

# Saint Thomas More Language College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100502
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	276322
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 May 2006
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Nolan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Vincent Berry Mr Gerard Connolly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cadogan Street London SW3 2QS
<b>Telephone number</b>	02075899734
<b>Fax number</b>	02078237868

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Saint Thomas More Language College, is situated in the Roman Catholic arch- diocese of Westminster and serves pupils from across London. Few live in the immediate vicinity. Numbers are restricted by the limitations of the site but the school is oversubscribed with more boys than girls. Pupils come from diverse backgrounds with a high proportion having a home language other than English. Around a quarter of the pupils, higher than average, are eligible for a free school meal. Very few pupils join or leave the school other than at standard times. Attainment on entry is slightly above average but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements of special educational need is higher than average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

### What the school should do to improve further

- \* extend the role of some middle and senior managers through continuing professional development.
- \* ensure better provision in mathematics.
- \* improve the consistency of classroom assessment so that all pupils understand clearly how to better their work in all areas.

## Achievement and standards

Grade:

### Personal development and well-being

Grade:

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Grade:

The school rightly notes that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Its evaluation of teaching and learning as satisfactory overall is accurate. The drive to increase the proportion of good or better teaching is bearing fruit and there are examples of good and outstanding practice in several subject areas, including English, science and modern foreign languages.

In the best lessons, energetic teaching is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and well-structured activities that maintain the pupils' interest. High expectations and an excellent understanding of each pupil's needs characterise the most successful lessons in the specialist language area. As a result, pupils, including those with learning difficulties, feel confident and well supported and enjoy the challenges offered.

Unexciting and mediocre teaching succeeds because pupils are self-motivated and well behaved but in these lessons learning is no better than satisfactory. Tasks do not always match pupils' needs sufficiently closely. Too little time is devoted to practical activities and explanations are often lengthy or lack clarity. The school's very proper emphasis on classroom assessment is not yet applied effectively enough in these lessons. Marking and homework in some subject areas, are not used consistently well to guide pupils on how to improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of the majority of the pupils. There are some strengths. The school's specialist status as a language college has resulted in the enrichment of the whole curriculum by emphasising the international dimension in the pupils' lives. Pupils are able to choose from a wide range of European and other languages, of particular importance to the many with a home language other than English. There are few opportunities, however, for pupils to choose vocational courses leading to recognised accreditation. A small number

miss out on examination courses involving a strong information and communication technology (ICT) content.

A carefully planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme provides good opportunities to prepare pupils for life beyond school. This is complemented by a comprehensive work experience programme. Year 9 pupils benefit from business enterprise activities concentrating on finance. The curriculum is enriched well by a range of subject and language related visits both at home and abroad, much appreciated by pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade:**

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment procedures are clear. Movement about the restricted site is well supervised. Pupils talk positively of the help they get and the efforts made to include them when they face difficulties. One pupil volunteered 'the school stayed with me'. Overall, there are good arrangements for tracking and supporting vulnerable pupils. However, the school recognises that additional attention is needed for those few girls who struggle to sustain regular attendance to the end of Year 11.

Both personal and academic monitoring are increasingly well managed. Pupils are clearly aware of their targets and appreciate the academic review days to support them and their parents. Good guidance in Years 9 and 11, particularly from the on-site careers service, enables pupils to choose realistic options for work and study. A very high proportion of Year 11 pupils continue on to the next stage of education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade:**

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## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

### Pupils

After our visit to inspect your school we would like to share our findings with you. We would also like to thank you for your friendly welcome and for sharing your opinions with us. We are pleased that you are proud of your school and enjoy the opportunities it provides. You attend regularly, behave well and work hard.

We agree with you that Saint Thomas More is providing you with a sound education and that your school is improving rapidly. There are many things that are good about your school; not least that it is a specialist language college. This is really important because you can choose from a wide range of new languages as well as developing the many home languages that you speak. Most of your teachers are very committed, particularly the headteacher, his deputies and the governors. They want you to do well and get the most from school. They are working hard to improve a few areas that could be better managed. You told us about mathematics, for example. We think you are well looked after. Although your school is short of space, it has done its best to provide you with attractive, well-kept specialist areas. You also respect your environment, particularly in wet weather, when you have to use your classrooms at break and lunch times. Catering staff, encouraged by your wish for organic and fairtrade products, provide interesting and nourishing menus.

There are some things we would like your school to work on: \* move forward quickly those areas that could be better managed. \* improve mathematics. \* make sure that in all subject areas you get the best guidance on how to improve your work. We wish you and your school very well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan

Lead inspector