased from Emblematic the schools chosen supplier, details of which are available from school. You will receive a catalogue and information from school outlining the process for ordering uniform items. Every article must be clearly marked with the owner's name.

YEARS 7 - 11

Girls

- * Blue Kilt or Harrow Grey Trousers
- * Blue revere blouse
- * Royal Blue Blazer with School Badge
- * Navy Blue Jumper
- * Navy Blue, Black or Grey Overcoat
- * White / black socks. Black or flesh coloured tights, not patterned.

Sensible black shoes, no boots

School Hat (optional, no other hat may be worn, available from school)

(Neither the jumper nor the coat must be worn instead of the blazer, only as an addition. They are not compulsory, but no other jumper or coat can be worn)

Kilt must be worn to knee length. Earrings / Jewellery, with the exception of a watch may not be worn in school. Extreme haircuts or colours are not acceptable.

Boys

- * Black Trousers
- * Blue Shirt & Tie
- * Royal Blue Blazer with School Badge
- * Navy Blue Jumper
- * Navy Blue, Black or Grey Overcoat
- * White / Black socks



YEARS 12-13

Girls

- * Black Skirt or Trousers
- * White Fitted Blouse
(can be worn outside of skirt or trousers)
- * Black Blazer with Discrete School Initials
- * Maroon Jumper
- * White / black socks. Black or flesh coloured tights, not patterned.

Boys

- * Black Trousers
- * White Shirt & Tie
- * Black Blazer with Discrete School Initials
- * Maroon Jumper
- * White / Black socks

Navy Blue, Black or Grey Overcoat. Logos (other than discrete, small logos) are not acceptable

(Neither the jumper nor the coat must be worn instead of the blazer only as an addition. They are not compulsory, but no other jumper or coat can be worn)

Sensible black shoes, no boots

Extreme haircuts or colours are not acceptable.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All pupils take part in Physical Education lessons. They are excused only on medical grounds; written confirmation is always required by the school. Pupils must bring a towel to all PE lessons.

Boys

- * White Polo Shirt
- * Navy Sweatshirt
- * Navy Shorts
- * Navy Sport Socks
- * Navy/Royal AKOA Rugby Shirt

Girls

- * White Polo Shirt
- * Navy Sweatshirt
- * Navy Shorts
- * White Sport Socks

STATIONERY, ETC

All pupils must provide their own pens, pencils, eraser and rulers. Parents are urged to provide their children with an English Dictionary, and also provide a French and German dictionary as appropriate. Pupils will require an approved calculator; these are sold in school. For some aspects of art work, craft, design & technology, pupils must have an apron or old shirt to protect clothing. All pupils must have a cookery apron and a basket or biscuit box to carry ingredients and dishes.

The library is open from 8.00 am Monday to Friday and is open until 6.00 pm Monday to Thursday. All pupils have the privilege of using it as a lending library and a study area. There is a stationery shop on site for pupils to purchase any equipment they need.

SCHOOL SESSIONS & HOLIDAYS

On a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the morning session begins at 08.45am and ends at 11.50am. The afternoon sessions begin at 12.50pm and end at 3.35pm. On a Tuesday the morning session ends at 12.00pm and the afternoon session begins at 1.00pm. Parents will be informed when holidays are agreed by the Governors.

JOURNEY TO SCHOOL

Scholars' buses are provided by the Local Education Authority for all pupils travelling from Dunston, Whickham, Sunniside, Chopwell, Rowlands Gill, Gateshead, Greenside, Crawcrook and Ryton. A scholars' bus is also available from Northumberland. Please contact the school for further details.



SCHOOL MEALS

Our catering service is run by our own dedicated staff and chef manager who provide meals in accordance with the National Nutritional Standards for lunches in secondary schools. Meals are cooked on the premises and are paid for by pupils on a daily basis using Parent Pay. We provide breakfast from 8.30 am. Those pupils who wish to bring a packed lunch may do so.

In cases of financial hardship, the Local Authority will assist parents by providing free school meals. Application forms are available from the Welfare Benefits Section of Gateshead Council.

ABSENCE

Any pupil who is absent from school, even for half a day, should bring a letter from his or her parents.

Number of pupils of compulsory school age on roll for at least one session	1549
Percentage of authorised absences	3.2%
Percentage of unauthorised absences	0.4%

EXTENDED SCHOOLS

Government research has shown increasingly strong evidence for the positive impact of extended services on children's motivation, behaviour and engagement with learning. At St Thomas More school we will deliver extended school services in a range of ways to satisfy what our parents have requested after detailed consultation.

