

# St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

## Standards and Quality Report (August 2024)



Self-Discipline  
Teamwork

Trust  
High Expectations  
Openness  
Mutual Respect  
Achieving Excellence  
Success

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School is a denominational secondary school serving one third of the City of Edinburgh. The school draws most of its pupils from Holy Cross, St Mary's, St Peter's, and St Mark's Primary Schools, although we annually work with over 15 other Primary Schools for S1 transition. The wide catchment area stretches from the Pentlands to Granton, and St Thomas of Aquin's enjoys a varied social and cultural mix of pupils. The school is committed to the education of the whole child, body, mind, and spirit, to ensure that all our pupils fulfil their God-given talents. The projected school roll for August 2023 is 790, although the notional capacity of our building is set at 750. Our S1 & S2 roll is capped at 140 per year. The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Head Teacher, 2 Depute Head Teachers, and a Business Manager. In session 2023-24 there will be 10 Curricular Leaders, 3 pupil Support Leaders, 1 Support for Learning Leader, and a Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub & Sensory room. The Parent Council provides collegiate and constructive support to all aspects of school life.

### Summary of Standards and Quality Report, grades and statements in support

- QI 1.3 Leadership of Change (HT/SDO)
- QI 1.4 and 1.5: Leadership and Management of Staff and Management of resources to promote Equity (BM/SDO)
- QI 2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment – including the Teachers' Charter (DHT S4-6)
- QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion – including Leadership for Equity and The Promise (DHT S1-S3)
- QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement – including progress made on Stretch aims. (HT)
- QI 2.2 Curriculum – Theme 2, Learning Pathways (HT)
- QI 2.7 Partnerships – Theme 3, Impact on Learners, Parental engagement only (Learning Community HTs)

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Leadership of Change – Evaluation Level of Good

- **Developing a shared vision, values & aims relevant to the school and its community**
- **Strategic planning for continuous improvement**
- **Implementing improvement and change**

This indicator focusses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners.

#### **Developing a shared vision, values & aims relevant to the school and its community.**

Almost all staff have a very good understanding of the vision and values of the school (2023/24 staff survey returns). The school is using pupil and parent surveys analysis in providing evidence of how safe and supportive pupils and parents describe St Thomas of Aquin's (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/>). Almost all staff take time and care to know the pupils they teach and through staff meetings, pupil plans, Edict tracking systems, an open-door policy by the Integrated Support Service and Senior Leadership Team, staff are very much aware of the social, economic, and cultural context of pupils in the school (2023/4 staff, pupil, and parent surveys evidence). The newly appointed Senior Development Officer, January 2024, supports staff understanding by identifying vulnerable and targeted groups within our school community and sharing this via spreadsheets. St Thomas of Aquin's vision of fulfilling the talents of its pupils manifests itself in the commitment to the highest possible attainment levels, highest achievement levels of Literacy and Numeracy, and the highest rates of sustained positive destinations for all pupils. The 2023 Insight Data exemplifies very good attainment, very good positive destinations, and the closing of the attainment gap at St Thomas of Aquin's (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements>).

The school's nurturing and inclusive vision and values are at the centre of how the school supports pupils to reach their God-given talents and school improvement planning is shaped with pupil and staff safety, support, and enjoyment at its centre. Health and Safety is on the weekly BM/HT meetings and monthly MS Teams staff Health and Safety meetings take place. The high expectations for all pupils at St Thomas can be exemplified in the calm and focussed working ethos of the school (Supported Self-Evaluation 2024 identifies this as a strength of the school); the very good S1-S6 attendance percentages averaging 92% for session 2023-24; and the very good attainment levels over the last 5 years. The school community embraces restorative practice, and our positive relationships are supported by the BrBIBb staged intervention policy (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-BRBLBB-Policy.pdf>). The policy has been evaluated and improved by staff, pupils, and pupils. The introduction of the Wellbeing Hub to Level 4 of the school building and an updated Pathway 3/4 On Call system supports the school community's wellbeing and inclusion focus.

St Thomas' engagement with parents is open, respectful, and based on mutual trust and the 2024 evidence of 82% of parents identifying the school as well led supports this claim (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/>). Parents understanding of how the school helps their children to fulfil their potential is supported through information evenings, parents' evenings, or individual meetings with the Integrated Pupil Support Team and the Senior Leadership Team. The highest standards of communication are in place to support parents understanding of the leadership of change process; weekly parent briefing emails are sent out and placed on the school website; the continued growth and use of X/Twitter by Faculties supports up to date pupil work and successes; a school App (linked to the school website) supports Parents with pupil updates; school attainment and achievement data and school policies are updated and shared with pupils and parents on the school website (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/>); Pupil voice groups such as The Pupil Parliament, The Equalities Group, and The Climate Action Groups meetings are shared in

Daily Key Adult classes and through the Key Adult Bulletin (placed on the school website for parents information). In 2024 Senior pupils from the Equalities Group led a whole school event to create a shared understanding of the diverse nature of our school community. Our Culture Day celebrated the vast number of heritages which form part St Thomas' school community and received positive feedback from pupils, parents, and staff alike. The Daily Key Adult programme RAISE focus for all S1-S6 year groups has ensured that there is a timetabled system for the pupils and staff at St Thomas' to support attendance, standards, and pupil voice. Daily Key Adult time will continue to be developed throughout the next 3 year rolling school improvement plan.

### Strategic planning for continuous improvement

St Thomas engages systematically in effective quality improvement and moderation activities to improve the outcomes for all pupils. St Thomas of Aquin's uses a 3-year rolling school improvement plan that is contextualised using How Good is Our School 4. The senior leadership team update the plan 3 times during the year and Faculty plans are updated twice a year to support a robust analysis programme. St Thomas of Aquin's uses SQA data, Insight data, Pupil, Parent, and Staff surveys, and HGIOS4 Quality Indicators to assess and moderate school improvement; analysis and evaluation of annual school improvement is robustly captured in the Standards and Quality Report which then supports identification of priorities for an updated School Improvement Plan. All Senior Leaders and all Faculties self-evaluation calendars which link to the Headteacher's whole school Self-evaluation calendar and these systems support the weekly senior leadership team meeting and Leadership of change team meeting (2 weekly rota). The self-evaluation calendar ensures that all Leaders are aware of the month-by-month school improvement tasks and impact needed to continue St Thomas' drive in self-improvement. Staff are supported to take on leadership opportunities that support delivering impact on pupils' experience that range from Pupil Equity Funding, Chaplaincy, Learning and Teaching, Homestudy/BGE Levels, Literacy and Numeracy, Sustainability, Rights Respecting Schools, Equalities, Behaviours of Concern, Communication amongst Staff, and Mentors in Violence. These leadership opportunities are articulated in the school improvement plan and staff are supported through time, CATs, and Inservice slots to drive through their specific vision and outcomes for pupils (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Feb-2024-School-Imp.-Plan-Update.pdf>).

The S4-S6 DHT strategic lead on Learning, Teaching, and Assessment continues to enhance the quality of the learning experience for pupils in the school via a voluntary supported self-evaluation process held in March 2024. Through learning observations, sharing good practice both inside and from outside the school, use of HMIe Inspection findings, iPad training for pupils, the S4-S6 DHT and the Leadership Team of the school has the evidence of where the school is now and how it will achieve a Very Good for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment over the next 2 years – a key focus for St Thomas of Aquin's. Staff at St Thomas' are committed to the educational success of pupils and Faculty attainment statistics placed on the school website (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/>) exemplify their commitment. The school is committed in using the City of Edinburgh Teachers Charter to improve the consistency of pupils' learning experience and the effective development of iPad creative use is a testament to that commitment. Please refer to the 2.3 Quality Indicator for detailed analysis on Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.

There is a strategic focus and determination to complement the Very Good attainment of pupils by ensuring that the school is a safe and nurturing, supportive and inclusive, and a mutually respectful environment for all pupils to reach their potential. The school has developed a robust pathway system of support for all pupils; a universal support approach in Key Adult classes and all subject classrooms; Support for Learning and Pupils Support Leaders plan, monitor, and share targeted intervention information; and a targeted system of support using Place2Be counsellors, the Wellbeing Hub, the Additional Support Services, and identified organisations that work with St Thomas of Aquin's to get it right for all pupils. The Depute head for 3.1 is leading on the standards and quality analysis and improvement in this area to ensure a Very Good experience is in place for all pupils over the next 3 years.

The Senior Leadership Team and the Leadership Team work together strategically and operationally to ensure that the school continues to develop, promote, and sustain an aspirational vision that places all pupils at the centre of the decision-making process. The combined SLT/LT meetings (every 2 weeks) support School and Faculty improvement planning implementation and self-evaluation calendars support a focussed and collaborative strategy. All Staff have access to Impact Folders, found on the

school server, in which annual key strategic and operational information is stored to support their analysis and evaluation of school improvement – CEC returns, school improvement updates, draft policies, and policy updates. The school improvement plan is systematically supported by CATs, DATs, and In-services which supports all teaching staff to analyse and evaluate improvements in their practice. The Senior Leadership Team continues to support the growth of the Pupil Parliament and the Parent Council to ensure that the voice of pupils and parents are translated into sustainable and effective practice in the school.

Faculties complete a 2.3 and 3.1 Quality Indicator analysis in May and 3.2 Quality Indicator evaluation and grade for their Faculties in August/September. The school is ensuring HGIOS4 1.3, 2.3, 3.1, and 3.2 Q are fully understood, in terms of their benchmarking and demands, by staff and the sharing of HMIE Inspection Reports continues to support their understanding of standards. It is very encouraging to write that so many colleagues support the school improvement plan via taking on Leadership remits (found at the end of the school improvement plan (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Feb-2024-School-Imp.-Plan-Update.pdf> ) and that S6 pupils and staff support a comprehensive lunchtime and afterschool clubs programme (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime-and-after-school-clubs/sports-clubs/> ). Staff are involved in supporting pupils leading the Pupil Parliament, Climate Action, and the Equalities groups, chairing working groups in the areas of positive behaviour, learning and teaching, and equalities and ethos. Staff also plan and implement engaging outdoor learning experiences and invite visiting guest speakers which adds to the shared learning experience at the school. There is a commitment from all stakeholders, pupils, parents, staff, and outside agencies to continue to work collegiately to improve the school.

The school has close partnership working with the 4 associated Primary Schools in St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community and a comprehensive communication system to support the significant amount of other Primary Schools that support transition of P7 pupils to St Thomas of Aquin's (around 20 per year). Our transition systems (enhanced and universal transition days) support the wellbeing and progression of P7 and other pupils transferring to the school. The St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community is now benefitting from a permanent Transition Teacher who supports enhanced transitions in May, CfE Level moderation in Literacy, and new S1 pupils who benefit from a flexible timetable when starting at St Thomas of Aquin's High School. All HTs meet on a regular basis with an agreed Learning Community plan as a means to continue to support improvement outcomes for pupils at the 5 schools.

