



St Thomas More | Prospectus



Enjoying More Success

A young man with short dark hair, wearing a red V-neck sweater over a white collared shirt, is captured in profile, running outdoors. He has a focused expression and his mouth is slightly open. The background shows a clear blue sky and a blurred residential building with a chimney.

“ You have led the school well and continued to ensure that staff are true to the core values of the school.”

Ofsted March 2017

Dear Parent

I am delighted to welcome you to St Thomas More Catholic School, Buxton.

We like to think that St Thomas More Catholic School is a special place where we all work together as a community to live out our Mission for the benefit of our children.

Our record on academic achievements and pastoral care are excellent. This was reflected in our 2013 Ofsted inspection when the inspectors judged the behaviour of our pupils to be OUTSTANDING and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education to also be OUTSTANDING. Ofsted's recent visit in March 2017 confirmed that the school continues to be a good school.

“The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.” (Ofsted Section 8 inspection, March 2017)

We are very proud of our academic achievements over the years and we will continue to strive to make them even better, but we believe that school is more than just about exam success. 3rd place in the National Basketball Final; Derbyshire Basketball Champions; High Peak Football Champions are tremendous achievements, but being the smallest high school out of the 45 schools in Derbyshire makes this an even greater accomplishment. Champions in the Derbyshire Literature Competition 3 years out of 4 and 3rd place national champions, I believe is quite impressive. The art work in the school is second to none and the quality of the music is superb.

We are a Catholic School in the true, universal and all-encompassing sense of the word. With around 60% of pupils being of the Catholic faith, we are open to all pupils who are supportive of our faith and who wish to work under our warm, friendly and caring environment; whether Christian, of another faith or of no faith.

If you choose to join the St Thomas More community, you will be joining a school which strives for excellence through our strong Catholic faith, our commitment to high standards of achievement, our high expectations of behaviour and respect for all, and a belief in developing a love of learning and healthy living.

Further information may be found by visiting our website at

www.st-thomasmore.derbyshire.sch.uk

Thank you for your interest in our school

Yours faithfully

B Hickey

Headteacher



Our Prayer

God Our Father,

Bless our school community as we gather together.

Help us to live our lives to the best of our abilities.

To be open to those who love us,

To respond to those who need us,

To forgive those who hurt us

And to appreciate the world in which we live.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Amen

A close-up, profile view of a young man with dark hair and black-rimmed glasses. He is smiling slightly and looking down at a notebook. A blue pen is visible in his hand, positioned over the notebook. The background is blurred, showing another person in a school uniform sitting at a desk. The overall scene is brightly lit, likely in a classroom.

Being More Committed

“ In accordance with the school aims, they indeed have a ‘strong sense of pride and belonging’ for the school community. Teachers know individual pupils very well and provide them with good support academically and emotionally.”

Ofsted March 2017

Mission Statement

St Thomas More is first and foremost a Catholic School – in faith and in our all-embracing philosophy based on the values of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves as a Catholic community to the development of the whole person and the pursuit of excellence by:

- 1 Nurturing and developing the **Catholic** faith within our community, with a love of God and neighbour and through a belief that all are unique and equal in the eyes of God
- 2 Having **expectations** of the highest possible standards in all things for all pupils, resulting in the highest possible academic success and personal achievement
- 3 Ensuring **high standards of behaviour**, through a culture of respect for oneself, for the school and for others: embracing the fact that we are all members of a wider multi-cultural and multi-faith community, whilst holding a strong sense of pride and belonging for our own school community
- 4 Fostering a **love and joy of learning** and healthy living, to produce happy, healthy, successful and responsible global citizens of the future.

British Values

Democracy

- 1 An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process.

The rule of law

- 2 An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.

Individual liberty

- 3 Freedom, within the law, to be the person you want to be.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- 4 An acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.

Admission

Applications must be made on the Common Application Form provided by your **home** Local Authority. Applications must be made to your **home** Local Authority by the closing date set by your **home** Local Authority.

In addition **all applicants wishing to apply for a place under a faith criterion (oversubscription criteria 1-6)** should complete the Supplementary Information Form. This form can be downloaded from the Local Authority website within which the school is located and is also available from the school and its website. The completed form, together with any required evidence, (see notes 3-8), should be returned to the school by the same closing date set by your home Local Authority for the return of the Common Application Form.

If you do not provide the additional required evidence and do not return it by the closing date, your child will be ranked in a lower admissions category and this may affect your child's chances of being offered a place.

Where schools have more applications than places available, Governors will draw up a ranked list based on the criteria listed below and will allocate places accordingly.

Pupils with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school will be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available.

