

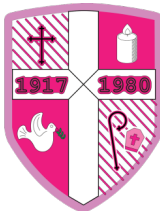
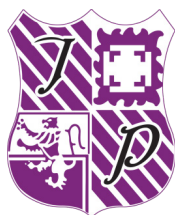


St Thomas Aquinas

Catholic School & Sixth Form

Recruitment Pack





Committed Learners. Exceptional People.

Values: Intentional. Attentive. Eloquent
Virtues: Integrity. Compassion. Service

*"Christ is the centre of our school community
where we live, love and learn together"*

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

WELCOME TO APPLICANTS

Thank you for your interest in joining St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, a high performing and rapidly improving Catholic school in South Birmingham.



SCHOOL BACKGROUND

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has a proud history; it opened in 1963 as the last grammar school to be built in England and has only had five headteachers in its history. The school has an established reputation as a good school based largely on considerable internal stability in a context of constant external change. The present staff is a good mixture of youth and experience with about six or seven new teachers joining each year most of whom are newly qualified.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School became an Academy on 1st April 2015 as part of the Lumen Christi Multi-Academy Company. The MAC is now very well established and growing from strength to strength. It consists of one secondary school and seven primary schools and will expand further in the not too distant future.

Since September 2017 the school has pursued a distinct approach to school improvement and developed a vision around becoming a knowledge-rich school. Following significant changes to whole school routines, behaviour systems and the adoption of a new curriculum, behaviour is now very good and teaching sufficiently challenging.

The school was judged to be 'Good' by OFSTED in November 2018. While pleased with the report, we do not feel for a moment that our work is done. In reality, we have only just begun our school improvement journey.

Examination results in the summer were excellent. Published data indicates progress was at least in the top 20% of schools nationally (a progress score of +0.34). There is now an extended waiting list for pupils to get into the school. This is a school on the up!



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EXPECTATIONS

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is unapologetically ambitious for the children we serve. Undoubtedly, the next phase of development is to become a truly great Catholic school.

Any colleague seeking appointment at the school should be under no illusion that they will be expected to work very hard. Leaders operate within the highest professional standards and there is no room for complacency. We have a dedicated, talented and committed team of middle leaders and colleagues, who will quite rightly expect an analytical and robust strategic approach to departmental improvement allied with strong interpersonal skills from a peer.

SUPPORT & PROGRESSION

In return, you can expect to work in a successful school with students who are ready to learn, enthusiastic and full of life and laughter!

Within the wider context of Lumen Christi, we are supported by responsive and knowledgeable governance. Every possible opportunity will be taken to support the successful candidate in their own professional development.

AND FINALLY

Any person appointed to the post of _____ will be committed to continuing the tradition of hard work and dedication to the students of our school, the majority of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School genuinely is a vibrant learning community; full of committed learners and exceptional people. Any role is a wonderful opportunity to make a huge difference in the lives of children and contribute to the journey of a great Catholic school. It will be one of the most fulfilling and worthwhile roles any professional could have.

If you have the drive to make a difference in a rapidly improving school, I urge you to find out more about us on our website <http://www.stacs.org> and I look forward to hearing from you.

God bless,



Chris Martin
Principal



“It is to such as *these* that the kingdom of God belongs.”
Mark 10:14

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Why do we exist?

Our mission statement.

"Christ is at the centre of our school community where we live, love and learn together."

What do we make?

Our core purpose.

Committed Learners. Exceptional People.

What language do we use?

Our virtues.

**Intentional.
Attentive.
Eloquent.**



**Integrity.
Compassion.
Service.**



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REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

In case no one told you

*You are not uninvited.
You are not a statistic.
You are not worthless. You are not "trouble".
You are not useless. You are not a failure.
You are not like all the others.
You are not on your own.
You are not a problem to be solved.
You are not here to prove yourself.
You are not hopeless. You are not "bottom set".
You are not a comparison.*



*You are God's work of art.
You are called to a unique and specific purpose.
You will inherit an eternal destiny.
You are wonderfully made.
You are worth dying for.
You are knit together by the Almighty.
Every detail of you is known and loved.
You are worth more than all the sparrows.
You have been anticipated since the beginning of time.
You are fantastic!*

It is time to be fearfully and wonderfully **YOU!**



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WELCOME TO ST THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

A warm welcome to St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School, an Academy within the Lumen Christi Multi Academy Company (MAC).

