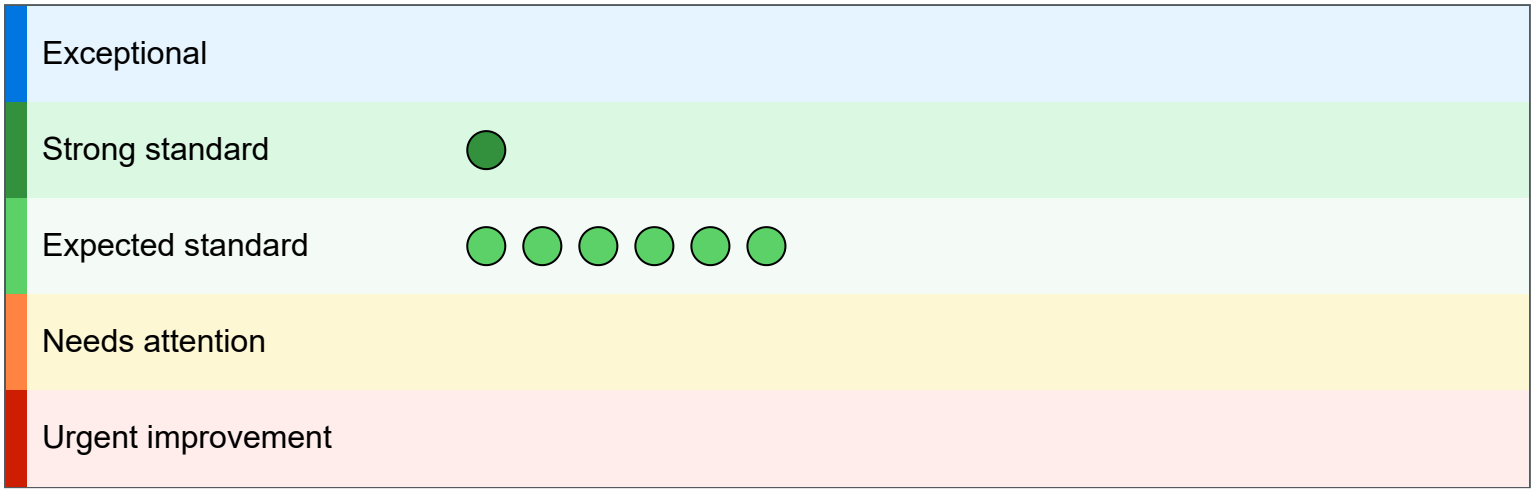
St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Address: Greenway, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3LF

Unique reference number (URN): 149742

Inspection report: 23 June 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.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders place high importance on attendance. They track attendance closely. They act quickly when they spot concerns. Leaders identify pupils at risk of frequent absence early, so they can offer help without delay. Staff promote regular attendance and challenge absence where needed. This approach leads to high attendance across the school. Overall attendance is above national figures. Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above national levels. Persistent absence remains below national figures. Sometimes, pupils miss school for valid reasons, such as illness. Staff maintain regular contact with families and support pupils when they return. This helps pupils feel settled and attend regularly over time.

Behaviour across the school is calm, respectful and purposeful. Pupils follow routines and settle quickly to learning. They show consistently positive attitudes and sustain effort in lessons. Older pupils model thoughtful and responsible behaviour and support younger pupils, including during playtime. This builds a strong culture of care and responsibility. Pupils rightly say behaviour is highly positive and that staff deal with concerns quickly. Bullying and unkind behaviour are very rare. When they occur, staff take swift and effective action. Leaders anticipate when pupils may need more help to manage their feelings, emotions and behaviour. They provide effective support in these cases. Leaders track behaviour closely and respond quickly to patterns. This ensures that high standards of behaviour are sustained.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils achieve well. Typically, they develop secure knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' books show improvements in handwriting. They also show that pupils use more complex vocabulary and produce more developed writing. In reading, most pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. This helps them understand texts. In discussions, pupils explain what they know using appropriate subject-specific vocabulary. This includes subjects such as science and personal, social and health education. This shows that pupils use their knowledge across different subjects.