1. Catholic children who are 'looked after' or who were 'previously looked after'.

2. Catholic children.
3. Other children who are 'looked after' or who were 'previously looked after'.
4. Catechumens, (Someone preparing to be received into the Catholic Church) Candidates and members of Eastern Christian Churches.
5. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion.
6. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader.
7. Any other Children

First priority within each criteria will be given to applications from children who attend one of the partner primary schools.

Second priority within each criteria will be given to applications from children who will have siblings attending the school at the proposed time of admission.

In the event of oversubscription within any criterion allocation of places will be decided on distance measurements supplied by the Local Authority.

Appeals

If a child is not offered a place, parents/ carers have a statutory right to appeal. This should be done by writing to the school setting out your grounds for appeal no later than twenty school days after the decision letter has been received. The appeal will be arranged on behalf of the governors by the Catholic Schools Appeals Service and will be heard by an independent panel. The decision of the panel will be binding on the school.

Further information is available on the school website under FAQ.

Making More Progress

A young girl with freckles and glasses is shown in profile, playing a violin. She is wearing a white shirt and a red tie. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green hills and a cloudy sky. The violin is a dark wood color, and the bow is held across the strings.

“ This school manages to provide an environment in which my daughter is safe, supported emotionally and challenged academically.”

Ofsted March 2017

Curriculum

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 will study the following subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Religious Education
- Art
- Computing
- Drama
- Modern Languages
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Technology
- Personal, Social and Health Education

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

Pupils in years 10 and 11 will study the following subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science (either Physics, Chemistry and Biology or Dual Award Science)
- Religious Education
- Physical Education
- Personal and Citizenship Education/
Work Related Learning

GCSE choices will be made from the following list:

- Art and Design
- Computing
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Spanish
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Technology

Sex and Relationships Education is taught through Personal, Social and Health Education, Personal and Citizenship Education, Science and Religious Education and is seen within the context of family life and the wider perspective of religious and moral education. As well as learning about the physical aspects of their sexuality, all pupils, according to their age and maturity, are helped to consider the consequences of decisions relating to matters such as personal relationships, love, marriage, contraception and abortion. This teaching is always within the framework of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

Pupils' progress is tracked and parents are kept informed through the pupils' exercise books, through the planner, via text messages from school and through termly reports (1 full report and 2 interim reports each year). Intervention takes place as appropriate at either subject level or through our pastoral system across the curriculum. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in this process.



A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a white collared shirt and a maroon sweater, is sitting at a wooden desk in a library. He is leaning forward, focused on writing in a notebook with a silver pen. The desk is cluttered with papers and a purple folder. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books and binders. A stack of papers is visible on a shelf to the left, and a book titled 'DICTIONARY' is on a shelf to the right. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting a window to the left.

Earning More Respect

“ You and the leadership team have successfully ensured that, since 2013, the most able achieve the high grades expected of them.”

Ofsted March 2017

Partnership with home

We try to live out our mission through the pursuit of excellence and the development of the whole person by nurturing the Catholic faith, having high expectations for academic success and personal achievement, having high standards of behaviour and fostering a love of learning and healthy living. This can only be achieved through the close partnership between home and school.

We expect all parents and pupils to support and respect our standards and expectations. An application for a place at our school is based on the acceptance of the importance of the Catholic faith to the life of the school and all pupils are expected to play a full part in the spiritual and religious life of the school. We also expect parents to support their child's education by attending parents' evenings.

Praise is given for good work, effort, honesty, helpfulness, success and courage. The rewards system involves a series of "credits" awarded by each subject area. In each pupil's planner, there are pages for the collection of credits. Certificates and Vouchers are awarded based on the number of credits gained by a pupil. Credits are awarded as a tangible sign of success in any field. Rewards will be given for good work and behaviour. An end of term draw is also carried out to reward effort, achievement, participation and attendance.

Sanctions will be used for less than satisfactory behaviour, for underachievement in work/homework and for issues with uniform.

The sanctions pathway uses a system of short and long detentions. Students may be detained for 10 minutes without notice, but for a longer detention 24 hours notice is given.

A copy of the school rules and standards and expectations will be sent with each letter offering a child a place.





Showing More Care

“Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. They are confident that adults in the school will attend to their concerns or worries.”

Ofsted March 2017

Special Educational Needs

We do not discriminate against pupils who have a disability or special need.

Our priority is to meet the needs of all pupils including those pupils with any kind of Education Health Care Plan (EHC); to identify all pupils with any kind of learning need and to provide teaching and resources to address those needs.

Pupils having difficulties are identified by their teachers, their parents or themselves. When it becomes clear that the pupil is having difficulties, the Learning Support Department assesses them to determine where help is needed.

Pupils may be supported within their mainstream lessons or they can be withdrawn for specific skill work. Such skills may include reading accuracy and comprehension, spelling, writing, number work or social skills.

We aim to overcome any and all barriers to learning.