### **Implementing improvement and change**

St Thomas of Aquin's collegiate approach ensures the whole school community is aware of the improvements needed to develop, enhance, and ensure impact in pupil attainment and achievement. Over the last 3 years, the S4-S6 DHT, in line with CEC advice, has implemented a Meaningful May curriculum so that pupils who are experiencing 3 or less National 5 Qualifications examinations have an engaging educational involvement during the SQA calendar. The Meaningful May planning has also supported the annual change of timetable being brought forward by 2 weeks to the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in May to support S1-S3 pupils' engagement and learning. The school is constantly identifying improvements that can be made and collegiately plans to ensure long-term progression. The Senior Leadership Team, the Leadership Team, and Staff members have developed and continue to work in a collegiate working partnership at St Thomas. There is very good partnership working with outside agencies to get it right for every child and the DHT S1-S3 has invested strategic planning to incorporate Volunteering Scotland and Spartans for targeted pupils. The Wellbeing Hub is in place at St Thomas and now that a full complement of permanent staffing is in place for the first time (May 2023), the DHT will plan accordingly to ensure the strategic and operational outcomes of the Wellbeing Hub delivers for pupils. The Counselling service continues to provide wellbeing provision for pupils, parents, and staff. The Equalities Captains, Equalities Group, and staff supporting the Equalities improvement plan continue to make progress in ensuring the school is a safe and inclusive place to learn and work and the responses in both pupils and parents surveys identify a school that respects the rights of the individual and supports pupils to do so (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/S1-S6-2024-Pupil-Survey-Analysis-and-Comments.pdf> ).

**Next steps:**

Redraft Pupil Parliament strategy using KAT and SDO.

Locality and Learning Community Leadership opportunities for St Thomas of Aquin's staff visits out of school.

## Quality Indicator 1.4: Management of resources to promote equity

- **Governance framework**
- **Building and sustaining a professional staff team**
- **Staff wellbeing and pastoral support**

This indicator highlights the importance of sound governance and fair and proper recruitment and selection of staff. It focuses on accountability, responsibility and shared values as important features of building and sustaining a highly professional staff team. Effective empowerment of staff and partners with due regard to wellbeing and positive relationships is a key feature of a successful professional team.

### **Governance Framework**

Our school's values underpin the climate of learning at St Thomas. Pupils, staff, and parents know our school values and the Senior Leadership team consistently lead by example to ensure that these values underpin the environment in which our young people learn. Leadership of our school is clearly founded on the key governance principles of high-quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture. Educational practitioners follow the General Teaching Council, Professional Standards [A guide to the professional standards \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk). St Thomas' ensure all governance regulations are in place via Business Manager ensuring financial management, human resource, facilities management and health and safety and correct and embedded within the school on a day-to-day basis or as required. BM/HT meet on a weekly basis to discuss and implement all governance work/operational aspect are effective. The City of Edinburgh Council monitors the school's actions rigorously and ensures a prompt response to stakeholders' concerns and suggestions with Complaints Procedure (CEC), local school level complaints with effective process. Incidents protocol is completed via corporate Health and Safety. The City of Edinburgh Council works in close partnership with the school regarding learning and teaching and strategic policies for all employees to embed.

Positive respectful relationships are fostered between pupils and staff. 80% of our pupils are 89% of our parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff treat pupils with respect in our recent whole school surveys March 2024. Pupils feel cared for and safe at school and feel that they have a member of staff that they could approach to discuss any issues or concerns. 91% of parents and 90% of pupils agree or strongly agree that their child/they feel safe at school with 84% of our parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pupils like being at our school. Our positive and nurturing relationships with pupils was recently identified as a key strength in our Supported Self evaluation from the City of Edinburgh.

### **Building and sustaining a professional staff team**

Our school uses effective and transparent recruitment, selection and performance management procedures consistent with current legislation and local and national agreements. We process the recruitment and selection of staff via the CEC system currently in place, Talentlink. We review the staff loading sheet versus the devolved school budget financial information to ensure consistency. We review and evaluate the FTE pointage, we follow the rigorous protocol and approval chain to ensure effective and best practices are in place. Once closure of Live adverts, applications are reviewed and selected for interview, analysed against the CEC Job Outline. Once interviews are completed the preferred candidate is nominated, the on-boarding conversation begins to allow us to complete necessary recruitment procedures to ensure a timeously commencement date.

Safeguarding procedures are understood and implemented by managers with responsibilities for the recruitment of staff. Our appointment procedures give due regard to the skills, aptitudes and experience required for the post. All staff have a good understanding of legislation pertaining to GIRFEC legislation and Child Protection procedures and

use the wellbeing concern forms consistently and effectively. This session Staff attended a mandatory CLPL session on CP procedures in addition to the yearly update session in August. We have supportive induction policies and procedures for all staff. We welcome all new staff, NQT and educational students to the school, we follow the CEC induction programme and new staff are met with various personal, this current practice to be reviewed to ensure a quality induction programme for all.

A coaching and mentoring approach to professional review and development is used by all staff to reflect on their professional knowledge and skills. Educational practitioner observations are completed and leaders support all staff regarding PRD to enhance and develop knowledge, skills and expertise. Newly Qualified teachers are linked with an experienced practitioner and discuss on a regular basis the sharing of good practices. Staff actively engage in professional learning activities to improve their effectiveness. Staff capability, capacity and leadership are well developed to support the culture of learning. All staff are encouraging to actively be involved and embed learning to support their effectiveness via in-service days, CATs and DATs and City for Edinburgh Council or other led CLPL programmes supportive to skill set, SSERC, SLS, LIAM, Seasons for Growth and observations per peer group.

### **Staff wellbeing and pastoral support**

The school work in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council via any policy and procedure currently in place; Absence Management, Grievance and Disciplinary. The City of Edinburgh People Strategy 2024 – 2027 discusses creating a great place to work for the people of Edinburgh. The themes include Developing exceptional leaders, attracting the best people, fostering a culture of equalities, diversity and inclusion, retaining and growing talent, nurturing a healthy workplace to allow people to thrive.

There are clear strategic policies, procedures, and protocol to ensure pastoral support and wellbeing of staff, this is shared. This includes: The Council offers both an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and an Occupational Health service. [Employee wellbeing – The City of Edinburgh Council Intranet](#)

The school has clear guidance for setting high professional standards of conduct as outlined by following City of Edinburgh Council policy and local agreements by professional stakeholders, EIS, SLS, GTCs.

All staff take responsibility for ensuring our approaches to communication are wide, varied and effective. We currently have a Communications Group working to review current communication within the school environment and develop a sustained and achievement programme of next steps. Opportunities to consult, share information and raise concerns are well established and understood by all staff. Lines of accountability are clear. All staff share information effectively, listen to others and respond positively to ideas and issues raised with them by day-to-day communication at strategic, faculty and department/section level.

### **Next steps:**

- An enriched Induction Programme for new members of staff
- Develop a School Staff Wellbeing Strategy
- Communication – currently an evaluation taking place as part of the Communication Working Group, this will be analysed and further enhanced where necessary in line with School values and best practice and CEC protocol
- Embed the City of Edinburgh Council – Our Behaviours model within the school community
- Review a process for support staff collegiately being actively involved in priorities for the school
- Consider a process for support staff to be actively involved in self-evaluation



## Quality Indicator 1.5 (The Business Manager and Administration Team)

### 1.5

- Management of finance for learning
- Management of resources and environment for learning

This indicator highlights the importance of sound risk assessment which puts the needs of learners at the centre of decisions about financial and other resource management. The promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners and stakeholders. The school's management of resources should result in building a more sustainable and equitable future for all

### Management of finance for learning

We have effective systems for financial stewardship and management to ensure best value and sustainability. We comply with the Devolved School Management Guidelines Devolved school management (DSM) – The City of Edinburgh Council Intranet ensuring effective strategic financial controls are in place to monitor the DSM whole school budget effectively. The DSM School Budget is issued by Finance, the school internal controls include staff loading sheets to monitor staffing spends and full-time equivalents FTEs. The HT & BM meet regularly to monitor finance and spends to support the school resources and required environmental impact to change to deliver quality learning for all young people. Each Faculty has an annual per capita budget to allow spends specific to each department – this is allocated using a pupil weighting system to support practical and non-practical subject specific areas. The DSM school budget is support by a system called Frontier.

Peeble Pay is the system which holds the school fund account [Peeble - School Fund - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#) – towards Promethean boards. ParentPay allows payments to be made on behalf of young people [ParentPay – Parent Support \(parentpaygroup.com\)](#).

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used on resources, including the Senior Development Officer post, to help improve outcomes for children and young people who are affected by poverty. There is a clear rationale for use of the funding, based on a contextual analysis which identifies the poverty related attainment gap in their schools and plans must be grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at raising attainment for children affected by poverty. The budget is managed within the Frontier system and re-coded to allow successful monitoring of budget spend, focusing on funds spent in areas of counselling, universal breakfast, excursion/trip attendance and uniform support.

Procurement Services support the purchasing and ordering of resources to support the young people and environmental aspect of school life. Contracts are agreed to achieve the best value including contractual obligations and sustainability to ensure the best price for CEC. We are pro-active in seeking funding from a range of sources to support specific aspects of our work. We sought and achieved a Scottish Government grant to support the delivery of our Culture Day which created a greater understanding of the diverse nature of our school community. A local partnership between Sainsbury's and the Well-being Hub has also been established and a donation secured. Equally our active Parent Council have donated funds towards the delivery of inclusive and equitable activities as part of the Meaningful May programme, as well as replacing equipment. This has included funding Apple pens, keyboards, modular tables in the Well-being hub and funding towards Retreats.

Financial expenditure is carefully planned to improve the quality of learning and teaching and increase attainment and achievement for all learners. The removal of all curricular charges from the Art and Design Technologies faculty to allow for equitable learning and teaching has been in place for a year and will continue. In addition to this, uniform and support for excursions are provided to families on an ad hoc basis. A free universal breakfast club is available every morning to support pupils in starting the day right. DSM spends include iPads, chargers and cables, musical instruments, resources to support new courses within science, i.e. Electronics course linked with Physics. There is a rolling programme in place for Promethean Boards, this commenced 2023/24 and will continue throughout academic sessions in the future. Refurbishment of corridor flooring throughout the school has been successfully completed to ensure a welcoming and safe environment for all pupils and staff. There is a painting programme in



operation to support the environment to ensure a clean and professional building environment. Work is ongoing in the outside area of the school, picnic benches/seating benches were purchased last year to support an outdoor learning space, this year a greenspace area will be completed in July to allow pupils further space in the playground.. The Fitness Suite has been completed renewed and is used as part of the learning and teaching for pupils, secure lockers have been put in place as a measure for valuable items for pupils to place security. All 3 computing classes have new computing chairs to support under H&S and learning and teaching. Chairs have been purchased for the Assembly Hall to allow more comfort to pupils and staff during school events and assembly times.

### Management of resources and environment for learning

We diligently implement relevant health and safety legislation and are vigilant in ensuring the security and safety of all users and visitors. As a result, our buildings are secure, and any health and safety issues are identified and addressed promptly. We make the best use of available resources, including digital technologies, to create, sustain and enhance a motivating environment for effective learning. Staff, pupils and parents have been supported through the transition to Empowered Learning and pupils regularly experience digital learning in their lessons; our recent SSE evidenced “a majority of lessons included the use of digital learning” March 2024. This is further supported through Faculty and Key Adult chargers which have been purchased for pupils to use to help mitigate the additional costs to families incurred with Empowered Learning.

We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support and challenge learners at all levels of their learning. In addition to the extensive Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices employed by our teaching body to support and challenge all learners, the school provides free supported study sessions in the Easter holidays and after school, to help Senior Pupils prepare for their exams. We also engage with wide range of partners such as 6VT, Green Team, and Volunteering Matters to provide further support and opportunities to pupils. We encourage our learners to make independent and responsible use of a range of resources. We fund multiple resources for pupils to access independently to support their learning and to facilitate home study. These include subscriptions to *Sumdog*, *Pearson's* and *Achieve!* which are embedded in lessons and accessible remotely for pupils.

We manage allocated resources proactively and efficiently to meet planned learning and development priorities. As part of the National Improvement Framework priority of Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, the school has appointed a Senior Development Officer to track and support this priority. They have already identified and shared information about our most disadvantaged cohort to enable class teachers to support these learners appropriately. Support information for families is also shared with parents and carers, both online and in person at school events. This has included support to apply for Young Scot Entitlement Cards (bus pass) with the support of our school librarian. We continue to offer uniform as required to families and are developing both our sustainability and the supports we can offer with donations of uniform, school equipment and books.

We diligently implement relevant health and safety legislation and are vigilant in ensuring the security and safety of all users and visitors. As a result, our buildings are secure and any health and safety issues are identified and addressed promptly. Support staff diligently record visitors to the school and inform them of the school's child protection protocols. The whole staff body are also reminded termly of the school's robust procedures in the event of an intruder or any other suspicious activities.

#### Next steps:

- Continue to track and support most disadvantaged cohort in line with NIF Priority
- Continue to manage DSM budgets efficiently and effectively with control measures to ensure the continuation of rolling programmes.
- Planning and preparation for increasing pupil roll to ensure a positive impact on the learning community and resources available.
- Family learning and teaching opportunities- pupil for a day, S1 parent iPad evening

### Quality Indicator 2.3: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment – Evaluation Level of Good.

- **Learning and Engagement, including use of digital technologies**
- **Quality of Teaching**
- **Effective use of Assessment**
- **Planning, Tracking & Monitoring**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

#### **Learning and Engagement, including use of digital technologies**

Our school's values underpin the climate of learning at St Thomas. The climate of learning across the school is in line with our values. Pupils, staff, and parents know our school values and the Senior Leadership team consistently lead by example to ensure that these values underpin the environment in which our young people learn. Positive respectful relationships are fostered between pupils and staff. 80% of our pupils are 89% of our parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff treat pupils with respect in our recent whole school surveys March 2024. Pupils feel cared for and safe at school and feel that they have a member of staff that they could approach to discuss any issues or concerns. 91% of parents and 90% of pupils agree or strongly agree that their child/they feel safe at school with 84% of our parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pupils like being at our school. Our positive and nurturing relationships with pupils was recently identified as a key strength in our Supported Self evaluation from the City of Edinburgh.

Our school has successfully achieved the silver award for the UNCRC Rights Respecting schools after achieving the bronze award last year. This project is successfully led by a teaching staff member and group of pupils. In our recent March 2024 surveys 90 % of pupils and 85% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school helps me to understand and respect other people. This has increased from last year's findings which were 85% of our pupils and 81% of our parents. 70% of Pupils strongly agreed or agreed that other young people treat them fairly and with respect at St Thomas of Aquin's.

Our pupils have opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school. We have an extensive variety of groups that pupils can join and have their voices heard. These groups include the Rights Respecting Schools group, the Climate Action Group, the Equalities group, the Caritas award group as well as an extensive selection of clubs for pupils to participate in. We also have leadership roles for our senior pupils including S6 leadership team, House captains, sports captains, equalities captain, peer mentors and volunteering opportunities to support our younger pupils in class as well as paired reading. The HT meets regularly with the S6 leadership team to ensure that their voices are being heard. 79% of Pupils strongly agreed or agreed that St Thomas of Aquin's offers them opportunities to take part in activities in school beyond the classroom and timetabled days. Well planned activities throughout the academic session including Feast- day events and retreats give pupils the opportunity to contribute effectively to the life of the school. During this academic session we have also increased our opportunities for outdoor learning across the curriculum and faculty areas are reintroducing excursions to support learning out with the classroom. Social subjects have delivered a number of opportunities this year including but not limited to an S4 trip to the Scottish parliament a Business led trip to Chocolateries. Environmental Science took pupils on a Windfarm excursion plus Rivers fieldwork and Higher Geography have experienced Rivers Fieldwork plus urban fieldwork, Book Festival trip, National Gallery trip with Fashion and textiles, a Biology trip to RoslinCT.

Pupils can share their views about the school through a variety of forums including surveys, focus groups and the Pupil Parliament. Only 57% of Pupils strongly agreed or agreed that St Thomas of Aquin's listens to their views. The Pupil Parliament is still in the early stages and its development has been identified as a whole school priority for

academic session 24-25. Pupils have also engaged in a survey to gather their views about a variety of aspects of the school.

The school has a broad range of SIMD across the school community, and we are making good progress in ensuring that we are providing a broad range of courses across the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. 79% of our staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. We have introduced NPAs in Computing and Art, skills-based courses such as Practical Electronics, Administration, Fashion and Textiles as well as Environmental Science and Computer Games Design. We have increased our provision in the senior phase in line with our current social, cultural, and economic context to ensure that we are meeting the needs of learners at all levels. Staff have engaged in sharing good practice sessions this academic session with a focus on inclusion and meeting the needs of all learners. The Learning Development and support team have presented sessions to all staff on differentiation, ASN, as well as a focus on how the accessibility functions on the iPad can support learners in the classroom setting.

Our Wellbeing Hub continues to evolve and integrate within the whole school learning provision. The Wellbeing Hub has been relocated within the school to provide a physically more nurturing and inclusive location within the school building. This relocation has created a more inclusive, nurturing and safe space for all pupils who access this resource. The school has co-ordinators in Literacy, Numeracy, and Health and Wellbeing who lead in enhancing their specific whole school responsibility area. The school has after-school Literacy and Numeracy clubs where S6 pupils' mentor S1 pupils. The Health and Wellbeing co-ordinator has developed the school's systems for lunchtime and after-school clubs.

### **2.3 Quality of teaching**

The school's Senior Leadership Team uses evidence from out of school and in school learning visits, collegiately planned learning visits, and the use of the 2.3 Quality Indicator Faculty returns to identify the areas of strength as well as next steps to move the school from Good to Very Good. Our whole school learner visits programme runs on a 3-year cycle with each member of teaching staff being observed once per year with a follow up feedback meeting. Learner visits are completed by SLT, CL and a peer on a rotation. This year we have introduced the use of MS Forms to record feedback which supports with sharing good practice across the school community. This academic session we have completed year 3 of the rotation so all colleagues within the school community have as a minimum been observed by a member of SLT, their direct line manager and a peer over the last three years.

Teachers have continued to embed and develop their digital skills to support the creative use of iPads in the classroom. Through training and practice colleagues have become more proficient and creative in their use of the iPad to enhance learning and engage our young people. We also have a whole school staff MS Teams which supports dissemination of resources and 'how to' videos to support staff in their own time. The MS Teams has also been complimented by 'Top Tip Tuesdays' where a useful bitesize tip has been shared with colleagues to support improvement in pedagogy. Some faculties use the private channels in MS Teams to support individual learners and encourage pupils to ask questions. Some faculties have channels in their MS Teams for pupils to access the resources and work if they have been absent to allow for them to ensure that they do not miss out on any part of the course. Most faculties are now using MS Teams to share learning resources with pupils and some faculties have now implemented the use of Class OneNote. All faculties have been given 1 or 2 promethean boards in their classrooms to continue to develop the digital skills and quality of provision in our classrooms. Some faculties are also embarking on using iPads creatively to enhance the learner experience and engage pupils in their learning. Faculties are beginning to confidently use Apps and websites to support learning including Desmos, Kahoot, Minecraft education and clickr.

St Thomas of Aquin's Learning and Teaching has a wide range of very good practices – good planning, a lesson structure which offers clear instructions and expectations, very positive staff-pupil relationships, individual, paired, and group work activities and the use of plenaries to measure success criteria. In the recent Supported Self - evaluation visit in March 2024 the key whole school strengths identified were our learners were engaged and motivated, the purpose of learning was clear in almost all lessons, a whole school learning and teaching policy was in place and excellent and very good teaching was observed in some classrooms. As a school, we will continue to develop our learning and teaching approaches in line with St Thomas LEARNS to increase the our very good and excellent teaching across the school.

The school has co-ordinators in Literacy, Numeracy, and Health and Wellbeing who led in enhancing their specific whole school responsibility area. The school has after-school Literacy and Numeracy clubs where S6 pupils' mentor S1 pupils. The Health and Wellbeing co-ordinator has focussed in on developing the school's systems for lunchtime and after-school clubs. The school continues to support colleagues in taking on SQA marking responsibilities. Through sharing SQA good practice at Leadership meetings, Faculty meetings, and Faculty activity time, there is clear evidence that the confidence from the SQA experience supports the planning of learning, teaching, and assessment in most Faculties. This expertise will continue to support the quality of teaching and assessment in the school and the raising of attainment at the school. The school works with a range of partners to provide individualised opportunities to learn in a variety of settings including Spartans, 6V cafe', Be you Be strong programmes. For pupils who are at risk of not achieving targeted support has been delivered through the closing the gap teacher and the SfL faculty. There have been a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn out with the school setting including trips in Social Subjects, Science and Modern Languages as well as a range of activities that have been delivered through the Meaningful May programme.

The Learning and Teaching working group this session have developed a whole school approach to Learner conversations in line with our whole school tracking periods. The introduction of a OneNote Learner conversation log has allowed pupils to be able to identify their next steps in each of their subject areas alongside their teacher. The digital approach also allows for parental involvement as parents can read through and discuss them at home. Furthermore, targeted learner conversations are conducted by Pupil Support Leaders and DHTs with pupils who are not on track or are at risk of not achieving. In the April 2024 pupil survey 81% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback they receive on their work helps me to improve my learning. St Thomas LEARNS posters are now on display in all classrooms so there is a clear visual approach for all teachers and pupils.

Most faculties use learning intentions and success criteria across all year groups but there are still inconsistencies across the school in the use of effective learning intentions and success criteria. In the recent SSE this was highlighted as an area for further development. Another area that has been highlighted as a whole school development point is the effective use of questioning. The Learning and Teaching group will plan a series of collegiate learning activities over the course of next academic session to continue improvements in these 2 identified areas.

### Effective use of assessment

#### **Broad General Education**

Most faculties use a variety of assessment approaches to monitor the progress of our young people in the Broad General Education. There is a wide range of creative formative assessment approaches being used in these faculties including the use of mini white boards, the apple classroom app, MS forms quizzes which provide pupils with instant feedback. Summative assessments still play an integral part in monitoring pupil progress and in these faculties, there are clear systems in place to ensure that these assessments are based on the CfE benchmarks and opportunities to standardise, moderate as a faculty team are planned. In some faculties pupils can choose how they can demonstrate their understanding by choosing the way in which they would like to present their work. The faculty 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment self-evaluation returns completed in May 2023 highlight that further development is required in some faculties next academic session to ensure that pupils in S1-3 are being consistently assessed in line with the Education Scotland CfE benchmarks. The implementation of faculty self-evaluation calendars in line with the whole school calendar to support their faculty teams have regular and consistent approaches to standardisation, moderation and verification has supported a consistent streamlined approach to quality assurance across the school and will continue next academic session 2024-2025.

At a whole school level, we are continuing to develop staff confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the CfE Broad General Education levels. Following the work of our Curricular Leader of RMPS who gathered collated information and data regarding BGE levels across faculty areas this is a clear area of development that has been identified following the recent SSE March 2024 visit. However, there are inconsistencies with the provision offered at authority level by subject leaders which has resulted in some subject areas not having opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools this session. 62% of staff surveyed stated that strongly agreed or agreed when asked if they had opportunities to share and learn with colleagues from other schools. Although this is an improvement from last year it is an area for the CEC to consider. Teachers

value the subject leader network meetings which in many subject areas have not occurred this academic session. A clear whole school focus for next session will be to develop teacher knowledge, understanding and confidence in the use assessment in line with BGE benchmarks to ensure that reliable evidence is generated which will support clear and consistent tracking of progress for all pupils. This will lead to accurate reporting of CfE levels.

### **Senior phase**

To support SQA estimates we have continued to provide progress tests across faculties in class time to support SQA estimates and to provide pupils gauge where they are in their learning and to inform next steps. This is further complimented by a formal assessment week in November and January prelims for all S4-6 studying at National 5 and above. The prelims alongside progress tests provide robust evidence for SQA evidence and the exceptional circumstances process. In most faculties senior pupils are provided with a prelim evaluation sheet whereby pupils need to identify their own areas of strength as well as their next steps to support their progression. In most faculties MS teams is used to provide pupils with exemplar answers and revision material to support their learning at home.

The DHT S4-6 analyses whole school prelim results. This supports identification of pupils that are not on track in their learning and allows for targeted interventions to be implemented. This session the Closing the Gap teacher with the support of the Pupil Support Leaders and Curricular Leaders have identified pupils that are at risk of not achieving and well-timed interventions have been put in place to support these pupils achieve. One key target for the CTGT is to ensure that all pupils in S4 achieve at least 5 National qualifications by the end of the session. Some faculties communicate successes as well as concerns home via text messages, letters and seemis referrals to Pupil Support Leaders who communicate with home to ensure that parents are informed of concerns in ample time to allow for interventions to be put in place.

### **Planning, Tracking and Monitoring**

Most faculties have a central spreadsheet to track pupil progress from S1-3 and in the senior phase if they continue in the subject area. This allows for the Curricular Leader to identify those at risk of not achieving in their subject areas and initiate well timed interventions. Key targeted groups are closely monitored and regularly discussed at faculty meetings, PSL/SfL house meetings, LDS meetings and 16+meetings. Most faculties plan their curriculum to ensure that all young people's abilities are being met. The Support for Learning faculty work collegiately with faculties across the school to support the development of differentiated material and courses that support our SRP pupils and pupils with ASN. The faculty use a variety of assessment data to plan supports and next steps for pupils with ASN. This data includes SNSA and standardises scores. Through Young Person's planning meetings pupils with ASN are fully involved in planning their learning and identifying their next steps along with parents/carers and partner agencies. Individualised support plans are in place to support teacher planning and to ensure that pupils are achieving at their own pace with their successes tracked and monitored at regular intervals. In line with the whole school reporting calendar faculties track pupil progress and inform pupils and parents of their current working level and next steps. In the March 2024 parent survey 68% of Parents strongly agreed or agreed that the information they receive about how their child is doing reaches them at the right time. This is an area that the continues to develop. Currently the DHT S1-3 and DHT S4-6 have separate systems to track and monitor pupils across the school in line with the reporting calendar. This allows for some effective interventions to be implemented including targeted learner conversations, at risk groups identified, communication with home. This is an area that has been identified as a whole school priority to ensure there is a consistent whole school approach and with the introduction of a new tracking and monitoring system next session the Senior Leadership team will explore how to improvements can be made to our current internal tracking and monitoring of all pupils across the school.

### **Next steps to consider**

1. Mini faculty reviews
2. Continue to embed and support colleagues St Thomas LEARNS- effective questioning and learning intentions/success criteria
3. Continue to embed the whole school learner conversation system
4. Implement new tracking and monitoring system specifically with BGE levels- reliable assessments in line with CfE levels

### Quality Indicator 3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion – Evaluation Level of Good.

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of Statutory Duties, including presumption of ASN for Looked After, unless assessed to the contrary, and specific arrangements for support to improve outcomes
- Inclusion and Equality

This indicator focusses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.

#### Wellbeing

Most staff have a secure shared understanding of the importance of wellbeing and of their responsibilities towards ensuring that young people feel safe, respected and nurtured within the school environment. The school has well-embedded systems in place to promote wellbeing across all aspects of the life of the school as part of universal and targeted support. Young people are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their personal wellbeing through a range of learning experiences embedded in the curriculum and participation in school clubs and activities. School staff are working towards the recognition of pupil achievement in and out of school and encouraging young people who have not engaged to become involved. Most pupils (79%) agreed that the school offered them opportunities to take part in activities beyond the timetabled day and that the school helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle including opportunities for them to get regular exercise. The majority of pupils (65%) agree that the school provides them with opportunities to discuss their achievements with an adult who knows them well. To develop this further Mrs Hastings, St Thomas of Aquin's Senior Development Officer, has achievements on her remit. Mrs Hastings is strategically leading the Key Adult Class programme developing this will support engagement with achievements. As a follow up the school will roll out a bi-annual survey to gather, share and celebrate these achievements with the wider school community.

#### Universal support

Young people's entitlement to universal support has continued to be delivered through a range of strategies including a structured, relevant, and updated PSE curriculum, punctual House assemblies led by Pupil Support Leaders, DHTs, HTs and partners, daily contact with a KA teacher, wherever possible weekly contact with the Pupil Support Leader through PSE and individual interviews at times of transition. The vertical Key Adult system aims to provide continuity of support and opportunities for learners to review progress with key staff who know them well. The structured Personal Education Programme provides a clear progression pathway from S1 to S6 and has been recently updated to be relevant to pupil needs. The S1-S6 PSE learning journey promotes physical, mental, emotional health and wellbeing and social interactions including for example support during transition, road safety, friendships, online safety, healthy life choices etc. The delivery of a new S1- S6 Relationship programme of work completed last session in response to pupil consultation was fully embedded this session across 3 curricular areas. This session Equalities units have been embedded across all year groups in the PSE curriculum as well as SLO inputs in the BGE curriculum. In the recent survey 69% of pupils agreed that school helped pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle and 73% stated that they can access regular exercise through school.

Mental Health support is available to pupils, parents and staff through our school-based counsellor. Mental Health awareness is raised through a range of class-based



activities during PSE. PSL's are delivering Mental Health and Wellbeing at Level 4 in Senior Phase. A range of activities are available during Mental Health Awareness Week activities. This session SfL and Wellbeing staff have accessed CLPL from a range of partners which will allow for the joint delivery of specific programmes such as Journey of Hope (Loss and Bereavement) and LIAM. The school has developed eco-sensory therapy through the setting up of a flower and vegetable garden offering alternative learning experiences for learners with additional support needs. One member of the SfL faculty has completed training on social therapeutical horticulture and is expanding the range of interventions available to ASN pupils. At St Thomas of Aquin's we recognise the importance of using open spaces to promote positive relationships and to support mental health and wellbeing. After feedback from the pupil voice and support from the parent council our head teacher established an outdoor seating area where pupils and staff can converse with one another in an area which has wooden seating and planters to improve mental wellbeing.

Over the course of the session the support available to pupils has been enhanced by the opening of our well-being hub which can provide a range of individualised or group interventions to young people with social and emotional needs. The Wellbeing Hub has started to implement a systematic approach towards the tracking of the health and wellbeing of the young people attending the base with a view to informing development priorities and evaluating the impact of specific intervention.

Several whole staff sessions of CLPL have been delivered by the SfL faculty focusing on Dyslexia/ Literacy difficulties, use of assistive technology on iPad and differentiation during CAT and in service sessions with a view to embedding inclusive practice in classrooms. The Learning and Teaching pupil focus group reported that most teachers create an environment enhancing learning and are positive. There are effective systems in place to support all learners in their class at pathway 1&2 based on the belief that young people learn best in an inclusive classroom environment whilst also recognising the need for additional support strategies. The staged intervention approach is supported by a range of partners. These include Be Strong, Be You, Ruts and Volunteering Scotland. These strategies ensure that overall attendance remains higher than the national average for all pupils including Care Experienced pupils.

### **Targeted Support**

Targeted support for learners with ASN is delivered by the Learning Development Support team in collaboration with a wide range of partners including Project Scotland, Canongate Youth, 6VT. Through planned targeted partnership working pupils experiencing a range of barriers to learning can access advice and support in line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child. Young Persons Plans actively seeking pupil and parent views are reviewed on a regular basis. LDS staff have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils and their personal circumstances supporting highly individualised and pupil centred solutions to arising challenges. Detailed and effective tracking and monitoring and systematic targeted tracking of pupils at risk of not achieving leading to individualised interventions taking place. Pupils feel that their needs are being addressed by staff. Tracking and monitoring, follow up interventions and support plans are set up, monitored, and reviewed regularly by the LDS team consisting of the PSL/ SfL / Wellbeing Staff under the guidance and leadership of a DHT. More specialised support requiring partner involvement is available in response to individual concerns through a range of referral pathways. SfL PSLs and CL well-being also provide support and guidance to all staff in relation to individual pupil arrangements and most subject staff show high levels of flexibility and creativity in finding solutions to overcome the barriers to learning of pupils. Most school staff liaise closely and promptly with the LDS team to address identified issues and work collaboratively with creativity and flexibility to meet the learning and personal needs of learners requiring adjustments. Relevant information relating to pupils' additional support needs are shared appropriately and staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of their child's needs. At BGE and Senior Phase level, PSLs, SfL, Wellbeing staff and DHTs collegiately work with colleagues and partners in planning flexible pathways and ensuring positive destinations for all pupils. Most parents (70%) believe that their child receives the help they need to do well.