We hope that this pack will give you some insight into what we offer but more importantly communicates how we work and what we are about.

Our mission statement "Christ is at the centre of our school community where we live, love and learn together" is at the heart of all that we do.

We believe all people are imprinted with God's image. The dignity and value of our students and staff comes not just from the work they do, but from the persons they are. Diversity and difference is not just tolerated here but respected, celebrated and loved. As a result, visitors to our school will be greeted with smiles, find warm relationships between staff and students and often hear laughter in our corridors, offices and classrooms.



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EDUCATION IS A GIFT

We also believe a good education is a wonderful gift. Each of our children only get this precious gift once. As a result, we continuously emphasise excellent behaviour, high standards of uniform and require students to commit to their learning. In return, we will provide all children, regardless of ability and background, with an ambitious and challenging curriculum. Our highly professional staff will work selflessly and tirelessly to ensure our children's ambitions and God-given talents are realised. We want our children to leave us knowing they are loved unconditionally and as a committed learner and exceptional person. A bold ambition but one we can all achieve in prayer and by working together.



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CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

We offer a truly distinctive education; everything we do helps our children flourish into the wonderful people God made them to be.



Prayer and Mass

At the start and end of every day, we will pray. The Chapel is the physical centre of our school site and a place of hospitality, support, dialogue and reflection. Voluntary Mass is celebrated every week in the school chapel. Staff, students, parents and friends are all very welcome to join in the celebration. At different times of the year the school comes together for the celebration of Mass and the students are involved with the preparation of all the celebrations.

Community

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is an inclusive faith community. We warmly welcome everyone and encourage applications from all backgrounds.

We believe the gospel speaks to everyone. All students and parents fully support our ethos but we recognise that each member of our school community is at a different stage in their own faith development so we aim to accompany our young people and try and answer those big questions of life together.

We provide an experience of school in the context of prayer, worship and spiritual reflection; experiences of happiness, sadness, joy, loss, mourning and achievement are drawn together, given words, and offered to God.



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MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL

Outreach

Our faith reminds us of our duty to care for others in the world today. In everything we do, we talk about integrity, compassion and service; we want our students to stand up for what is right, to be moved when they see injustice in the world and then give of their time, energy and abilities to help others. We raise thousands of pounds for charity every year as a result.



Retreats

Every student has the opportunity to visit Alton Castle in Staffordshire and participate in a residential retreat. Sixth Form students also join the annual Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes to care for and assist the sick and disabled pilgrims. This is a very popular extra curricular opportunity which demonstrates the faith of our students in action. Throughout the week God's love in action is seen through the selfless service of the young people and their generosity of spirit, sharing their talents and energy and time willingly with others.



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WORKING AND CARING TOGETHER

Dedicated Support

The role of the Form Tutor is vital here at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Pupils are allocated to mixed ability tutor groups that are drawn up after detailed discussion with younger pupils and their knowledge of the primary transfer process. Tutors progress through the school with their tutor group and consequently get to know their students extremely well. In the Sixth Form, another specialist team has responsibility for students' progress at the stage.



House System

Although we are a relatively large school, students are also divided into eight houses, each named after a prominent Catholic Patron. The House System is a wonderful means of building community through healthy competition and working together. Although we no longer operate a vertical tutoring system, great emphasis is still placed on the care of subjects for each other and the importance of older students acting as role models. There are considerable Student Voice and Student Leadership opportunities.



