

# Inspection of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Kidlington

Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 1EA

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Inspection dates:	15 and 16 July 2025
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Julieann Exley. This school is part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company 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), Fraser Long, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Concannon.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are enormously proud of their school. They are happy and behave exceptionally well. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the school's values of determination, humility, fairness, respect and unity. They use these to shape the way they behave and interact and to contribute to the school's positive culture.

Pupils are mature and are extremely proud of the contributions they make to the school and community. Pupils of all ages are involved in regular community fundraising projects. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities. They gladly act as role models, student council members or sports leaders. They help younger pupils feel safe and welcome, all of which boosts the school's calm and accepting atmosphere.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils' achievement and meets this goal. Previously, outcomes were in line with national averages. However, the quality of education has been strengthened considerably. As a result, pupils of all ages, including those who speak English as an additional language or join the school mid-year, achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils feel overwhelmingly safe at school. The strong bond between home and school means pupils feel understood and secure. They know who to talk to if they have any worries.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum is highly ambitious and clearly identifies what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. It helps staff skilfully deliver lessons that build pupils' curiosity and thirst for learning. This enables pupils to deepen their knowledge in each subject.

Staff systematically check that pupils' knowledge develops over time. Activities are well judged and help pupils explore ideas and use what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. The school is swift in identifying pupils with SEND, and they are well supported. As a result, they achieve highly.

The school provides teachers with resources and training to ensure high-quality delivery of the curriculum. Staff have detailed subject knowledge, which they use to develop pupils' thoughts and ideas confidently and efficiently.

Development of pupils' vocabulary is a priority as a significant proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. In class, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary to deepen their understanding and to link ideas with their prior learning. Pupils are inquisitive and articulate. They are keen to participate and share their learning. Classrooms buzz with new ideas. As a result, pupils have a depth of knowledge and excel in all subjects.

Reading is central to the curriculum and takes centre stage. Older children value how class texts links to their wider learning. Children in the Nursery classes enjoy a rich

selection of stories, rhymes and songs that link to their experiential learning. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read make progress rapidly. Staff deliver the school's chosen phonics scheme expertly. They carefully check that pupils can use the techniques and sounds they have been taught. Should any pupil require additional support, this is provided through tailored individual and group sessions. As a result, pupils quickly catch up.

Early years is a vibrant and welcoming place. The environment is expertly designed to ensure that activities help children to learn and to develop. Staff carefully model language and behaviour such as when children eat together or learn how to play. Year 6 pupils help and encourage Reception children to learn about the school. This helps them become familiar with school routines and events. Pupils make a tangible positive contribution to the life of the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils learn without disruption. They describe the school as a kind and respectful place. The school's strong culture means that pupils and staff have a shared understanding of what is expected of them. Pupils recognise this helps them know how to treat others and be respectful of any differences that may exist in our world.

Pupils' wider personal development is carefully crafted. The school uses its detailed knowledge of pupils to develop their individual talents and interests. All pupils learn musical instruments and are proud to perform together. School trips, such as to the Devon coast, are an eagerly anticipated highlight. This helps to strengthen pupils' social skills and independence.

Staff, members of the local governing body and trustees are incredibly proud to be a part of this inspirational school. Governors diligently fulfil their statutory duties and provide support and challenge to ensure that the school meets their high expectations while maintaining its strong individual culture.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139530
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379869
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Concannon
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Fraser Long
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julieann Exley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-thomas-more.oxon.sch.uk">www.st-thomas-more.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in June 2022.
- The school offers Nursery provision for both two- and three-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and other staff.
- The inspectors met with governors, including the chair of governors, a representative of the board of trustees, the CEO, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors listened to a sample of pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also viewed a range of pupil's work from other foundation subjects.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ray Lau

Ofsted Inspector

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