### **Transitions**

A transition programme from P7 into S1 is in place within the Learning Community and this session has been facilitated by a Transition teacher whose focus has been to



support the literacy / numeracy and well-being of groups of identified P7 learners in each of the associated Primary Schools as well as deliver programmes of intervention to identified S1 learners. The transition teacher has also liaised with a wide range of other primary schools and in partnership with SfL and subject specialist staff contributed to the delivery of an enhanced transition programme available to all P7 pupils. Individual transition arrangements were also arranged where required. The needs of young people requiring targeted support are identified at the point of transition through close liaison with associated primary school and the use of CEC documentation. Reviews are held by the Primary schools and attended by SfL/ Transition staff to plan adjustments and additional support prior to the P7 visits in June. The information collated at the point of transition is communicated to all staff and updated regularly through an Integrated Support Sheet.

Regarding Senior Phase transitions the 16+ team meet on a 6 weekly basis led by S4-S6 DHT. It is attended by a range of partners who work collaboratively to ensure that all pupils achieve a sustained positive destination. Last session 98.4 % of school leavers went into training, university, College, and employment on leaving school.

### **Ethos and Leadership opportunities / Pupil voice**

Pupils at BGE and Senior Phase level are provided with a wide range of opportunities to support the ethos of the school. Such opportunities have included volunteering (Project Scotland Partnership) S6 Mentoring, participation in the Equalities group, the Rights Respecting School group, the Pupil Parliament, and a wide range of after school clubs. Senior pupils have been encouraged to lead in key areas such as in class mentoring, equalities, and coaching/ mentoring of younger pupils. The S1-S6 pupil-led parliament met on a termly basis. The majority of pupils (58%) agreed that the school listened to their views, but a significant minority were undecided which initiated a review of the systems and procedures. Areas of good practice highlighted by the Learning and Teaching Pupil focus group included the regular use of end of topic surveys/ evaluation through Forms in curricular areas, opportunities to discuss, debate and share opinions in class, pupil focus groups, options for clubs and the Rights Respecting School.

### **Fulfilment of Statutory Duties, including presumption of ASN for Looked After, unless assessed to the contrary, and specific arrangements for support to improve outcomes.**

All staff have a good understanding of legislation pertaining to GIRFEC legislation and Child Protection procedures and use the wellbeing concern forms consistently and effectively. Staff attended a mandatory CLPL session on CP procedures in addition to the yearly update session in August. Most staff (80%) report that they understand how to apply the school's procedures relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding. The learning Community works in close partnership with parents as first educators, Educational Psychological Services, Educational Welfare Services, CAHMs, 6VT and Additional support for Learning Services. Pupil and Parents' views are central to the child planning process and pupil-centred plans embedding the principles of Girfec and partnership working are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all pupils can access their educational opportunities and achieve their full potential.

Staff are proactive in supporting the prompt identification of additional support needs and considering the information provided to them in devising or implementing learning and teaching strategies to meet individual learners' needs. Staff show a solution-focused approach in addressing barriers to learning and respond positively to CLPL supporting the development of their practice. As a result, most pupils enjoy learning in school (79%), feel that they are sufficiently challenged (85%) and that they are supported by staff to understand how they are progressing in school (84%). Child protection and Seemis data recording are in line with guidelines. CEC guidelines pertaining to PPR organisation and storage have been initiated for S1 pupils and will be rolled out for incoming year groups.

Quality Assurance is in place to ensure that wellbeing concern forms are fully completed and stored appropriately once they have been actioned. Next steps should focus on feedback being provided more consistently to staff initiating the referral. Learners' entitlement to assessment Arrangements for SQA NQ are planned well leading to positive

outcomes for all learners as per Insight overall data.

### **Inclusion and Equity**

There is evidence that the school is improving outcomes for all pupils in some areas above the national comparator levels. See insight data. All staff have high expectations of pupils (83% ) of pupils agreed that they are encouraged by staff to do their best), which was also highlighted by the Learning and Teaching Pupil focus group. 97% of S3 pupils are on track to achieve level 3 or better in Numeracy and 94% level 4 or better. In Literacy, 96% of pupils are on track to achieve level 3 or better (up from 91% last year) and 84% level 4 or better (up from 80% last year.) Strong attainment can also be evidenced at Senior school Level as a result of well-planned curriculum opportunities providing a range of flexible pathways to meet a range of individual needs and aspirations. High quality universal and targeted support allows for strong data in terms of Positive destinations (98.4%),

New learning experiences were created for S1-S6 pupils through a partnership with Volunteering Matters and local business Baillie Gifford which provided opportunities for 15 learners with additional support needs/ or at risk of disengaging from education. 15 pupils were able to access individual tailored and highly supported placements as part of our closing the gap strategy. A further 7 pupils also benefited from a mentoring programme delivered through Volunteering Matters. This session all staff and pupils were provided with an iPad to promote digital inclusion and a regular programme of CLPL for staff was delivered throughout the year including opportunities to share good practice and a specific focus on iPad accessibility features to promote digital learning and support effectively pupils with additional support needs.

### **BR, BB, BL**

The school ethos and values are well established among pupils, parents, and staff. Most staff (78%) report that their work is underpinned by the school's visions and values and feel that young people are treated fairly and with respect (91%). 94% of staff agree that pupils are encouraged and supported to treat each other with respect. Almost all staff feel they have a clear understanding of the impact of positive relationships on attainment and improving outcomes for young people and are committed to the principles of the Better Relationships, Better Behaviour, Better Learning policy.

The school's better relationships, better learning, and better behaviour policy emphasises the importance of restorative practice, restorative conversations, and getting back on track through staged intervention. The policy was updated during the 2022-2023 session. Staff and pupils' views were sought on existing areas of strength, as well as areas for development. The clarity and consistency of the system were highlighted with many citing that the approach fostered positive relationships and worked to support staff and pupils with steps and strategies when relationships temporarily broke down. Staff were also enthusiastic about using Seemis to record and manage behaviour-based referrals and favoured the implementation of an on-call system to support with instances of dysregulated behaviour.

As outlined in the Pupil Survey learners felt that within a supportive learning environment, they could access support and guidance from teachers. 72% of pupils reported that they could identify a member of staff they could speak to when upset and 76% of pupils said that they felt comfortable approaching a member of staff with questions. Pupil Support Leaders, Support for Learning & Wellbeing staff DHTs, and HT are actively involved in supporting young people and their families when challenges arise. Through intensive one to one support, pupils experiencing challenges are encouraged to reflect on behaviour, accept responsibility, understand the impact of their actions, and seek solutions in accordance with the principles of restorative justice. Individual target setting and individualised support plans are used widely to work towards changes in patterns of behaviour and sustained positive impact. Arrangements are reviewed regularly to reflect changes in circumstances and progress made. 70% of pupils agreed that staff helped young people to be responsible for their own behaviour.

The pupil survey shows that almost all pupils (80%) feel safe, secure and treated fairly and with respect by staff and peers (70%). This is in line with parental view which show that 87% of parents feel that staff treat their child fairly and with respect and that their child is safe at school (89%) and that the school encourages young people to treat each other with respect. However, a minority of pupils (48%) stated that the school deals well with any bullying highlighting the need to communicate investigation outcomes

to pupils more promptly and with greater consistency. Most parents (84%) report that their child likes being at school.

The Learning and Teaching Pupil focus group identified other areas of strength such as staff being welcoming, approachable and friendly, SLT greeting pupils at the door and staff being responsive to issues arising. The caring nature of the culture with a focus on pupil welfare was also highlighted and the overall ethos described as positive with a feeling that all teachers wished the best for their pupils. Pupils commented on the dedication of their teachers and commented on the relaxed environment which gave learners autonomy in how they wanted to learn. Pupils felt comfortable asking questions to consolidate knowledge and understanding.

### **Equalities**

The St Thomas of Aquin's Equality Group is pupil led by three S6 Captains. The group and school community have shown a shared vision of celebrating diversity within our community whilst also raising awareness of local and global issues. Captains have presented to their peers and organised whole school activities via our Key Adult programme including Show Racism the Red Card – Wear Red Day, Dyslexia Awareness Week, Neurodiversity Week, International Women's Day, Anti-bullying Week, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Month. Arrangements have been made available to support the cultural and religious traditions of other faiths led by volunteer members of staff.

The CEC Equalities review undertaken this session identified areas of strengths such as pupils feeling represented, treated equally and able to voice their concerns. Areas for development included a streamlined way of reporting concerns to staff and further embedding of diversity and inclusion themes. Areas of strength identified by staff included a shared strong of belonging to the school community, the celebration of the school diversity recognised as being at the core of its identity, positivity from staff and Senior Leaders, and a strong caring ethos. Areas for development included increased clarity on the certain aspects of the Ethos and Equality policy pertaining to the response to misogynist language for example as well as the continuation of the focus on decolonisation of the curriculum and cultural inclusion.

### **Rights Respecting School**

The whole school community is in the process of developing a deeper understanding of the UNCRC and its associated terminology. Staff are becoming more confident in referring to them and displaying articles in the context of the classroom. Pupils are increasingly able to discuss different rights and entitlements and understand their universal principle. This process is supported through weekly meetings of a Pupil Steering group who have raised awareness of UNCRC by presenting 2 pupil assemblies, organised displays around the school building and planned and delivered a whole school rights day. CLPL has been delivered to the whole staff on the RRSA and faculties have completed a return highlighting the rights embedded in the delivery of their curriculum. In Modern Studies S1 unit of work has been dedicated to learning about rights including UNCRC. Information is shared regularly with the wider school community via a dedicated section on the school website and a twitter page. A survey has been completed by staff and pupils to identify further areas for development next session. RRS recently received the silver award highlighting their drive to ensuring that all views voices are heard in our whole school community.

### **PEF**

Most staff (83%) report that they have a clear understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school and report using information including data effectively to identify and reduce inequalities in children and young people's outcomes.

Targeted support in Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing has been delivered to S1-S3 pupils from SIMD 1-2 and FME with a view to close the poverty-related attainment gap. Strategies have included individual coaching sessions on a 2/3 basis, support from the Learning and Nurture Hub PEF coach, a 6-week numeracy programme. PEF coaches ensure that identified pupils are provided with the necessary equipment for school and that pupils and families are supported with clothing, the application for free bus pass or other arrangements if required. A daily breakfast club promoting healthy options is also available to all pupils as part of universal support with a view to supporting attendance. Using the Shanarri indicators, pupils feed-back has highlighted that the majority of pupils coached feel safe and listened to. Relevant information is shared with

staff on a termly basis through the staff bulletin.

**Next Steps:**

- Emphasis on strengthening the pastoral role of KA teachers who will undertake learner conversations as part of the Tracking and Monitoring follow up according to a planned and systematic timeline and will develop an overview of the learners' journey from S1 to S6 in their Key Adult class. Relaunch of the wellbeing outcomes to staff and pupils to be used as an evaluation tool during learner conversations.
- Review of the 3.1 Quality Assurance calendar to ensure that pupils 'needs are met with greater consistency in classrooms and evaluating the impact of the strategies used at pathway 1&2 prior to targeted intervention as well as the further integration of pupil Support Services to reflect to streamline referral processes and capitalise on the full range of skills, expertise and knowledge within the team.
- Focus on systems and procedures to improve the quality consistency of the feed-back provided to pupils, staff and parents following on from SEEMIS referrals, wellbeing concern forms and the recording of incidents on the SEEMIS Equalities and Management module.
- Review of Health Care Plans and medical information

## Quality Indicator 3.2: Raising attainment and achievement – Evaluation Level of Very Good

- Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall Quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners, including specific reference to Looked After children and other Equity cohorts

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator.

### Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy – St Thomas of Aquin's S3 Numeracy and Literacy CfE levels for the last 3 years

#### Broad General Education

St Thomas of Aquin's pupils attain well in Literacy and these high standards are sustained over time. Over the last 3 years, almost all S3 pupils achieve Third Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level or better in Literacy. In the last 3 years, most of S3 pupils achieve Fourth CfE level in all Literacy. The systems at St Thomas supports these high levels of Literacy attainment. The school continues to provide SRA classes to pupils who have a standardised reading score of 85 or under and this programme is co-ordinated between Support for Learning and the English Faculty. Maths and English S1 & S2 sets are constructed to support a smaller pupil-teacher ratio where necessary. All pupils in S1 complete a reading and research unit which uses resources from most CfE areas to teach them skills useful for pre-reading and research, this allows pupils to develop literacy skills relevant for all subjects. The English and Literacy Faculty have also developed IDL projects with Science (S1) and Social Subjects (S2) which enable progression in research and writing skills.

St Thomas of Aquin's pupils attain well in Numeracy and sustaining these high standards over time. Over the last 3 years, almost all S3 pupils achieve Third Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level or better in Numeracy. In the last 3 years, most of S3 pupils achieve Fourth CfE level in Numeracy. Through a variety of experiences, Maths Week Scotland, Number Day, and National Numeracy Day St Thomas continues to raise the profile of Numeracy for pupils. A Numeracy booklet to support consistent approaches to the Numeracy is in place across the school. Parents of S1 pupils at risk of not achieving Level 3 Numeracy are invited to a parental engagement event at the school and this is also supported by a S1 Numeracy catch-up club led by S6 pupils from October onwards (these types of events are now in place for Literacy at St Thomas of Aquin's). In line with teaching methods introduced across the St Thomas Learning Community, the Mathematics and Numeracy Faculty have implemented SEAL strategies within the lower ability sets taking into consideration barriers to learning.

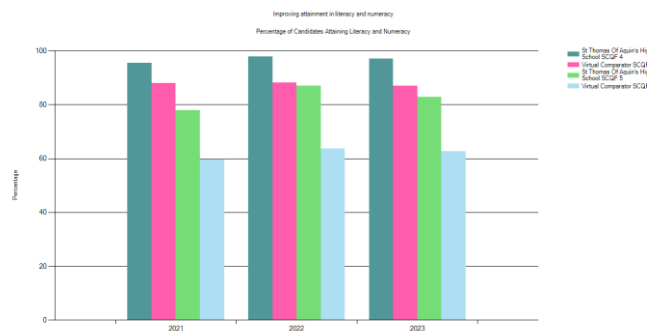
S3 March 2024	% on track to achieve Third level or better	% on track to achieve Fourth level
Numeracy	98.6% of pupils on track to achieve Third level or better (138 out of 141)	92.2% of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level (130 out of 141 pupils)
Literacy	96% of pupils on track to achieve Third Level of better (134 out of 140 pupils)	84% of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level (118 out of 140 pupils)

S3 March 2023	% on track to achieve Third level or better	% on track to achieve Fourth level
Numeracy	97% of pupils on track to achieve Third Level or better (135 out of 139)	88 % of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level or better (123 out of 139)
Literacy	91% of pupils on track to achieve Third level of better (126 out of 139)	80% of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level (111 out of 139 pupils)

S3 April 2022	% on track to achieve Third level or better	% on track to achieve Fourth level
Numeracy	99.3% of pupils on track to achieve Third level or better (136 out of 137)	97.1% of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level (133 out of 137 pupils)
Literacy	96% of pupils on track to achieve Third Level of better (131 out of 137 pupils)	86% of pupils on track to achieve Fourth Level (118 out of 137 pupils)

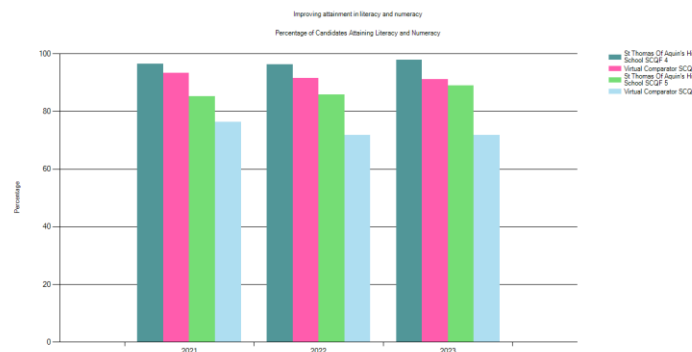
### Senior Phase Literacy and Numeracy

Performance of S4 candidates in Literacy and Numeracy based on S4 cohort numbers



2023 S4 Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy is at **97.14%** which is slightly down from the 2022 statistic of 97.83%. St Thomas of Aquin's Level Literacy and Numeracy combines statistic is **10.21% above the Virtual Comparator**. 2023 S4 Level 5 in Literacy and Numeracy is at **82.86%** which is 3.83% down from the 2022 statistic of 86.69%. St Thomas of Aquin's Level Literacy and Numeracy combines statistic is **20.15% above the Virtual Comparator**.

Performance of S5 candidates in Literacy and Numeracy based on S4 cohort numbers.



2023 S5 Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy stands at **97.81%** and S5 Level 5 in Literacy and Numeracy stands at **89.05**. The Level 4 statistic is 6.64% above the VC and the Level 5 statistic is over 17% above the VC.

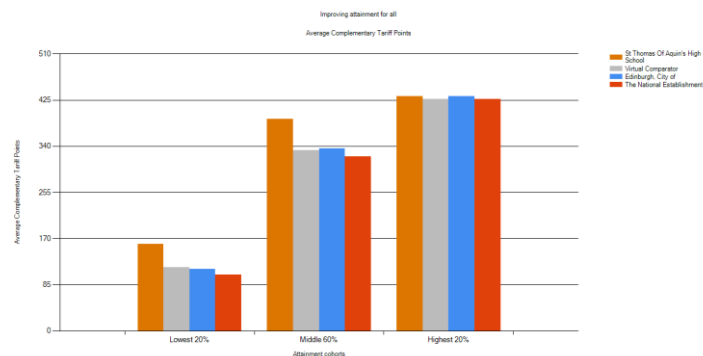
### Attainment over time

The attainment of pupils at St Thomas' is very good and the results over the last 3 years compared to the Virtual Comparator exemplify this (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Insight-Analysis-September-2023.pdf>). The school has self-evaluated Learning, Teaching and Assessment as Good and is focussing on the consistency needed in every Faculty to achieve Very Good – the 2024 self-supported evaluation experience will identify the school's next steps. There is a significant uptake of staff working as SQA markers which helps support our pupils' understanding of courses and assessment standards. Curricular Leaders and Faculty staff have benefited from the SQA alternative certificate assessment, internal assessment systems to support their professional understanding of SQA National Qualifications, and May planning days to support collegiate working. There is a strategic approach to coursing by Curricular Leaders, the Integrated Support Team and Deputes Headteachers, led by The Headteacher, to support pupils' attainment. An annual review of the school's coursing timeline ensures deadlines are met timeously and in session 2022-23 the timetable has been brought forward by 2 weeks to support the S1-S2 pupil learning experience – this has also occurred in May 2024.

The Senior Leadership Team, Curricular Leaders, and the Integrated Support Team know the pupils of St Thomas' very well. Changes in SLT remits has supported the 2.3 Depute to have overall responsibility in tracking S1-S6 year groups. The move in 2023-24 session supported the DHT in using the school's Edict tracking system and the existing collegiate staged intervention process to help pupils who are underachieving or at risk of not attaining a meaningful group of National Qualification awards to identify their next steps. St Thomas continues celebrating pupils' success through the use of Faculty corridor notice boards, congratulatory texts sent home to parents, and the increase of pupil certificates at the award ceremonies. Almost all Curricular Leaders have their individualised tracking systems in place and liaise well with Pupil Support Leaders to ensure the needs of learners are met and early intervention packages are implemented where need be. Faculty tracking will be supported by the newly created Faculty self-evaluation calendar. A newly created Learning Conversation OneNote document supports pupils and staff in having meaningful targeted learning discussions which is captured via an iPad OneNote document which can be shared with parents.

### Improving attainment for all

2023 S4 average complementary tariff points based on S4 cohort numbers.



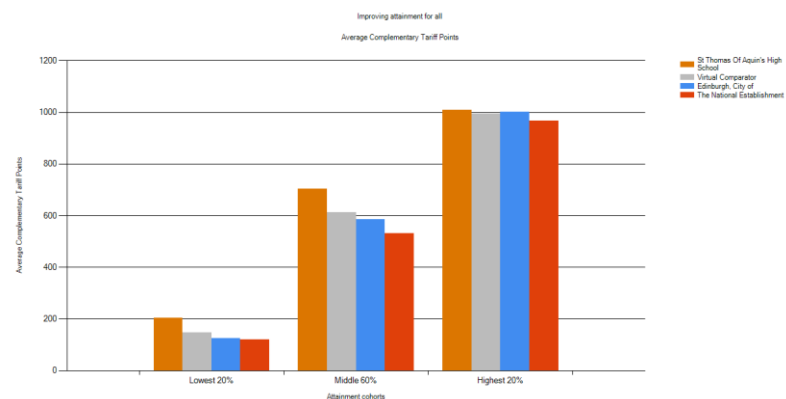
The average complementary tariff points measurement allows secondary schools to compare pupil attainment by taking a pupil's 5 "best" National Qualification subject attainment levels (combining the tariff points for subject Levels and Grades) and compare this with other pupils in different schools within a Local Authority and outwith. In



Local Authorities, pupils can sit 6,7, or 8 National Qualifications. In St Thomas, a S4 pupil sits 7 National Qualifications.