The school is open to pupils daily from 7.30 am. Breakfast can be bought in the dining room from 8.00 am. From 3.15 pm to 5.00 pm, (Monday to Thursday), a free study support club is available in the library. The sessions are supervised by experienced teaching staff. From 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm (Monday to Thursday) the library will remain open supervised by the Assistant Librarian. On Fridays the library is open from 7.30am and closes at approximately 3.35pm.

There are a huge range of activities available to pupils after the school day ends; sports clubs, drama, choirs and music. We are also using an external provider to deliver sessions which are not part of our school curriculum. For these there is a small charge.

To support our parents there are also a number of evening classes delivered by staff where parents will be given the opportunity to learn how to help their children in a range of subjects.



EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENTS

It is the policy of the School that all pupils are regarded as candidates for Key Stage 4 GCSE or equivalent examinations. Final decisions on examination entry at Key Stage Four and Sixth Form are made on the recommendation of the Head of Department in any given subject.

KS3

In 2014 the Department for Education stated that, 'assessment levels have now been removed and will not be replaced'. In place of National Curriculum Levels schools now have the freedom to develop their own means of assessing pupils' progress towards end of key stage expectations.

In light of these recommendations we have reviewed our assessment procedures across Key Stage 3 and developed Progress Ladders for each subject area. These Progress Ladders are based on the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum, GCSE specification and our local curriculum design. Furthermore through links with our primary feeder schools we have ensured that the criteria and curriculum content is fully joined up between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

Progress Ladders are an integral part of teaching across Key Stage 3 and are used at the end of each module to enter a summative level for pupils. Our main aim when using Progress Ladders is to help pupils understand where they are, where they want to be and what they need to do to get there.

As a strategy to monitor progress and differentiate materials for pupils we ask staff to breakdown their assessment by using an a, b or c. This indicates the level of differentiation or scaffolding required to enable a pupil to work within the criteria of the given level. We break this down in the following way:

- A - the pupil is working with autonomy
- B - the pupil requires occasional scaffolding to access the material
- C - the pupil requires significant scaffolding to access the material

As scaffolding is removed the sub-level awarded changes. When the class moves to a new topic, especially if it is one that is unfamiliar to the pupils, then it would not be unexpected for pupils who were autonomous in a level to require some scaffolding to get started, however it would be expected that pupils would return to autonomy very quickly.

There is an intrinsic link between departmental Progress Ladders and their curriculum planning ensuring that pupils are taught the precise skills they need to make rapid and sustained progress.

STM10

As a school we truly believe in the power of a growth mindset. As a strategy to promote this and work with pupils we have developed the STM10. We believe these are the ten key attributes pupils need in order to make progress. These ten attributes link directly to our school values and ethos and are something that all pupils become aware of throughout their time at St Thomas More.

KS4

Key Stage 4 builds on the progress pupils have made in Key Stage 3. Pupils are assessed using the new GCSE grading systems (1-9) throughout KS4. This is reported to parents together with grades for work ethic and behaviour every ten weeks. Parents can access this information through My Child at School.

Throughout Key Stage 4 parents are invited in to school for various information evenings and workshops to support pupils in their learning.

YEARS 12 & 13

During Years Twelve and Thirteen, pupils are presented for an extensive range of examinations under arrangements made with Examination Boards.

The following pages outline the exam results for the academic year 2015 - 2016

GCSE Examinations (KS4)
A & AS LEVEL GCE

EXAMINATION RESULTS JULY 2016

Once again, the school had a successful year in public examinations.

Year 11 pupils gained excellent results : 82% of the pupils achieved 5 or more passes at grades A* to C at GCSE or equivalent qualifications. 80% of the pupils achieved grade C or better in English, Mathematics and three other qualifications.

This is the government's headline measure for schools. Our Year 13 also performed excellently with over half of the grades at A2 being A* to B with the school's fourth best ever points per entry in all qualifications score.

Following the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (English, Mathematics, two Science, a Humanity, a Language), 41% of all our pupils achieved this qualification in 2016. Pupils who chose to follow Applied and Diploma routes have also achieved magnificently.

In Year 13 there were 146 candidates who completed a wide range of qualifications. Results were excellent with most of the pupils moving on to a higher education establishment of their choice with the majority going to their first choice.

Comparing against national expectations shows that pupils have left the school achieving higher grades than their levels of attainment on entry would suggest.

GOVERNORS' POLICY ON BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS

The Governors at St Thomas More School wish to maintain the highest standards of civilised behaviour in the school. In achieving this end the Governors seek the support of parents and carers for the Head Teacher and Staff.

The Governors wish all parents and guardians to know that they expect the Head Teacher and staff to maintain a caring atmosphere in the school where the pupils can feel happy and secure and work to the best of their ability. The Governors believe that this atmosphere presently exists in the school, which is free from the misbehaviour mentioned below.