Some pupils produce work of a high standard. This is seen in presentation, sentence structure and spelling. This includes accuracy in mathematics. Many pupils apply their calculation skills confidently when solving problems.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other additional needs, make steady progress. Typically, pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for their next stage of education. This is reflected by pupils' achievement in national tests and assessments.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have constructed a well-structured curriculum across subjects and year groups. In each subject they have identified what knowledge pupils should learn and when. Pupils revisit and build on earlier learning. In English and mathematics, whole-school approaches ensure learning builds in a clear order. Teachers follow agreed sequences, so that pupils develop knowledge step by step and avoid gaps in learning.

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They use this knowledge to decide how to use staff and resources. Consistent approaches to teaching are becoming embedded across the school. Leaders act quickly when they identify areas for improvement. This strengthens teaching. It also helps pupils to learn the planned curriculum well. Leaders provide effective training and guidance. This enables teachers to teach subjects well. Teachers give clear explanations and model learning, so pupils understand new ideas.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn to read through a structured phonics programme. Teachers ensure pupils use this knowledge in reading and writing tasks. Teachers use questions and discussion to check understanding. This helps them identify what pupils know and adjust teaching when needed. This helps pupils' knowledge to grow steadily.

Teachers usually use their knowledge of pupils' starting points and needs effectively to support pupils' learning. This helps pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders make early years a priority. They give children a happy and positive start to school. Leaders know what is working well and what needs to improve. They make changes when needed. They have designed a curriculum that reflects children's needs.

Staff teach the curriculum well. They adapt activities to children's starting points and interests. They support children to develop language skills and confidence. For example, children talk about their ideas and engage in activities that build communication skills. In art, children create drawings that show progress from early mark-making to more detailed images. This shows how children build skills and knowledge over time.

Staff get children ready for Year 1. They teach daily routines and show children how to manage things like coats and clothing. They also help children develop physical skills. Leaders give clear information to Year 1 staff so learning continues without gaps.

Children develop well from their starting points. Over time, they become more confident and get on well with others. They develop early reading and writing skills. Additionally, they use their phonics knowledge to read and write more accurately. Children stay calm and follow routines. They feel safe and enjoy playing. Leaders make sure all children, including those with extra needs, can join in fully. Typically, most children are ready for the next stage.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders identify pupils' additional needs quickly. These include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who face other challenges. Leaders work with parents and carers and, where needed, they involve external services to build an accurate picture of each pupil. This, alongside regular communication with families, helps the school provide the right support at the right time.

Leaders expect all pupils to achieve well. For those pupils who need this, staff create support plans. These spell out the strategies and actions that will support each pupil. Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise to use these strategies. However, sometimes these strategies do not impact as positively as they could. As a result, some pupils do not apply their learning as successfully as leaders intend.

Leaders plan transitions carefully, including moves to secondary school, so any extra support a pupil has continues without disruption. This means pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. They provide academic support and support for pupils' wellbeing. Leaders also ensure pupils attend enrichment activities. These activities build skills and widen pupils' experiences. This helps pupils apply what they learn in class with confidence. Additionally, these pupils feel included.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

New leaders have quickly improved the curriculum and teaching. These changes have already raised pupils' achievement. For example, pupils now produce higher-quality work across subjects. Leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They set clear next steps. They focus on what matters most for pupils. Changes mean that pupils now behave better.

Leaders set a clear vision for the school. Staff follow this vision with support from the trust and governors. All staff share responsibility for improvement, which leads to steady progress. Leaders review and improve the curriculum and teaching. They replace programmes when needed. Leaders train subject leaders effectively. They provide coaching in lessons. This strengthens teaching, which impacts positively on pupils' achievement.

Governors and trustees carry out their roles effectively. They gather useful information about the school. The trust provides additional oversight.
They gather the right information. The trust provides additional oversight. Governors ensure that they understand the school's work. They support and challenge leaders effectively. This strengthens leaders' work and sharpens improvement.

Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing. They consider staff's workload when they introduce changes. They develop systems, such as planning approaches, with staff. Staff use these systems effectively. Staff morale is high and value leaders' support. Leaders provide training that meets staff needs. Parents share very positive views about the school. For example, they feel leaders are approachable and their children are well-cared for.

Personal development and wellbeing **Expected standard**

Leaders have developed a sequenced programme for personal development. The personal, social and health education curriculum covers important and relevant themes. Many pupils share ideas with maturity. They take part in debates, such as ‘conscience alley’, which supports pupils to listen to different viewpoints and explain their ideas. These debates help pupils gain a broader awareness of the wider world.

Pupils learn about discrimination and equality. They apply this understanding in how they treat others. Pupils link this learning to their religious education, including how their faith promotes fairness and respect. They also learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, and understand their importance.

Pupils are cared for and listened to. Regular 'check-ins' help pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Leaders ensure that pastoral systems meet the needs of a wide range of pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand the risks of being online. They also learn about safety in the community, such as water safety. Additionally, pupils support each other to stay safe in the heat, for example by reminding each other to wear hats, use sunscreen and drink water.

The relationships and health education programme helps staff teach pupils what healthy relationships look like. For example, pupils learn about forming positive friendships. It also helps pupils understand the changes their bodies will go through in a way that suits their age.

The wider offer the school provides supports pupils’ personal development and wellbeing further. Pupils take part in clubs and trips, such as coding and residential visits. These experiences build pupils' confidence, independence and teamwork skills. Leaders make sure all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers, can take part fully.

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

Pupils greet staff warmly when they arrive at school. They show respect for each other. Pupils and staff build positive relationships. Pupils feel safe and supported. They show kindness and politeness. Pupils use good manners every day. Bullying happens rarely. Pupils trust staff to act quickly and deal with it effectively if it does occur.

Pupils enjoy playtimes. They take part in many activities. They build, climb and enjoy den-building. During these times, pupils develop teamwork and cooperation. They solve problems as they play. As a result, pupils learn how to collaborate. They use their imagination, which builds creativity. Some pupils take on roles to help others join games. They take this responsibility seriously. They help make playtimes fair and inclusive.

Pupils behave very well. They listen to teachers and to each other. Pupils work hard and keep trying. They take pride in their work and present it neatly. Pupils understand what staff expect. The school’s religious teaching helps pupils build confidence. It also helps them

become responsible. Many pupils join interest groups, such as developing the school grounds. These groups help pupils feel part of the school community. Children in early years learn routines quickly. They know what to do in different situations. They make choices and manage tasks on their own. This builds confidence. It prepares them well for Year 1.

Across the school, pupils enjoy learning. They understand expectations during independent tasks and complete work confidently. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are well-prepared for each stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy the educational visits the school provides. They know how trips link to their learning. Staff plan these experiences carefully to extend pupils' knowledge and provide new opportunities. They ensure these opportunities are available for all. This helps pupils connect classroom learning to real-life contexts.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that the school's agreed approaches to curriculum and teaching are implemented consistently so that pupils build their knowledge more rapidly over time.
- Leaders should ensure that staff evaluate the impact of strategies such as small-group support more precisely so that they consistently help pupils access the curriculum successfully and achieve well alongside their peers.

About this inspection

This school is part of All Saints Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Wheatley, At the time of the inspection, the board of trustees was overseen by the chair Leigh O'Connor.

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

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

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, teachers, pupils and some parents and carers during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body and trust, including the CEO.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Westminster. Its last section 48 inspection was in October 2025.

The school capacity is now 210.

Since the previous inspection, the school has a new leadership team.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Alex Sallis

Lead inspector:
Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Ofsted Inspector
Wayne Jarvis, Ofsted 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

178
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: 272

School capacity

240
Close to 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

10.78%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

0.56%
Well below 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.04%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below 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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25 (final)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
2022/23		44%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	62%	Below
2022/23		60%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	58%	Below
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2022/23		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
2022/23		66%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	80%	-46 pp
2022/23		78%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	78%	-61 pp
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp
2022/23		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	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)	7.8%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	14.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright