



# St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School

## SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2023/2024

<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Fr Mark North
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Dean Moran
<b>Status and Character:</b>	Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School Girls and Boys 4 - 11 years

<b>Number of pupils at September 2023</b>	535
<b>Number intended to admit (Sept '24)</b>	75

Dear Parents and Carers,

A warm welcome to St. Thomas of Canterbury!  
We are a Church of England Primary School, whose main aim is to give every child an education of the highest quality and the opportunity to realise their full potential in all aspects of their education, within a caring, Christian community. The school began in 1835 and has grown in size as well as changing sites and status.

The foundation stone for the present school was laid by the then Bishop of Chelmsford, in 1967. The Duchess of Kent performed the opening ceremony in October, 1968.

This is one of the most highly resourced schools in the district. We have:

- 20 well-equipped classrooms
- Two large halls (KS1 & KS2)
- Two well stocked modern libraries (KS1 & KS2)
- Extensive computing facilities including a network of PCs, including a dedicated suite of 32 computers alongside a growing number of iPads for use in and beyond the classroom
- Small group rooms
- Three music rooms
- A recently refurbished school kitchen
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> generation all-weather pitch

- Active Play adventure trails, with climbing equipment
- Three outside classrooms
- A courtyard
- A school allotment & 'Spiritual Garden'
- Three playgrounds
- A large playing field
- An outdoor cardio gym
- A 'Daily Mile' course/track

A large Country Park (Merrymeade) surrounds the school.

The school was founded by the Church to provide an education according to the principles and practices of the Church of England. Being a Church Foundation, we are grant aided by the Department for Education (DfE).

Religious Education at the school is in accordance with the Diocesan Syllabus for Aided Schools. Although parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE and worship, our expectation is that all children will participate in the Religious Education and collective worship of the school, as this is a fundamental part of our ethos and Christian Distinctiveness. The school has very close links with the Parish Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood.

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## Application Process:

Applications will be handled in accordance with the co-ordinated admissions scheme published by Essex County Council in the Primary Education in Essex booklet.

## Admission Number:

The Governing Body intends to admit up to 75 children to EYFS/Reception in September 2024.

## Admission Criteria (September 2023 onwards)

1. Looked after children.
- 2\*. Children whose parents/carers are regularly at the heart of the worship at St Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood, or St George the Martyr, Brentwood (attendance of at least twice each month for at least the past two years).
- 3\*. Children whose parents/carers are regularly at the heart of worship of another Anglican Church or another Christian Church (recognised by "Churches Together" in England or the Evangelical Alliance) (attendance of at least twice each month for at least the past two years).
- 4.\* Children whose parents/carers are committed to the worship (attendance of at least twice each month for at least the past year) at St Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood, or St George the Martyr, Brentwood.
- 5.\* Children whose parents/carers are committed to the worship (attendance of at least twice each month for at least the past year) at another Christian Church (recognised by "Churches Together" in England or the Evangelical Alliance).
6. Children who have a brother or sister attending St Thomas of Canterbury CEVA Primary School at the time of admission.
- 7\*. Children whose parents/carers (i) wish their child to attend a Church of England School and (ii) are committed to the worship (attendance of at least twice each month for at least the past year) of any Christian Church or any other world faith (represented on the Interfaith Network).
8. Children who do not fall into any of the above categories.

In the event of over subscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be given in the first instance to children who have a sibling attending

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School at the time of admission and in the second instance will be determined by straight line distance from home to school, those living closest being given the highest priority.

\* To be considered under these categories, Part 2 of the **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** must be completed by the Priest or Minister. If you have recently joined a new church; attendance at a former church may be taken into account and should also be included on further copies of the Supplementary Information Form.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church [or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church [or in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

### **Admissions Policy Summary:**

- ✓ St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School does not have a catchment area.
- ✓ The school exists to serve the worshipping communities of St Thomas of Canterbury and St George the Martyr.
- ✓ Parents/carers who wish their child to attend this school must complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) as well as the Local Authority form.

## A – Z

This prospectus is set out in sections organised in alphabetical order.

### **ABLE, GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS**

Able, gifted and talented children are identified in the school and provision is made including access to extra-curricular activities and specific support within class through personalised learning exploring the curriculum at 'greater depth' or mastery. We have a member of staff in charge of this area and all teachers are trained to meet the individual needs of their children.

### **ABSENCE – 'Studybugs'**

It is essential that your child attends school every day; any interruption in their attendance affects their progress and learning. Parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible if their child is absent due to illness, etc so that the absence can be authorised and recorded. We would ask parents to inform the school by using the Studybugs app or in person by **9.30 a.m.** on the day of the absence. You can do this by downloading the Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>) Please do not try to telephone the School Office unless you absolutely have to. The Studybugs system helps us track sickness related illness more closely and also provides you with reassurance, advice and guidance from the UK Health Security Agency. If we do not hear from you for some reason, we will always try to contact you. If your child is absent for longer than 2 days please contact the school again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence before 9.30 a.m. If you wish to request leave of absence in term time please complete the form available from the school office. The Governor responsible for leave of absence requests and attendance monitoring is **Fr Mark North**.

### **ACCIDENTS AND MEDICAL**

The vast majority of our teachers, learning support assistants, midday assistants and office staff are trained in first aid (EFAW). We also have designated Paediatric First Aiders. Minor bumps are recorded in the homework diary; anything more serious also triggers a telephone call home. Our policy regarding administering medicine is on the school website.

### **ADMISSIONS FOR RECEPTION**

Children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 are eligible to apply for admission to the school. All children who are offered a place from September 2024 will be able to join the school family full time in the Autumn Term at the beginning of which there is a short induction period. Parents/carers may choose for their children to start part time (mornings only) although all children must, by law, be at school full time in the term after their fifth birthday.

All children joining our Early Years Foundation Stage/Reception will be invited to visit the school before they are admitted, to meet the adults in the Reception team. The Headteacher talks to the parents/carers during the summer term prior to the children starting at school to explain the organisation of the school and other arrangements.

### **ANTI-BULLYING**

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is committed to a policy of inclusion, to respect, equality and justice. We believe that bullying behaviour is totally unacceptable. We believe that where bullying is challenged effectively children feel safe and happy and we will demonstrate a school that cares. Our anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with our Character Education policy.

### **ASSESSMENT**

St Thomas' believes in the importance of Assessment for Learning (AfL). Teachers make regular ongoing assessments of children both informally and formally.

All EYFS/Reception children complete the Department for Education (DfE) Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of starting in school. All new children to other year groups across the school are assessed in the first half term; this is internally moderated to enable accurate assessments to be made right from the start.

The teachers collaborate to moderate their assessments of children and we look at the progress that is being made very carefully. All children are monitored and expected to make at least 'good' progress. Teachers are challenged by senior staff at pupil progress meetings (PPM) held

termly to ensure that all children are realising their potential.

We work hard to ensure that children are increasingly aware of their own strengths and areas for development. Each child should know his/her next steps – especially in the core subjects (English, Maths and Science).

Parents receive reports for their children at the end of the academic year; these include comments from staff and grades on attainment and effort. Parents can also speak to the classteacher at parents' evenings twice a year and on more informal occasions – like when the teacher is at the classroom door or on the playground after school.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher track the progress of all pupils', meeting with teachers regularly to monitor each individual child.

## AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

All relevant documents of interest to parents: School policy documents; National Curriculum documents; Minutes of Governors' meetings etc. can be consulted and viewed upon request.



## CHARACTER EDUCATION

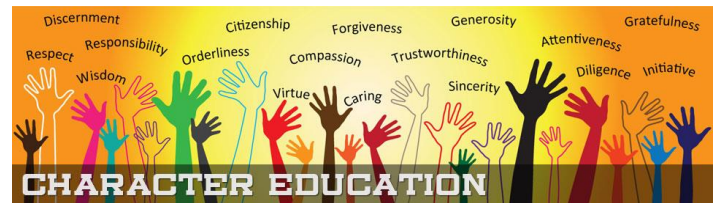
Character Education is our approach to upholding, promoting and teaching positive behaviour within and beyond our school community. The school is a caring, Christian community in which behaviour is based on **respect** and **responsibility**. These two values are specifically taught to the children through collective worship, PSHE, class time and in the day to day running of the school.

We hold seven core values for our school that children are expected to understand and apply in developing a distinctive Christian character. They are:

**Respect**  
**Responsibility**  
**Honesty**  
**Trustworthiness**  
**Caring**  
**Fairness**  
**Forgiveness**

Everyone in the school plays a part in developing these values. We want to build a school with a distinctive Christian character.

The values, standards and attitudes of the school community are made clear to the children through example and discussion. Most children enjoy the caring environment they are in and seek to behave appropriately.



If a child behaves inappropriately then the school community will respond in a variety of ways. For the majority of children in the majority of cases a simple look or quiet word from a member of staff can be enough of a reminder!

Occasionally, further action is required. We believe in restorative processes and justice. Most children will immediately feel sorry for their actions and will think for themselves how to put things right. Very little input is required in these instances. However, a few children may need to be taught not only that what they did was inappropriate, but also how to feel a sense of remorse for their actions. We will work on this, where necessary.

Once the child has apologised, some sort of logical consequence will follow. Logical consequences will vary depending on the inappropriate behaviour. The emphasis on the logical consequence is on learning. So the outcome of the consequence should be an increased level of respect or responsibility.

Parents can trust the school to take appropriate action to maintain good order and discipline. We have an excellent reputation as a caring, Christian community and we work hard to maintain this. Where necessary, children may be excluded from working with the rest of the class and may be asked to work outside the Deputy Headteacher's/Headteachers' office or in another classroom.

We do need the support of parents in ensuring that the values of the school are upheld. Therefore we ask all parents and children to sign the home/school agreement.

We **do not** discuss with other parents what action has been taken for an individual child. We can reassure you that appropriate action has been

taken and discuss the Character Education Policy, but it is not our policy to discuss other people's children with another family.

Further details about the school's highly successful Character Education Policy are available on the school website.

## CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

No charges are made for materials or activities which take place in school time and are part of the curriculum. However, parents are sometimes asked for a voluntary contribution or donation towards the cost of particular items, educational visits and swimming lessons etc. as without them these activities would not take place. No child is ever excluded from an activity due to the parents' inability to contribute. Our Charging and Remissions Policy is available from the school website for further details.

## CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING

As a caring organisation with direct responsibility for children, our first concern must be for safeguarding your child's welfare in all aspects and therefore there may be occasions when we have to consult other agencies even before we contact you, particularly in relation to Child Protection/Safeguarding concerns. Should this be necessary we want to reassure you that any concerns we have about your child will then be discussed with you by the appropriate agency after we have talked with the other agency. We recognise that for many children school can be a protective factor.

The procedures we have to follow (it is a statutory duty) have been laid down by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board ([www.escb.co.uk](http://www.escb.co.uk)). If you want to know more about these procedures please speak to the Headteacher.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): **Mr Moran**

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: **Mrs Coughtrey, Mrs Moran, Mrs Newman & Mr Beales**

Designated Safeguarding Governor: **Mrs O'Hara**

*'St. Thomas of Canterbury C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding principles and promoting the welfare of children in our care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All volunteers, staff, Governors and adults coming into regular contact with children are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure, satisfactory references and medical clearance.'*

## CLUBS

The school has a good reputation for running high quality extra-curricular activities. For these we rely almost entirely on the skills and enthusiasm of our own staff who give up their time freely for the good of the school and for the enjoyment of the children.

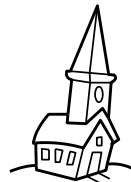
Last year we ran a variety of extra-curricular clubs including: football, netball, fencing, athletics, public speaking, drama, gym trail, coding, choir, orchestra, board games, tennis and tag rugby to name a few!

The school is also linked with Brentwood Tennis Club (Lisa Kemp), a football coach (Cam Cole), Tag Rugby coach (Simon Peace – Old Brentwoods RFC – Acorns) and a fencing coach (James Beevers - Little Musketeers).

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We have a collective act of worship every day. It is often in the hall with all the children and teachers together as two key stages. It has a strong Christian character and reflects the distinctive ethos of the school.

Fr. Mark, the vicar at St. Thomas', leads worship every week and a weekly class-based 'teaching'



Eucharist on a rolling cycle. On three occasions each term the School Eucharist forms part of our collective worship, either in school or at St. Thomas' Church.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Because of our emphasis on partnership, we hope that all problems will be dealt with effectively by informal means. The first person to consult is your child's classteacher and/or Team Leader and then the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher, if necessary. If parents/carers have any problems or concerns it is important that they bring them to the school's attention, where it will be dealt with promptly, professionally and confidentially.

However, should concerns not be resolved, then there are arrangements designed to deal with complaints. These are detailed on the school website.

## CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Regular contact is maintained through various means: website, fortnightly newsletters, emails, Parent Hub messaging, TV screen in reception, and of course face to face in the playground.

Parents are always welcome to visit the school by appointment. Teachers are always very happy to discuss relevant issues at the earliest convenient time. Please remember the playground is not always the best place to have a sensitive conversation! Parents are also invited to attend Parent Consultation Evenings, normally in November and March, when members of staff are available to discuss children's progress. A report is sent home every year, in July, following which there is an opportunity to speak to the classteacher, if there are any very serious concerns. Parents are given a questionnaire every year where they are able to contribute towards our annual review. (ParentView) The whole school is open throughout the year for 'viewing' and 'tours'. Please call the school office for information about the next opportunity and to book a personal tour.

There are many opportunities for parents to join with, or see their children taking part in, various activities such as: School Eucharists, Sports Days, Christmas Productions and Music Concerts.

Parents/carers of Reception and Year 3 children will be invited to attend a meeting during the term prior to entry to EYFS and Key Stage 2 and will be able to meet their child's new teacher. Each child will also have the opportunity to spend some time in their new classroom.

New pupils are welcomed throughout the year if and when spaces become available. Formal induction processes exist to help the new children get off to the best possible start.

## CURRICULUM INTENT



The School Curriculum Intent Statement takes account of the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014, the Diocesan Guidelines for Religious Education and Local Authority Curriculum Statements. We regard it as very important that all children are able to develop as fully as possible within a caring, Christian community; that they achieve levels of attainment, maturity and independence which will enable them to follow suitable and satisfying occupations and activities; that they learn respect for self and others and that they have the ability and the will to make a positive contribution to the life of the

community. The full Curriculum Intent Statement can be accessed via the school website.

## CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

The emphasis throughout the curriculum is on developing skills, knowledge and understanding and personalised learning. We aim to use meaningful and authentic contexts where possible. We usually teach in discrete timetabled subjects:

- English,
- Mathematics,
- Religious Education (RE),
- Science,
- Computing,
- Art & Design,
- Citizenship (including British Values),
- Design and Technology (D&T),
- Geography,
- History,
- Music,
- Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)
- Physical Education,
- Spanish (MFL) – KS 2 only.

Cross-curricular themes are sought to draw subjects together and children will often work on projects that interweave a number of different areas.

Teachers plan these topics carefully to inspire the children, to reflect the issues of the local community or to enhance understanding of the world around them (for example these may vary from the Olympics, the World Cup to the development of a new local housing complex).