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INCLUSION

The school is committed to a policy of inclusion and works to support the learning of all students whatever their abilities and needs. Our SENDCO and Deputy SENDCO work with subject faculties to examine ways in which literacy and numeracy skills can be further enhanced through the work students meet in all their subjects

The school works closely with feeder primary schools and undertakes detailed assessments in order to identify students who have a special need with regard to their learning. A range of support strategies are implemented to work towards students becoming independent learners. The SEND team of staff work, together with subject teachers, to manage the provision of support and guidance. The needs of physically disabled students are also met within this framework.



IMPACT

The role of the Form Tutor is vital here at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Pupils are allocated to mixed ability tutor groups that are drawn up after detailed discussion with younger pupils and their knowledge of the primary transfer process Tutors progress through the school with their tutor group and consequently get to know their students extremely well In the Sixth Form, another specialist team has responsibility for students' progress at the stage



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CURRICULUM BUILT ON CORE KNOWLEDGE

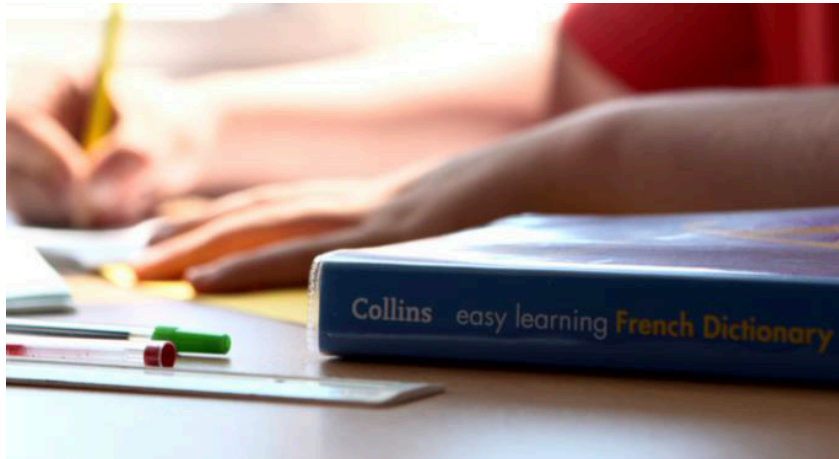
We teach a broad and challenging knowledge based curriculum, designed by our subject experts, and influenced by research and visits to the best schools in the country.

Knowledge Curriculum

We deliver a knowledge based curriculum where teachers are the experts whose role it is to convey their knowledge and expertise to pupils .

We believe that learning is a change in long term memory it is not enough for students to simply hear knowledge, they must commit it to memory as it is then when they can use it in their thinking.

We believe that intelligence isn't fixed and all pupils can learn and memorise more ideas and knowledge and are able to develop greater expertise and thereby become more intelligent than those who do not Knowledge is like Velcro, the more you have, the more that sticks.



Culture of Revision and Memory

Our thinking has been carefully crafted by using research into learning.

We have used current thinking on memory to develop our use of Knowledge Organisers. All students carry a Knowledge Organiser and are tasked with committing the information within it to their long term memory by using tried and tested techniques.

We train our students in practice retrieval; they learn how to quiz themselves to strengthen their long term memory so that they can build on and apply their knowledge in future lessons. Teachers regularly review previous topics in their lessons to ensure confident recall and to interrupt the forgetting process.



