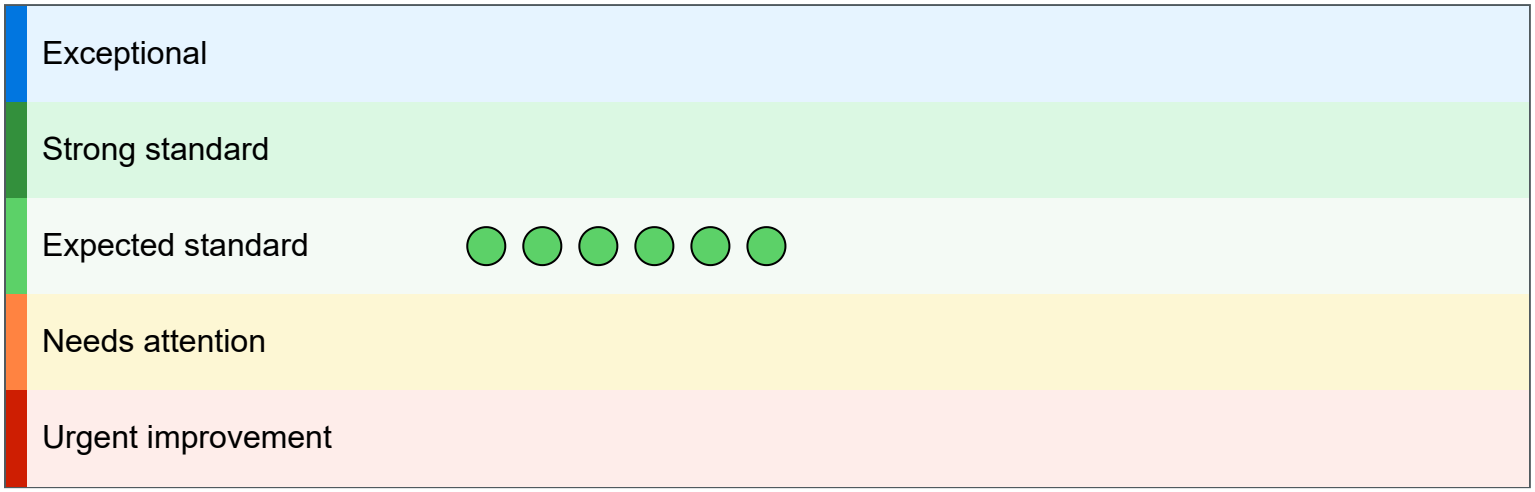
St Thomas More RC College

Address: Town Lane, Denton, Manchester, M34 6AF

Unique reference number (URN): 106271

Inspection report: 22 September 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils' outcomes in national examinations are in line with national figures. Although disadvantaged pupils do not match the attainment of their non-disadvantaged peers, the gap is reducing. This is because leaders' targeted work is beginning to help these pupils to overcome barriers to their learning.

Pupils typically acquire the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those with English as an additional language, make appropriate progress from their starting points. This is because they receive appropriate support which is focused on meeting their needs.

Pupils who access the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, and those on part-time timetables, benefit from a bespoke curriculum. This enables them to make purposeful progress and reintegrate into mainstream classes when they are ready.

By the end of Year 11, most pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. This is because they secure the qualifications they need for future success. Pupils have growing confidence in their ability to progress onto their chosen career pathways.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders take a strategic and systematic approach to attendance. They analyse patterns closely and act early when concerns arise. Attendance is above national averages, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders use the specially resourced provision and alternative provision effectively for pupils with more complex challenges. This tailored support helps these pupils to re-establish routines and attend school regularly. Leaders ensure that any use of part-time timetables is routinely reviewed so that these pupils return to full-time education as soon as possible. Where persistent absence remains high for a small number of pupils, leaders' actions are increasingly effective in securing improvement.

Pupils behave well and understand the school's high expectations. They generally conduct themselves positively in lessons and during social times. Pupils listen attentively and mostly complete work with care. Typically, they show positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders offer effective support for pupils who find the school's behaviour expectations challenging, including pupils with additional needs. This ensures that any adjustments help pupils to improve their behaviour. These comprehensive approaches contribute to a largely settled and purposeful climate for learning.

Pupils treat others with respect and kindness. Bullying is not tolerated. Leaders act quickly when any unkind or discriminatory behaviour occurs. This ensures that pupils feel safe.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders provide clear strategic direction for curriculum and teaching. They ensure that pupils study a broad and ambitious range of subjects. Key knowledge is identified and ordered effectively so that pupils' learning builds logically over time.

Teachers select tasks that build on what pupils already know. Typically, they check pupils' understanding and use this information to adjust the curriculum or their teaching. This allows pupils to consolidate their prior learning and means that any misconceptions are addressed quickly.

Leaders carefully identify pupils who need additional support with their reading, writing or mathematics. Targeted teaching typically helps these pupils to establish the foundations that they need to access the wider curriculum with confidence. Leaders' improvement work is focusing on strengthening the consistency with which pupils' literary skills are developed across subjects.

Most staff are confident in adapting learning activities so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND), access the curriculum consistently well. Leaders ensure that pupils who use the specially resourced provision benefit from a curriculum which is adapted to meet their needs. This supports pupils to reintegrate into lessons when appropriate.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders identify pupils' additional needs promptly. This allows them to have a clear understanding about the barriers that affect pupils' learning and wellbeing. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders continually gather and review information about pupils' needs from a wide range of sources. There is a rigorous transition process for pupils with SEND who access the school's specially resourced provision. This includes discussions with relevant external professionals. Leaders generally make effective use of the information that they gather to shape support for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care.