We have achieved the Primary Geography Quality Mark (Bronze) and the ECO-Schools Award. We also hold the Healthy Schools Award and Activemark. These awards reflect the rich and dynamic curriculum that is taught here. A curriculum that is highly engaging and relevant to a child growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Children are encouraged to develop their **spoken language skills** in all areas of the curriculum. Collaboration, cooperation and the ability to solve problems are also developed as key skills. High quality written **English** is fostered through all subjects. The ability to use correct **grammar, punctuation and spelling** is still highly valued in this age of texting and social media! We instil this

through a wide variety of **writing** opportunities. In addition, a clear, legible style of handwriting is taught.

**Reading** is taught carefully and systematically to all children in order that they develop the skills they need to read with fluency and understanding. A wide range of books are available from the school libraries and reading scheme. Progression in **phonics** is given high priority in EYFS/Reception and Key Stage 1 through use of our systematic synthetic phonics programme – Essential Letters & Sounds (ELS).



All children here are regarded as 'free readers'; they can all choose books for themselves from our extensive libraries. We do not reserve this for the 'best' readers, as some schools do.

Alongside the libraries we use ELS progression books and a colour coded scheme approach, where books are graded according to children's phonetic awareness and understanding.

Some books are targeted to improve children's writing and, as a result, may appear to be quite 'easy' compared to the books the children choose for themselves from the library. However, this is because most children write at a stage below that which they can read. The colour book is chosen mainly to improve a child's comprehension skills and writing. The library book is to develop a love of reading.

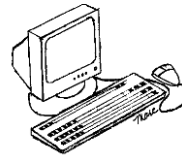
In **Mathematics**, the National Curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all children. Our Calculations Policy sets out a clear approach to the teaching of number and is available on the school website. We examine mathematical problem solving across the curriculum and teach the children to apply their understanding. The children are taught through the main strands of **Number**, **Measurement**, **Geometry** and **Statistics**.

$$2+2=4$$

In **Science**, we focus on a different area each half term. The children are encouraged to learn through an investigative, 'hands on' approach. We teach children to design their own experiments and find answers for themselves. We teach about how to make a test fair and reliable using a wide range of high quality scientific equipment.

**Geography** and **History** are taught weekly, on an alternating timetable, with a different focus each term.

**Computing** is taught separately when necessary, but increasingly focuses on supporting other curriculum areas. We have Interactive Display Screens in every classroom. Throughout their time in primary school children are taught coding, podcasting, website design, how to make movies and mix their own music!



Internet Safety (e-safety) is paramount and the school uses a strict filter system alongside lessons in sensible internet usage, highlighting our digital footprint. We would like to ask all parents in supporting us to insist that children **do not** use Facebook and other social media platforms (age restrictions apply for a reason) and do not use laptops or computers in their own bedrooms unsupervised. They should always be in view of an adult.

We also encourage parents to ensure their home computers are adequately protected against the threats of the internet. One useful guide can be found at:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Parental-controls/>

**Art** and **D&T** develop from various areas of the curriculum and encourage a full range of skills and creativity. We value high quality art.



Children have opportunities to listen to and enjoy good **music**, to take part in group singing and to play a variety of instruments. There is a very strong music tradition in the school resulting in a variety of concerts and participation in local festivals by the School Choir. Our purpose built music suite allows classes to work in state of the art studios with electronic keyboards alongside traditional instruments.

A tremendous variety of music lessons are available for children who wish to choose this option e.g. drums, recorder, piano, guitar and keyboard. (Please see details about peripatetic music teachers)

The school is extremely well equipped for sport and the **Physical Education** programme includes gymnastics, dance, games, athletics, swimming and The Daily Mile™.



## DATA PROTECTION

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is Europe's framework for data protection laws – it replaced the previous 1998 data protection directive. The legislation is designed to harmonise data privacy laws across Europe as well as give greater protection and rights to individuals. It came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is committed to full compliance with the new regulations. Our school website contains information about how the school complies with GDPR and contains links to relevant documents, policies and procedures which are shared with staff, parents and the wider community.