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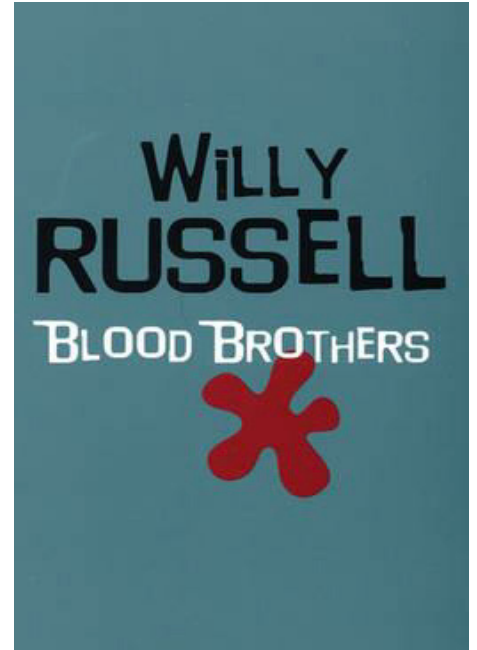
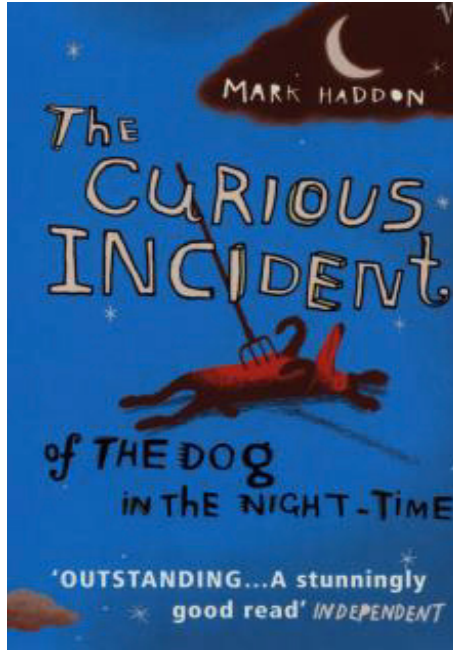
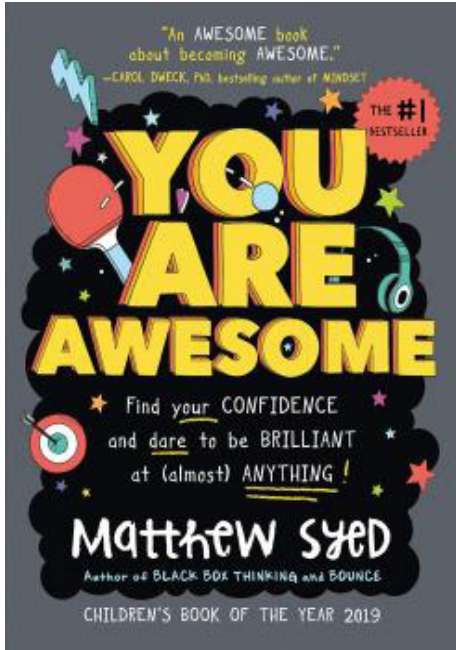
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LOVE OF BOOKS AND READING

Aquinas Canon

Students will all read a collection of books in their time at Aquinas. These will be 'classics' and/or books of cultural significance. Parents or students will not have to buy them. It is part of an enriching education beyond just exam board requirements. We want all our children to have cultural capital and to be able to access civilised conversations because they have been exposed to the best of what is thought and said.



Year 7

During form time, our youngest students will read a series of books with their tutor. Year 7 will start with a non-fiction text, "You are awesome" by Matthew Syed, which will teach them to be resilient and to believe that they can do well in anything that they choose, whether it is sport, science, drama, juggling or physics as long as they work hard. They will then move on to the classic adventure story, "Treasure Island", followed by Jewell Parker Rhodes "Ghost Boys".

Year 8

Year 8 will start with Mark Haddon's award-winning "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time", giving them an insight into the life of a boy with Asperger's Syndrome, who describes himself as a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties and who sees the world in a surprising and revealing way. They will then move on to a selection of Roald Dahl short stories, some of which are unsettling and sinister, but all of which have Roald Dahl's creative and entertaining use of language. They will finish the year by reading "The Diary of Anne Frank".

Year 9

Year 9 will start with the only play in our Canon, Willy Russell's "Blood Brothers", which tells the moving tale of twins who are separated at birth, only to meet again later with fateful consequences. They will then enjoy some Sherlock Holmes stories, before reading Orwell's classic dystopian novel, 1984.

