

The things we do well

Teaching and learning, planning and curriculum

- ⇒ We trust teachers to decide the best approaches for their pupils.
- ⇒ Teaching and learning policy is co-designed with subject specialists because they know what works best for different subjects.
- ⇒ Where possible, staff have their own teaching rooms and/or areas
- ⇒ Teaching and Learning development group highlight reflective teaching practices based on research.
- ⇒ No need to write lesson plans of any kind.
- ⇒ Although schemes of work and resources are provided, they are not prescriptive – teachers can adapt them however they like.
- ⇒ 44/50 periods of teaching per fortnight maximum.
- ⇒ Expert reprographics and IT support located centrally.
- ⇒ No pressure to 'put on a show' in lessons: a culture of typicality is reinforced by no lesson grading (outstanding, good, etc.).
- ⇒ Where timetabled teaching cannot take place, students take lessons in the Learning Resource Centre.
- ⇒ The school calendar is consulted by all staff before it is finalised each academic year.
- ⇒ "All staff" emails replaced with one daily briefing email to simplify communication between staff.
- ⇒ Student services easily accessible for all
- ⇒ Face-2-Face staff briefings on Monday and Thursday before school. Face-2-Face departmental briefings Friday before school.
- ⇒ Class Charts allows staff to take registers, complete data rich seating plans and have effective behaviour management with one software package.

Behaviour

- ⇒ Everyone has the highest expectations of behaviour, with all staff (not just teaching staff) reinforcing those expectations.
- ⇒ Staff can motivate students with achievement points using Class Charts which sends messages to parents/carers instantly.
- ⇒ Staff can monitor students with behaviour points using Class Charts which sends messages to parents/carers instantly.
- ⇒ Centralised after school detentions supervised by HOY – . Staff are expected to have a restorative conversation with student.
- ⇒ A clear system of sanctions which is applied consistently.
- ⇒ Senior Leadership are very visible and are always on "tablet duty".
- ⇒ All Senior Leadership run lunch duties so behaviour doesn't bubble up over lunchtime.
- ⇒ Training/CPD for behaviour management is provided to support staff.

- ⇒ One lunchtime for Y7-11 ensures a smooth start to afternoon learning.
- ⇒ Student zones before school, break, and lunchtimes allow students to mix with their peers in a familiar and calm environment. Students can be easily located by all staff.
- ⇒ Sanctions are communicated with all staff.
- ⇒ Classes with a high staff to student ratio support effective classroom management.
- ⇒ In KS4 we offer a bespoke options procedure for key students to ensure all students are on the right courses to support future aspirations.

Assessment and reporting to parents

- ⇒ Clear guidelines are in place for the expectations for assessment and feedback on pupil's work. This includes strategies to allow staff to work 'smartly' with time efficiency with effective assessment and feedback.
- ⇒ Assessment and Feedback frameworks written by departments for departments.
- ⇒ Feedback is for one audience and one audience only: pupils.
- ⇒ Only 2 data entries per year.
- ⇒ We never ask for any data to be entered twice.
- ⇒ No subject written reports are completed for parents/carers. Reports are sent to parents/carers 2 times per year, 1 of which includes a form teacher summary comment. Otherwise, no subject written reports are completed for parents/carers at KS3 and 4.
- ⇒ An effective pastoral team is in place to support the pupils and staff. This minimises the need for contact by phone with parents/ carers.
- ⇒ Home learning set on Class Charts to simplify setting and completion of homework.
- ⇒ Arbor Parent app allows direct booking of parents evening appointments.
- ⇒ Class Charts provides staff with all key information easily available in one place.
- ⇒ Learner profile system streamlined so save time and allow staff to easily include all necessary data.
- ⇒ Parents Evenings are a mixture of online and face-to-face; calendared throughout the school year.

Professional Development

- ⇒ CPD tailored specifically to staff needs, based on their feedback.
- ⇒ Time is given for staff to put new things into action.
- ⇒ Non-hierarchical approach to professional development – there are things a senior leader can learn from an ECT and vice versa.
- ⇒ Targeted support plans are put into place for teachers who are struggling.
- ⇒ Meetings take place during directed time on Monday evenings and do so when they are needed – not just because they are on the calendar. When meetings are not required directed time is given to staff CPD.
- ⇒ Subject briefings are kept succinct.
- ⇒ We have implemented new Leadership coaching to support and strengthen middle leaders.

- ⇒ There is comprehensive support for ECTs, with dedicated mentors and regular, timetabled meetings.
- ⇒ There is a programme for all recently appointed teachers to support their induction to St Thomas More and provide opportunities to get to know colleagues.
- ⇒ Second year ECT's on a reduced 42/50 timetable.

Spirituality

- ⇒ School staff are supported by the availability of the school Chaplain.
- ⇒ The school has a full time Lay Chaplain to support all staff.
- ⇒ Liturgical celebrations are available to staff throughout the year including on staff INSET day and end of year whole school Mass.
- ⇒ Staff spirituality weeks take place to provide opportunities for reflection and spiritual development in Advent and in Lent.
- ⇒ CPD Spiritual opportunities are available for staff including and diocesan opportunities with the Birmingham Archdiocese.
- ⇒ Strong links with CATSC and opportunities to attend voluntary Masses.
- ⇒ There is a recognition and respect for staff members of other faiths.
- ⇒ Weekly Mass in the chapel with the school Chaplain.

We work hard, play hard

- ⇒ A well-established Staff Forum group meet with the Head teacher every half term.
- ⇒ There are no prizes for looking busy or staying later – staff should feel free to work in a way that suits you and make sure you make time for yourself and your family.
- ⇒ No expectation to answer parental emails or student Teams messages outside school hours.
- ⇒ No expectation to respond to work emails during unsociable hours.
- ⇒ We are constantly streamlining all systems and processes so they take less time, e.g. the detention system and seating plans.
- ⇒ Free tea and coffee is provided every break time in the staff room.
- ⇒ Prize draws every half term for 100% attendance.
- ⇒ No tick box culture – never do anything if it's not going to make a difference.
- ⇒ A culture of peer-to-peer praise (Star of the week).
- ⇒ Open-door Senior Leadership – no concern is too small.
- ⇒ Staff social events out-of-school.
- ⇒ Free flu jabs.
- ⇒ Staff access to confidential Care First services.
- ⇒ Seasonal events for everyone to show their less serious sides, e.g. World Book Day, Christmas jumpers, etc.
- ⇒ Countless opportunities to get involved with the wider life of the school – Retreats, study visits abroad.
- ⇒ Part-time time budgets for parity with FTE.
- ⇒ Staff complete duties each week which are organised next to a non-contact period where possible. Staff can rearrange duties in September allowing flexibility as to when and where it takes place.
- ⇒ 'Coffee and cake' and 'Staff breakfast' events take place during the year.

- ⇒ Refreshments are provided for staff on Face-2-Face parents evening and food provided on Inset days.
- ⇒ “Keep, Tweak, Bin” – staff have the opportunity to feedback ideas to SLT through questionnaires.
- ⇒ Whole school Sports Day to foster staff and student cohesion.