

St Thomas More Catholic School & Sixth Form College



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Report

This report aims to provide you with answers to the questions you may have about how special educational needs and disabilities are met at St Thomas More Catholic School and Sixth Form College.

What kinds of special educational needs and disabilities can be provided for at the school?

We include many pupils with additional needs within our mainstream school and currently have pupils learning with us who have:

- Moderate learning difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Autistic Spectrum Difficulties
- Physical impairments
- Sensory impairments – visual and hearing
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Speech, language and communication difficulties

Some pupils will have Statements of Special Educational Need, or Education, Health and Care Plans, while other pupils will have their needs identified and met at a school level.

Is the school accessible to those with physical disabilities?

The main school is close to being fully accessible; ramps, a lift and disabled toilet facilities have been installed.

The Sixth Form College is purpose built to accommodate disabled students.

How are special educational needs and disabilities identified?

The needs of many pupils will already have been identified at Primary school and we work closely with Primary colleagues to share information and continue good practice which is already underway.

For other pupils, their needs will be identified at secondary school in different ways, such as:

- concerns raised by parents/carers or pupils themselves
- concerns raised by staff
- screening tests and assessments
- progress tracking

This may lead to further assessments by school staff or other specialists so that a plan can be decided on for support or intervention to address the need. This will usually involve discussion between home and school.

How does St Thomas More School organise teaching, support and intervention for pupils with SEND?

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will follow the mainstream curriculum, where teaching and grouping strategies will be used which allow pupils to learn at an appropriate pace and in a range of ways to suit different learning styles. The basic skills needed for effective learning and personal development are taught and monitored across the curriculum. Pupils with SEND are generally supported in lessons by teaching assistant staff who contribute to pupil progress and achievement by working with them towards the learning objectives.

Some pupils will have additional input with basic skills, such as reading, and pupils with a higher level of need, often with a statement or EHC plan, may have some individual teaching. In addition, many pupils will benefit from targeted intervention at some point in their school life, if it is identified that progress is not being made at the expected rate.

In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum can be personalised to meet an individual's needs through supported study or vocational opportunities. Pupils with SEND may also be eligible for special arrangements in exams such as reading or extra time, which the school will arrange.

What other kinds of support and intervention is available?

Personal development is promoted through the Pastoral system of Form groups and Houses, allowing pupils to develop social skills and non-academic skills. All pupils have access to clubs, extra-curricular activities and trips. Support is provided for such activities if necessary.

A lunchtime club is organised by the Learning Support department which provides support for homework, IT study facilities and a quiet place to play board games. Learning Support staff are also available in the library before school.

Social skills groups sometimes take place to help pupils' development in this area.

The school also has a Learning Mentor who works with a small group of pupils, with or without SEND, to promote inclusion, achievement and aspiration.

If a pupil is eligible for Pupil Premium funding, the school's co-ordinator will work with the pupil and family to use it for the promotion of learning and achievement .

How does the school work with outside agencies?

The school works with a range of agencies such as:

- specialist staff from the Early Intervention Service and Integrated Disability Service

- the School Nurse
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- The Common Assessment Framework
- The Educational Psychology Service
- Connexions
- Relate and its “Time for You” project

Input or referrals are always discussed with parents\carers and a joint approach agreed.

The school has a counsellor on site for one day per week to help meet the emotional needs experienced by our pupils at different stages.

How are parents and pupils involved?

Close working between parents and school is always important for successful outcomes and we encourage parents to contact school at any time to discuss concerns and queries. The appropriate member of staff will try to talk with parents as soon as possible to resolve issues.

The school’s SENCO is always available at Parents’ Consultation Evenings, but is also contactable at any point in the year to discuss issues relating to SEND.

Parents of pupils with statements of SEN or EHC plans will visit school at least once per year for the formal annual review of their child’s SEND, but it is not unusual for other visits to take place for interim reviews or as issues arise.

Reports are completed each term on academic progress and approach to learning. Two of these are brief overviews, with one report each year being a full written report. Feedback is requested from parents and followed up in school.

Pupils are consulted about any interventions in school in which they will be taking part. They will know who to talk with if they want to discuss it further. Each pupil has a formal discussion with their tutor once a year to discuss progress and how school can help them with their learning. Pupils with statements of SEND or other levels of need attend their review meetings.

What support is provided at points of transition?

When pupils transfer from Primary school, we work closely with the staff who know the pupils best to gather as much information as is available. Our pastoral or SEND staff visit Primary schools and attend review or transition meetings. We arrange for pupils with SEND, and other vulnerable groups, to visit St Thomas More School for additional Transition Mornings, prior to the actual induction day. They are often accompanied by support staff from their Primary school.

At the other end of the age-range, as pupils with SEND move on from our school, we liaise closely with staff at the next provision, whether it is a local college, training provider or our own Sixth Form College. We are assisted in this by staff from Connexions who work with learners with SEND, and other groups, to find the right provision for the next stage of education or training.

Which staff are responsible for pupils with SEND?

All teachers are responsible for the learning of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities within their classes. Staff undertake training, within school and outside of school, to equip them with the necessary skills; this process is on-going and develops according to pupil need.

The current school co-ordinator for special educational needs and disabilities is Mrs Gaffney who has been in post for many years and is a first point of contact for parents. It is her role to oversee the day to day provision and effectiveness of SEND work in school. Mrs Gaffney is assisted in her role by Mrs Olorenshaw who works with many pupils on an individual basis, getting to know them well and delivering programmes and activities to match their needs. Our team of teaching assistants are experienced and well qualified in supporting pupils in a variety of ways to achieve their potential.

How does the school monitor the effectiveness of its SEND provision?

The progress and attainment of pupils with SEND is monitored through collection of assessment information, inspection of work, observation in lessons and feedback from teachers and other staff. This gives an overview of how well our pupils are achieving against the targets set for them and allows actions to be taken where expectations are not being met.

The Senior Leadership Team work with the SENCO and Learning Support Department to review the SEND policy and its implementation, in line with all school policies, on an ongoing basis. One of the school's governors takes the role of overseeing matters relating to SEND and reporting back to the governing body.

The school sometimes works with specialists in an advisory capacity to help us take an objective view of our provision and plan for changes that will improve what we do.

How are resources allocated to ensure the school is meeting the needs of SEND learners?

The school is allocated resources on the basis of the number of pupils with identified special educational needs and the prior attainment of pupils at the school. Decisions are made by the Headteacher and the school's governors as part of annual budget planning. The SENDCO works with the Headteacher and finance officer to manage resources in a way which meets the needs of SEND learners across the school.

If you have any further questions, please contact Mrs Gaffney at school for a more detailed discussion.