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EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Aquinas Experience

We believe that all students should have the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. We therefore make a pledge to all our students that they will go out of school as a year group with their form tutors and Head of Year every year. We hope this will inspire our children, enhance their intrinsic motivation and help them become committed learners and exceptional people.

The experiences we offer are:

Year 7 Visit a university

Year 8 Climb a mountain

Year 9 Watch a production

Year 10 Visit London

Year 11 Outdoor activity

As a school, we offer a huge Duke of Edinburgh programme from Bronze through to Gold. We use local areas such as Earlswood and Blackwell for Bronze and head off to the Peak District and Brecon Beacons for Gold. A large number of our students get to go to the Palace every year to collect their Gold certificate's. We are one of the largest providers of Duke of Edinburgh in Birmingham.



Educational Visits

Many of us have fond memories of school trips and when we look back on our school days. We are blessed to have a varied programme of educational visits from day trips to museums, river studies, theatres, local towns and city visits to residential trips to Paris, Berlin and more!

We do have a unique tradition here at STACS. Our annual Guernsey camp has been running for over 35 years now. Every July we take over 70 Year 7 students away to enjoy 10 days on the beautiful island. This is the always the life changing visit that students remember when they leave school in Year 13.



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DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

School Productions

Every two years we run a whole school production. Recent productions have included High School Musical, Bugsy Malone, Little Shop of Horrors and Mary Poppins.

Physical Education

Students have many opportunities to participate in activities at social time and after school including football, basketball, netball, fitness, trampolining, dance, cricket, rounders and athletics.

These activities take place in a range of facilities, including a Sports Hall, Gymnasium, playing fields at the Hayes, a newly refurbished Fitness Room and the playground.

Interschool Competitions

Over the years the school has built up an excellent reputation for sport in Birmingham and the West Midlands. We have reached the finals of a number of prestigious competitions and have had many students reaching District, County, National and International standard. There are also a range of internal competitions as we encourage a high degree of participation.

We also have a wide range of individual performers who have represented district, county and academy level in their chosen sport in athletics, basketball, netball and football. We have international performers in trampolining, Irish dancing and skiing and a former student recently made his debut for Birmingham City Football Club!



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PASSIONATE ABOUT PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

**GCSE RESULTS
IMPROVING
EVERY YEAR FOR
5 YEARS**

**GCSE & A LEVEL
RESULTS ABOVE
NATIONAL
AVERAGE**



Success Stories

We have students at Universities all over the country including;

Medicine at Bristol University

Biomedical Science at Birmingham University

Theology and Philosophy at Newman University

Sociology and Criminology at Birmingham University

Medicine at Southampton University

One student graduated from Oxford with a First in Theology and is now doing her Masters One student graduated from Bangor University with a First in Music and now has a scholarship to do her Masters.

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SIXTH FORM

Sixth Form students are very much part of the school but enjoy increased freedom and responsibility for their own educational journey. Through sixth form collaboration with the OAKS (a partnership of local schools) students can choose from a range of subjects which help them to reach their potential.

The Sixth Form at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is both large and thriving. We have highly qualified, experienced and dedicated teaching staff and a proven track record of progression onto higher education and employment.

The St Bernadette Centre has recently undergone significant refurbishment and investment. Students have exclusive access to a group work room on their study day which doubles as a social space at break and lunch. They also have access to computer facilities in our new library which provides a modern learning space to aid them as they become more independent learners.

Our curriculum offers the very best in both academic and vocational courses to match the needs of all our students. We are delighted to be part of the Oaks Sixth Form College, a consortium of schools in south west Birmingham. This is a collaborative and innovative model and provides an exceptional breadth of choice for our students.

All Sixth Form students study Core RE across their two year career with us and complete the Extended Project, applying Catholic Social Teaching to a moral and ethical issue of their choice.

Whilst we believe in allowing greater freedom to our students, we strive to have a true partnership between students, parents and tutors. Excellent pastoral care is provided by experienced tutors who advise, encourage and monitor student progress.



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