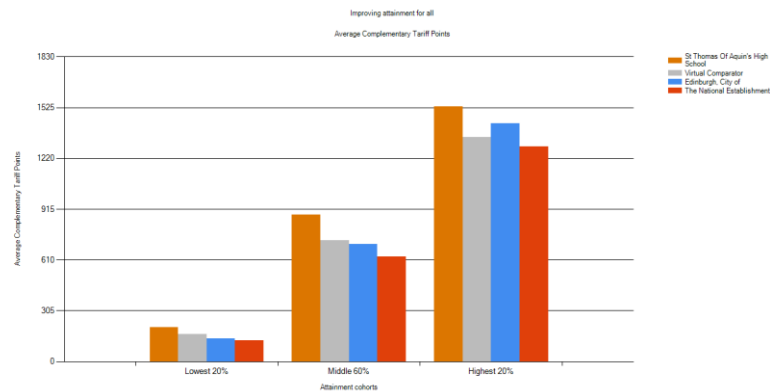
The **S4** graph shows that in the lowest 20% and middle 60%, and highest 20% attainment measurements, St Thomas' outperforms almost all of the VC, City of Edinburgh, and the National Establishment attainment metrics. In the highest 20% of attainment measurement, St Thomas is only outperformed by CEC, and this is by 1 point. To support your understanding of Tariff points - 1 C Grade at National 5 has 64 tariff score points. The average complementary tariff points score for the S4 middle 60% is 390 (58 points above the VC), which means that on average pupils in this measurement are achieving approximately 5 National 5 Bs. In the highest 20%, the average complementary tariff score is 431 which means that on average pupils in this measurement are achieving a blend of 5 National 5 As. In the lowest 20%, the average complementary tariff score is 159, which is 43 points above the VC. (completed)

### 2023 S5 average complementary tariff points based on S4 cohort numbers.



The **S5** average complementary tariff points graph continues to compare S5 pupils 5 best National Qualifications using cohort numbers from S4. The above graph shows that in all 3 measures, the lowest 20%, the middle 60%, and highest 20% attainment measures St Thomas' outperforms the VC, City of Edinburgh, and the National Establishment results. The difference between the average complementary tariff points of St Thomas of Aquin's middle 60% (703) and the City of Edinburgh schools middle 60% (585) is 118. To support your understanding of this, an A at Higher is the equivalent of 204 tariff points, a C at Higher is the equivalent of 160 tariff points. The St Thomas of Aquin's middle 60% average complementary tariff points of 703 means that on average pupils in this measurement are achieving approximately 4 Highers at B grade and that the St Thomas of Aquin's highest 20% average complementary tariff points of 1008 pupils are approximately achieving 5 Highers at A grade.

### 2023 S6 average complementary tariff points based on S4 cohort numbers.



The **S6** average complementary tariff points graph shows that in all 3 measures, the lowest 20%, the middle 60%, and highest 20% attainment measures St Thomas' outperforms the VC, City of Edinburgh, and the National results. If you look at the middle 60% of S6 pupils, the average complementary tariff points are 880 compared to the VC of 728, and the National Establishment measurement of 629. To support your understanding of this, a C at Advanced Higher is the equivalent of 400 tariff points, an A at Higher is the equivalent of 204 tariff points.

The average complimentary tariff points in the highest 20% (1532) is 187 above the VC and 102 above CEC averages. In the lowest 20%, the average complimentary tariff point (203) is 39 points above the VC.

For session 2023-24, the school implemented self-evaluation calendars for all Senior Leaders and Leadership Team members which ensures all Curricular Leaders, Integrated Support Leaders, Depute Headteachers are working collegiately to consistently raise whole school attainment, and this supports the whole school self-evaluation calendar. Curricular and Pastoral Leaders meet with the Headteacher and Depute Headteacher of S4-S6 to analyse the SQA Data in September of each year. For session 2023-24, Almost all Faculties met the HT in a September insight Subject/Faculty meeting in which faculty colleagues identified good practice in attainment and areas for improvement. Depute Head Teachers will lead on their specific QI area for analysis and improvement. Post prelim and estimate analysis are shared with all the Leadership Team and Teaching colleagues giving an overview of pupil performance to be evaluated with SQA exam results.

The school is very pleased with the continued improvement in the positive destination statistics. In 2022-23 the school achieved a positive destination statistic of 98.59%, outperforming the virtual comparator, the City of Edinburgh, The South East Collaborative, and the national averages. For a comprehensive analysis of attainment overtime at St Thomas of Aquin's please refer to the school website Attainment and Achievement website page: <https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/>

### Overall Quality of Learners achievement

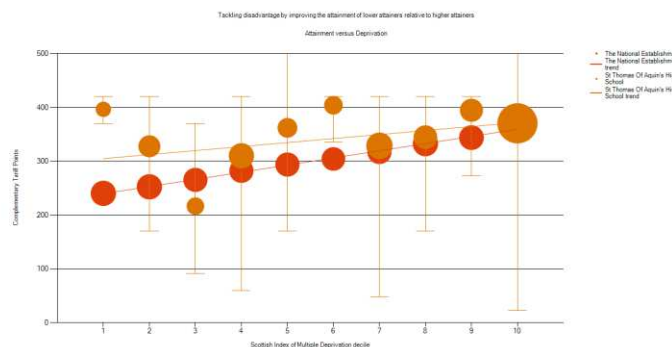
Pupils at St Thomas' are given the opportunity to be successful, confident, and responsible in the life of the school, the wider community, and as global citizens. The Senior Development Officer has started the process of implementing a MS Teams survey (twice yearly) to record and track S1-S6 people's achievements. This analysis will be shared with Key Adults, Faculties, and where appropriate the wider school community. The school provides as many lunchtime and afterschool clubs (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime-and-after-school-clubs/sports-clubs/>) and groups such the climate action group, caritas group, equalities group, and S6 leadership group to support the inclusive ethos of the school. The Headteacher communicates with parents via a weekly school briefing and this engagement strategy often includes pupil successes and achievements. The Headteacher along with Science, Modern Languages, Maths, Computing Science, Integrated support Faculties use School X (Twitter) accounts to celebrate the successes

and achievements of pupils. Through the redrafted St Thomas' annual Junior and Senior Awards pupils' achievements awards have increased and are contextualised in Curricular, Sports, Arts, and Charity areas. The school uses accreditation in Caritas and Duke of Edinburgh to ensure pupils undertaking charity work are positively recognised within the school. The school 2 comprehensive newsletters (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/newsletter/newsletter/>) complement the weekly HT parent briefing and is shared with the school community to celebrate the work of as many pupils as possible.

**Equity for all learners, including specific reference to Looked After children and other Equity cohorts.**

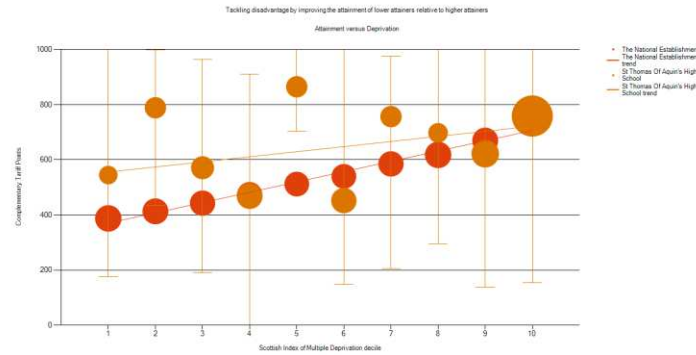
St Thomas of Aquin's continues to strategically support all pupils to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

2023 S4 candidates based on S4 cohort numbers: complementary tariff points.



The above S4 graph compares St Thomas of Aquin's (**orange**) complementary tariff points to the National establishment tariff points (**red**). The St Thomas of Aquin's attainment gap of pupils (3) in **SIMD 1 (397)** to that of pupils (52) in **SIMD 10 (371)** shows that there is no attainment gap. The gradient of the lines show that St Thomas is closing the attainment gap compared to the National Establishment averages. In **SIMD 1,2,4, 5,6, 7,8,9, and 10** St Thomas outperforms the National establishment averages in those specific metrics, with only SIMD 3 (5 pupils) below the National establishment averages. St Thomas of Aquin's knows these pupils and our job is to support pupils in their S5 attainment.

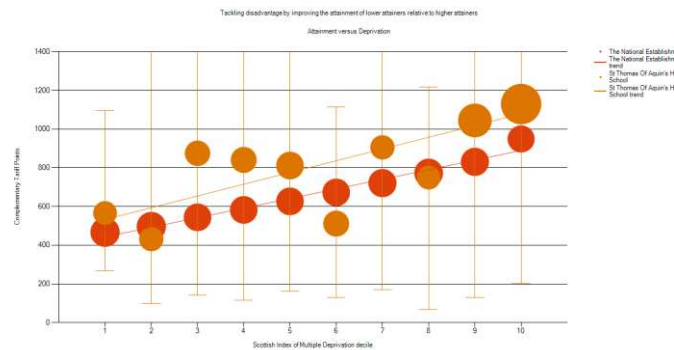
2023 S5 candidates based on S4 cohort numbers: complementary tariff points.



St Thomas of Aquin’s complementary tariff attainment gap in S5 pupils in **SIMD 1 (545)** to that of **SIMD 10 (759)** is a gap of **214** which can be compared to the approximate National Establishment gap between SIMD 1 to 10 of **371**. The gradient of the lines show that St Thomas is closing the attainment gap compared to the National Establishment averages.

In SIMD **1,2,3,4,5,7,8, and 10** St Thomas outperforms the National Establishment averages in those specific metrics, while SIMD 6 (13 pupils) and SIMD 9 (17 pupils) are the measurements below or slightly below the National Establishment average. St Thomas of Aquin’s knows these pupils and our job is to support pupils in their S6 attainment.

### S6 candidates based on S4 cohort numbers: complementary tariff points.



The attainment gap of S6 St Thomas of Aquin’s pupils in **SIMD 1 (566)** to that of **SIMD 10 (1129)** at St Thomas of Aquin’s is a gap of **563** compared to the National Establishment gap between SIMD 1 to 10 of **482**. The gradient of the lines show that at St Thomas the attainment gap is bigger when compared to the National establishment averages.

In SIMD **1, 3, 4, 5, 7,9 and 10** St Thomas outperforms the National Establishment averages in those specific metrics, while SIMD 2 (9 pupils), SIMD 6 (11 pupils) and SIMD 8 (8 pupils) are the measurements below the National Establishment average.

The percentage of St Thomas of Aquin's in S4 who move onto S5 and S6 is very high. Only a small number of pupils leave at the end of S4. The Depute Head of S4-S6 works with the 16+ positive destinations group to support pupils' securing positive destinations. The Skills Development Scotland partnership with St Thomas of Aquin's is highly valued and is a key stakeholder in the success of 98.58% of pupils in February 2023 achieving a positive destination. St Thomas of Aquin's is very proud of our 3-year trend of outperforming all metrics in terms of positive destinations. The majority of pupils at St Thomas of Aquin's go to further and higher education on leaving school with a minority leaving to enter employment.

**Next Steps:**

- The Tracking of CfE 4 Capacities in S1-S6 Faculty notice boards (3.2)
- Consistency in BGE CfE Levels moderation and communication (2.3)
- S1-S6 Achievement survey capture and celebrations – twice yearly (3.2)

**Quality Indicator 2.2: The Curriculum (Learning Pathways) – No Level evaluation required**

- Rationale and design
- Development of the curriculum
- Key area for CEC analysis and evaluation - Learning pathways
- Skills for learning, life and work

This indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs of learners at the centre of curriculum design and development. The structure and delivery of the curriculum should take good account of local and national circumstances. The curriculum is the totality of learning experiences across the four contexts as delivered by the school and its partners. An effective curriculum results in strong outcomes for all learners.