The Governors believe that the school is blessed with caring parents and guardians and well-behaved, well maintained pupils. The school policy is to encourage this positively by encouragement, praise and example.

The Governors believe that, in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, good behaviour in all aspects of school life is essential. It seeks to create a caring and learning environment by:

- Promoting excellent behaviour and discipline
- Promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, respect for authority with relationships based on mutual respect
- Encouraging consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- Providing a safe environment free from disruption, violence and bullying
- Supporting the Head Teacher and Staff when faced with challenging behaviour
- Encouraging a positive relationship with parents and carers to ensure that they play their part in the implementation of the school's policy and procedures

However, the Governors wish to emphasise to all parents and pupils that failure to conform to the high standards, expected of all pupils, may result in permanent exclusion by the Head Teacher. For example, if a pupil:

- Swears intentionally at a member of staff;
- Absolutely refuses to conform to reasonable requests by a member of staff;
- Makes a malicious allegation against a member of staff;
- Makes an unprovoked physical assault on another member of the school;
- Takes up an inordinate amount of staff time dealing with his or her misbehaviour;
- Misbehaves in any way while on the Head Teacher's report;
- Is involved in the bullying of another pupil;
- Is involved with illegal, non-prescribed drugs, or those substances referred to as "legal highs", during the school day. This includes being in possession, supplying or using drugs;
- Brings an offensive weapon to school;
- Is in possession of pornographic material or is involved in inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- Uses social networking media inappropriately with respect to the school or its members;
- Persistent truancy.

The list above provides examples for which permanent exclusion may be deemed appropriate, however it is not possible to foresee all possibilities and permanent exclusion may result from any similar serious misdemeanour. It is our wish that parents understand the importance we place on high behavioural standards and support us in our determination to maintain them.

CURRICULUM COMPLAINTS

Every school has to provide parents with the opportunity to raise concerns about curriculum related matters. The school has adopted the following arrangements to enable parents to exercise this right:

STAGE 1 (INFORMAL)

Concern expressed by parents can be discussed with those directly involved, i.e. Teacher/Head Teacher.

STAGE 1 (FORMAL)

Written letter to the Head Teacher.

STAGE 2 (FORMAL)

If the matter is not fully resolved, it may be referred to the Governing Body for their consideration.

You may contact the Governing Body through the Correspondent, name and address available from the Head Teacher. This complaint must now be put formally in writing stating:

- (i) The nature of the complaint;
- (ii) The name of the pupil involved;
- (iii) The class or group to which the pupil belongs.

STAGE 3 (FORMAL)

If you are still not satisfied, the matter will be referred to the LEA designated officer (except in the case of Religious Education) who will refer the matter finally to the panel of LEA members. The Head Teacher will give you details on how to do this.

STAGE 4 (FORMAL)

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, the complaint may be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

Under the Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) Regulations, 1989, the Head Teacher is required to make available information relating to the curriculum provision of the school. Relevant documents may be seen and acquired at the school on request to the Head Teacher.

GOVERNORS' CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, trips and residential experiences can make towards the pupils' education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional activities.

CHARGES

The Governing Body RESERVES THE RIGHT to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

A. EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

1. Board and Lodgings

The Board and Lodgings elements of residential activities deemed to take place within school hours.

2. Individual Instrumental Tuition

The cost to the pupil for providing individual instrumental tuition.

3. Charging in Kind

The Governing Body may charge for ingredients and materials for some subjects, or require them to be provided, if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

4. Examination Fees

The Governing Body may make a charge for the cost of entering the pupil for examination where the pupil has not been prepared for the prescribed examination by the school, as they may for entries to non-prescribed examinations whether or not prepared by the school.

If the pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the school has paid (or is liable to pay) any fee, then the Governing Body may recover the fee from the parent.

B. EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

1. Board and Lodgings

The Board and Lodging elements of activities that are provided:

- a) To fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination,
- b) Specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum, or
- c) Specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

B. EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS (CONT)

2.Optional Extras

The full cost of each pupil for activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours.

C. GENERAL

1.Amendments

The Governing Body may from time to time amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

2.Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for pupils.

REMISSIONS

1.Income Support and Family Credit

Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit, the Governing Body will remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that is organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place during school hours, or where it is provided to fulfil the requirements of a prescribed public examination, the National Curriculum or statutory duties relating to religious education.

2.Family Hardship

Where there are cases of family hardship which make it difficult for parents to provide specialist items of uniform and for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made, the Governing Body may remit all or part of this charge at the discretion of the Head Teacher.



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