Homework

We see homework as an essential component of the school's programme and we do expect parents to support us in our efforts by ensuring that homework is done under the best conditions possible - without distractions. A suitable bag is essential to carry books and equipment to and from school safely and securely.

A homework timetable is sent home at the beginning of each year and pupils are expected to note their homework in their School Planners. Parents should check that homework is completed and sign the planner at the end of every week.



Complaints

If you are concerned about your child's progress or behaviour in school, please do not hesitate to let us know. Concerns or complaints about your child may be addressed to the subject teacher, Head of Department or Form Tutor. In more serious cases, the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher should be contacted.

Data protection

Basic information about pupils is held on the computer to assist with the efficient organisation of the school and the children's educational needs. Security measures are taken to ensure that the information is kept confidential and is only available to authorised staff. It may be used for statistical purposes but this will not enable any individual to be identified.

The school conforms to the Data Protection Act and has registered with the Data Protection Registrar details of the persons to whom it may wish to disclose information.

Safeguarding children

The school will take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its pupils. In cases where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff will have no alternative but to follow County Child Protection Procedures and inform Social Services of their concern.

Charging Policy

Our charging policy is in accordance with the Education Reform Act. Whenever payment is required for curriculum trips and materials, it will be stated that the payments are voluntary contributions. Please speak to the Headteacher in cases of hardship.



Gaining More Rewards

*“The proportion of pupils achieving As and A*s across a range of subjects has consistently been higher than the national average.”*

Ofsted March 2017

Pastoral

Each year group in the school is divided into three houses - Bede, Columba and Francis of Assisi. Each new entrant to the school is placed in a House, and continues to be a member of that House as he/she progresses through the school.

Each group is under the care of a Form Teacher who is the first point of contact for parents and to whom parental notes explaining absence should be sent.

At the start of the school year, every pupil is given a school planner which contains information about the daily routine of the school as well as being a homework diary. One of the aims of the planner is to facilitate communication between home and school and there is a section which can be completed by parents and teachers. Parents should sign their child's planner at the end of every week and should discuss homework and any teacher comments with their child.

In addition to the teaching staff, the local parish priests visit the school and are involved in acts of worship in school. They are available for consultation and guidance on request.

As stated in our School Mission Statement, we see all learners and potential learners, their parents and carers, as of equal value: whether or not they are disabled; whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status; whatever their gender and gender identity; whatever their sexual identity. We recognise and respect difference. We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.



We recognise that children at risk or in care may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. The school takes its role very seriously and aims to offer the stability and security that may be missing from other parts of their lives.

We believe that good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the educational and social skills which will equip them for life. It is the duty of parents, carers and teachers to encourage and ensure maximum attendance at school. Parents/carers should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Parents are asked to take their annual holiday during the school holidays.

Our Mission Statement states that we have "expectations of the highest possible standards in all things for all pupils..." We believe that the wearing of our school uniform is important in reflecting the high standards and expectations we have in school. We expect pupils to be proud of our school and to wear their uniform with pride.

Disadvantaged Pupils

The school works hard to ensure that pupils in receipt of 'pupil premium' are not disadvantaged by attendance, through opportunities and in their outcomes.



Building More Confidence

“ All the disadvantaged pupils who studied alternative, work-related courses in key stage 4 last year went on to pursue meaningful post-16 studies and work.”

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Learning outside the classroom

We believe in making learning as relevant and as enjoyable as we possibly can. We do this by creating occasions when we can take learning out of the classroom. Our PE department has gone from strength to strength since the opening of our new Sports Hall in November 2008. The music department is very strong with an excellent peripatetic team giving lessons in guitar, keyboard, woodwind, strings, drums and voice. The Jazz Band and Choir have won many accolades in the many competitions and events they have been involved with. They have travelled to Austria, Spain and Italy to perform. Other opportunities to learn outside the classroom include trips to France and Iceland, skiing in Italy. The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Theatre Trips and reviews, skills for life trips, residential retreats, numerous science events and many other curriculum led activities. For more on this, please visit our website at www.st-thomasmore.derbyshire.sch.uk

Pupil Destinations

A career programme is taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the school has our independent careers adviser who visits the school regularly.

We have close links with Buxton and Leek College and local school sixth forms but we are a partner school for Aquinas College in Stockport. This means that all our pupils are guaranteed a place in this popular and oversubscribed college if they apply before the October closing date in Year 11 subject to appropriate course entry qualifications.





How to scan your QR code with your mobile

Download the QR reader App to your mobile to view videos, websites and further information.

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– Download reader from the App Store.

Blackberry users

– Download mobiletag software from Blackberry App World.

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– Search online for your reader.

You will need to hold your phone steady, 15cm away from the QR code to be able to scan it.

A window will pop up showing you the content of the QR code, (Video, URL, further information etc...)



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