**Rationale and design**

The aim of St Thomas' curriculum is to fully prepare all pupils at St Thomas' to take their place in a modern society and economy through experiencing a challenging and engaging curriculum. The curriculum provides a framework for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding in a breadth of curricular areas and develop their skills for learning, skills for life, and skills for work. St Thomas' curriculum is coherent, relevant, and inclusive which allows a pupil to progress from S1 through to their specific leaving year experiencing high quality learning and teaching which will lead to a positive destination.

St Thomas' curriculum aims to develop a coherent, relevant, engaging and inclusive pupil experience that builds on prior learning so that pupils become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. The curriculum supports pupils to achieve high standards in Literacy and Numeracy which is evidenced in the September 2023 Insight analysis: (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Insight-Analysis-September-2023.pdf> ) and ensure they experience a holistic framework in Health and Wellbeing. The school is committed to closing the attainment gap through a curriculum that enables pupils to progress through and achieve CfE levels and National Qualifications when they are ready to do so. Pupils will experience a curriculum model that has a distinct Broad General Education (S1-S3) and Senior Phase (S4-6). Pupils will move from experiencing 19 subjects in S1 and S2, to 14 subjects in S3, to sitting a blend of 7 National Qualifications and bespoke courses in S4 and again a blend 5 National Qualifications and courses in S5. In S6 there is a range of flexible pathways to support the individual needs of pupils to ensure the best positive and sustainable destination beyond St Thomas'.

## Development of the curriculum

### The Broad General Education (S1-S3)

In S1-S3, pupils will experience a broad range of subjects in S1 and S2 with personalisation and choice occurring in S3. Courses and programmes will generally follow Level 3 and Level 4 experiences and outcomes and, where appropriate, National 5 outcomes. The Broad General Education at St Thomas' supports pupils to experience breadth and depth in the 8 curricular areas. In S1 and S2, pupils will experience as full a range of subjects within curricular areas as possible in line with the staffing complement of the school. In S1-S3 Modern Languages, pupils will study Spanish and French. Pupils who already have one of these languages as their first language, the school will try to meet the needs of such learners. Personalisation and choice in the Broad General Education will start at the beginning of S3. The course choice meetings for S3 personalisation and choice will take place in January of S2.

### The Senior Phase (S4-S6)

Pupils in S4 will study 7 National Qualifications. The course choice meetings for S4 National Qualifications will take place in February of S3. S4 pupils will have the ability to experience JET courses and skills for life and work courses to complement their learning experience. Pupils in S5 will generally study 5 subjects depending on progression from their S4 National Qualifications. Some pupils may benefit from pursuing a complement of school-based subjects and a college placement and work experience. The school will work with neighbourhood schools to support pupils in gaining their optimum course choices. There will be opportunities for pupils to sign up for the JET, Career Academy, and Career Ready programmes. Pupils in S6 will have the flexibility to pursue a range and number of subjects and experiences at the school and neighbourhood schools, as well as opting to attend at college, work experience, and for volunteering opportunities. This flexibility will allow pupils to experience a blend of subjects and experiences to ensure a sustained, positive destination when leaving school. As a general rule of thumb, pupils studying at Advanced Higher level only will study 3 subjects; pupils studying a blend of Advanced Higher and Higher subjects will study 4 subjects; pupils studying a blend of Higher and National 5 or National 4 subjects will study 5 subjects. The course choice meetings for S4 and S5 pupils will take place in early March.

## Learning pathways

St Thomas' curriculum provides flexible learning pathways which lead to raising attainment through meeting the needs and aspirations of all our learners. Learning pathways through the school curriculum, neighbourhood schools, school-college partnership and work experience support pupils to build on their prior learning and ensure engaging appropriate progression for all learners. There is a clear rationale for providing pathways for pupils in the school curriculum which is articulated in the curriculum policy. Learning pathways are based on the experiences and outcomes and design principles of progression, coherence, breadth, depth, personalisation and choice, challenge and enjoyment and relevance. Faculties use information from primary to secondary transition to support continuity of learning and the school is strategically focussing on sharing Level 3 and Level 4 exemplars for pupils and parents – using the faculty corridor notice boards and school website. By the end of S3, most young people are undertaking learning in the fourth level of the BGE. Faculty BGE moderation is a focus in the newly drafted Faculty self-evaluation calendars and will continue to enhance staff understanding of Levels.

St Thomas continues to ensure that pupils receive their PE, RE, and 1+2 Languages entitlements and to support the Faith based entitlement of RE in S5 and S6, the Curricular Leader of Religious Education works with The Sisters of Mercy, The Archdiocese of Edinburgh and St Andrews, SCES, and Net Ministries in planning Senior retreats. As a school with a S1 and S2 intake fixed at 140, St Thomas' has never reached a school roll of over 800 in the past decade and this does have an impact on the senior phase curriculum offer. Senior and Faculty Leaders meet on an annual basis to reflect, review, and where possible enhance the senior phase curriculum offer. The HT is very aware of the sustainability of courses and pathways for pupils and this critical focus lies at the centre of ensuring new courses and experiences are implemented. The Broad General Education delivers as many Curricular areas and specific subjects as possible and although there is not space for bespoke achievement experiences the school has worked hard to plan and implement as large a lunchtime and after-school club calendar as possible (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime-and-after-school-clubs/sports-clubs>) and pupils positively refer to these opportunities in the 2024 pupil survey (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/S1-S6-2024-Pupil-Survey-Analysis-and-Comments.pdf>).

The school timetable is strategically led by The Computer Science Curricular Leader who works collaboratively with senior leaders and all staff to ensure as many pupils as possible receive their preferred curricular choices. The work of the timetabler should not be underestimated to the strategic and operational curriculum experience of staff and pupils. Working with the HT in Faculty meetings in November, the timetabler has been able to complete annual TTs in March which has not only supported a more meaningful May experience for new S4 pupils but also allows the senior DHT to work with SCP and Neighbourhood school in offers that are needed at and can be offered by St Thomas of Aquin's. Skills Development Scotland work with year groups (in PSE and via the PSE curriculum) to ensure that personalisation and choice is understood in the contact of the world of work and the school's sustained positive destinations stands at a 98.4% accuracy.

### **Summary of School College Partnership:**

**College:** Courses at Edinburgh College can be supported through Column C – Travel Column – Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. There will also be courses relevant to vocational opportunities – not timetabled during Travel Column C – which may involve whole days out. Edinburgh College offers course available in the evening but with direct curricular and/or vocational opportunities Pupils in S6 will have the flexibility of pursuing a range and number of subjects and experiences at the school and neighbourhood schools, College, work experience, and volunteering opportunities.

**Neighbourhood Schools:** City of Edinburgh schools work together to support S5 and S6 pupils who wish to study particular subjects or particular level of subjects. St Thomas' regularly liaises with Borroughmuir, JGHS and Firhill to support pupils learning experience.

**Work Experience:** Pupils can arrange their own work experience in S4-6 to gain experience in particular career areas or develop skills to support them beyond S6. St Thomas' continues to provide a S4 work experience week to support pupils in early identification of work, skills, and experiences that support their learning pathway.

### **Skills for learning, life and work**

The leadership team at St Thomas' support and develop pupils understanding and opportunities with their skills for learning, life and work. Opportunities to work out with the school building whether that is in the local, national, or international context are being developed and enhanced year by year. St Thomas' works to ensure there is an equity for pupils to learn in motivating contexts for learning. The high expectations we have for pupils supports them experiencing increasing levels of challenge as they develop skills for learning, life and work. Our staff and partners provide well-planned opportunities for learners to develop an awareness of the world of work.

### **Next Steps:**

- Continue to evaluate S4-6 coursing to support introduction of courses to improve breadth and depth of coursing.
- Colleagues to have their voice is heard in Faculty Curriculum



## Quality Indicator 2.7: Partnerships (Parental engagement) – No Level evaluation required

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

This indicator aims to capture the school's success in developing and maintaining strong partnership approaches which improve outcomes for learners and continued self-improvement for the school and community. All partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect for the particular contribution each partner brings. Partnerships are integral to the way a highly-effective school works.

### Progress and impact:

#### The development and promotion of partnerships

The 2023 Parent survey evidences that most Parents are enthusiastic supporters of their child's learning and wellbeing at St Thomas of Aquin's. 83% of Parents state their children like being at St Thomas of Aquin's, 78% of Parents state their children are making good progress at the school, 80% of the Parents state the school is well led and managed, and with an overall 77% satisfaction rate for the school in the 2023 Parent surveys the school continues to get it right for pupils and parents (<https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/>).

Most parents welcome the regular feedback on their child's progress. The BGE Tracking Reports and 2 S1-S3 BGE Parents Evenings supports parents with their understanding of how their child is progressing throughout the Broad General Education. Senior Phase Parents meetings along with 2 Tracking Reports and 1 Full Report, Parent Council meetings and SLT reports, Christmas and Easter Music recitals, as well as school social gatherings continue to support parent participation in the school community. Senior leaders wish to involve parents and carers more meaningfully in creating priorities for improving the school and the 2023 surveys show that the Parent Council and its sub-groups can enhance the collaborative work that is already in existence. The headteacher wishes to hear as many parent vices as possible and has succeeded in achieving a 189 parental return survey around (55%+ of Parents) and has summarised all findings into key priority themes which will help shape the Parent Council agenda focus for next session and beyond.

#### Collaborative learning and improvement

Where and when appropriate, pastoral and senior leaders, Curricular Leaders, and Pupil Support Officers meet with groups and individual parents to increase their confidence in how to support their children's learning. Literacy, Numeracy and Additional Support for Learning meetings along with Child Planning Meetings have had a positive impact on raising attainment and achievement particularly in the Broad General Education. The Business Manager has strategically worked with members of the Parent Council to support the school improvement agenda in the making the school playground as inviting as possible and in re-evaluating and improving junior and senior awards ceremonies through streamlining yet increasing the Faculty award structure. Most parents feel encouraged to take part in the work of the Parent Council and the majority agree that they are kept up to date with the work of the Parent Council. The Parent Council is looking for a new chair to take on a small contingent of Parent Council members and there is still work to do on ensuring the group reflect the diversity of families in the school community. The senior leadership team attend all Parent Council meetings are most parents appreciate the regular communication and consultation on attainment, achievement, and policy updates.

#### Impact on learners

There is a desire from senior leaders and parents to work collaboratively together to enhance the wellbeing, achievement, and positive destinations for all pupils. The new Chair is invited to co-create planning with the HT that takes on the key messages from the 2023 parent surveys.

- Parent Council to support pupils' positive destinations via individual Parent volunteer support system for pupils.
- Parent Council to support fundraiser for school pupil initiatives

	<b>Quality Indicator</b>	<b>School Self – Evaluation 2023 - 24</b>	<b>Inspection Evaluation (If during 2018- 19)</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Leadership of Change</b>	Good	
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Leadership and management of Staff</b>	No Evaluation Level required	
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Management of resources to promote equity (PEF analysis)</b>	No Evaluation Level required	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b>	Good	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Ensuring Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion</b>	Good	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Raising Attainment and Achievement</b>	Very Good	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>The Curriculum – Learning pathways</b>	No Evaluation Level required	
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Partnerships – Parental engagement</b>	No Evaluation Level required	