Staff receive clear guidance on how to adapt their teaching and most use this effectively. This allows pupils to access the curriculum well. Leaders have strengthened provision for a small number of pupils with more complex needs through the specially resourced provision or use of alternative provision. This helps pupils to re-engage with school life.

Leaders monitor the impact of additional funding and adjust their approaches based on evidence. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning, attendance and participation in enrichment activities. Leaders use alternative provision sparingly and check that placements are safe and aligned to pupils' needs.

Leaders' actions show that they have a clear commitment to meeting pupils' needs and reducing barriers for all pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding about the school's strengths and the areas that require further refinement. Their priorities are shaped by regular internal reviews and a focus on reducing barriers to achievement and attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Strategic decisions are made in pupils' best interests and leaders act promptly when provision needs strengthening. However, leaders do not always monitor the impact of their improvement work thoroughly to ensure that targeted support leads to the desired outcomes for pupils.

Governors are well informed about the quality of provision in the school. They provide appropriate challenge and ensure that leaders' work is aligned closely to the school's priorities. Leaders engage constructively with external partners, including the local authority, virtual school and the diocese. This helps leaders to validate and refine their improvement work.

Staff speak positively about the school's leadership and feel well supported. Leaders take staff workload and wellbeing seriously. For instance, they adapt systems to reduce administrative burdens so that staff can focus on high-quality teaching. Most staff benefit from purposeful professional development. This helps to strengthen their subject expertise and classroom practice.

Parents and carers value the school's ethos and the individual care that is shown to pupils. Community engagement is a notable strength. For instance, leaders foster positive partnerships with local charities to help enrich pupils' experiences and reinforce the school's values.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The programme to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing is comprehensive. Leaders have strengthened the taught programme so that it supports pupils' social development and cultural awareness. Charity work, linked to the school's mission and faith in action award, strengthens pupils' social awareness and builds a sense of purpose.

The personal, social, health and economics education curriculum is designed to develop pupils' knowledge so that they understand how to live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. For instance, pupils develop an age appropriate understanding about relationships, consent, health and online and offline risks. They develop a suitable understanding about how to keep safe in water and near canals. Pupils benefit from structured form time discussions where they can express their views and listen respectfully to others. They develop a secure understanding about the fundamental British values and can explain how these shape life in modern Britain.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to explore future career pathways. Careers education is well structured and pupils in Year 10 speak positively about their work experience. Older pupils are well informed about next steps at 16, including further study, apprenticeships and employment. This guidance helps pupils to make considered decisions and prepares them effectively for transition. Leaders ensure that pupils who face additional barriers, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive support so that they can access the full programme.

Leaders provide a wide enrichment offer that helps pupils to develop new interests and confidence. Many pupils enjoy taking part in clubs such as drama, performing arts, badminton and homework club. Trips, including residentials and visits to London, theatres and battlefields, broaden pupils' experiences about the world. Leaders generally track participation of opportunities so that they can support pupils who face barriers, including financial ones, to take part. At times, this work is not as carefully tailored as it could be for different pupil groups.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils value the caring and supportive school community. Most pupils have confidence that staff deal with issues promptly and this helps them to feel safe. Pupils forge admirable relationships with their peers and staff. They show mutual respect and understanding to each other. This means that most pupils benefit from a harmonious learning environment.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities that help them to build their confidence. They enjoy leading assemblies and fundraising activities through the 'gift club' and 'steward club'. Pupils also relish the wide array of enrichment clubs and visits. For example, they enjoy visiting museums and residential trips. This helps pupils to broaden their knowledge of the wider world.

Pupils benefit from a notably calm school atmosphere. Most understand the raised expectations that staff have for their behaviour. Pupils are generally motivated and keen to do well. Those with additional barriers to their learning and behaviour are supported well. Pupils attend school regularly. This reflects their mature awareness about its importance.

Most pupils achieve well in lessons and national examinations. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils' work is generally of high quality. This reflects their pride and desire to try their best. Pupils, including those who use the specially resourced provision, access the curriculum with increasing confidence. This is because they receive targeted support to help to reduce any barriers to their learning. Pupils receive effective support and guidance which helps to prepare for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that staff are confident in further developing pupils' language, vocabulary, reading and writing, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed.
- Leaders should ensure that the personal development programme is more precisely and consistently tailored to pupils' individual needs and aspirations, particularly for pupils with additional needs and barriers to learning, so that every pupil can participate fully and benefit extensively.
- Leaders should further refine how they monitor the impact of their improvement work so that standards continue to rise rapidly and consistently across all areas of school.

About this inspection

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

This inspection took place from 22 September to 23 September 2026.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This caters for 4 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with educational health care (EHC) plans.

The school uses three registered alternative provisions and two unregistered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.

The school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by July 2027.

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Louise Enderby.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, school leaders, school governors, the director of education from the diocese, virtual school head and representatives from alternative providers, during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Headteacher: Huw Brophy

Lead inspector:
Amina Modan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Katy Robinson, Ofsted Inspector
Helen Friend, His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Smith, Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Burnside, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

797
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,063

School capacity

780
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

28.86%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

7.28%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.91%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	42.0%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57.6%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	52.6%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	44.0	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49.3	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.43	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.28	-0.03	Above
2021/22 (final)	-0.12	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	18.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.6%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	32.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.5	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	46.9	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.04	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.25	-0.57	Above
2021/22 (final)	-0.99	-0.55	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	18.2%	53.1%	-35.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	44.0%	53.1%	-9.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	51.6%	52.4%	-0.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	32.6	50.4	-17.8

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	41.5	50.0	-8.5
2022/23 (final)	46.9	50.3	-3.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.04	0.16	-0.13
2022/23 (final)	0.25	0.17	0.08
2021/22 (final)	-0.99	0.15	-1.14

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.5%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	17.7%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	19.0%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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