You will also find our Privacy Notice statements under the Data Protection tab from our homepage.

## DISABILITY & ACCESS

As a fully inclusive Christian community, the school is open and welcoming to children with various disabilities providing the school has the resources and support that would allow these children to thrive and work to their full potential.

When an application is received from parents/carers with a disabled child then they are invited into school to discuss their child's requirements with the Headteacher and SENCo<sup>1</sup>. If appropriate, other professionals who have worked or are working with the child are invited to attend so an informed and rational decision can be made about whether the school can offer the care and support that the child requires through reasonable adjustments. Once agreement has been met it may be appropriate for some children to start with a part-time timetable, building up to full time to enable the child to integrate into normal school procedures and adjust to the rigours of school life.

**Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at St. Thomas'.** All children are taught from an early age to respect and care for each other and recognise and celebrate their similarities and differences, whether this be, for example, the colour of their skin, gender or disability. There are many opportunities to inform children about understanding, respect and empathy. The school actively encourages inclusion at all opportunities.

The SEND Information Report (School Offer) and SEND Policy which incorporates children with disabilities is reviewed annually and presented to the Governing Body. There is an appointed Governor

whose role it is to help oversee the implementation of the policy with the SENCo<sup>1</sup> and Headteacher.

<sup>1</sup> **SENCo:** Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators are members of the senior leadership team who co-ordinate the Individual Provision Plan (IPP) and One Planning process or Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) for children with additional needs. They work with the staff to set SMART targets for individual children ensuring the child is able to access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE/RECEPTION

The children in EYFS will experience a curriculum which is play based focusing on the seven areas of learning and development. This will promote their intellectual, physical, emotional, social, spiritual and moral development.

During the first few weeks, the Reception and EYFS team will seek to provide a secure, happy atmosphere while they assess the level of learning readiness and social needs of each child. The children's work at this stage is experienced through self-initiated and directed play activities with a wide range of apparatus and tools. The basic skills are taught and reinforced daily – individually or in small groups.

The class will frequently be brought together with an adult as one unit. The children will learn that there are times when they are expected to be quiet, to listen to an adult and to each other. The children will learn to share equipment and care for resources. From their first day in school children will select their own reading book. By choosing their own reading book at this stage, the children begin to learn to make their own choices. Children will also have a reading book each week which is carefully matched to the phonics teaching they are experiencing in the classroom to reinforce the learning of letters and sounds. Positive comments are invited from the parents/carers in the reading diaries which each child will have.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At St. Thomas' every child is entitled to a curriculum rich and varied, challenging and inspiring, which enables them to fulfil his or her potential to the highest possible standards, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, age or ability.



The school also communicates its commitment to equal opportunities through our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) available from the school website.

## GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body is constituted in accordance with its Instruments of Government. There are 12 Governors in total comprising of:

Foundation Governors (7),  
Parent (2), Staff (1),  
Headteacher (1), Local Authority (1).

In addition, the Governing Body may appoint Associate Members.

The Governing Body meets at least once a term with various sub-committees meeting on a regular basis.

Main Three Sub-committees:

Finance and Premises Committee  
Personnel Committee  
School Development Committee

Every Governor is also linked to a subject area and meets regularly with the curriculum subject leader for that subject. They offer quality assurance for that specific subject whilst also maintaining an overview of progress across the core subjects.

Governors receive regular updates from the Headteacher including a termly report and a key facts document that include attainment information, progress towards targets, attendance rates and financial summary information.

Governors are always open to hear from parents and regularly attend school events to do so. The majority of Governors are also parents and/or members of St Thomas of Canterbury Church and are therefore well known to most families of the school.

## HEALTH & SAFETY/ SCHOOL SECURITY

The Governing Body and staff work hard to make sure that the school is a safe and secure environment at all times. All visitors, including parents or carers, are asked to use the main entrance and report to the school office on arrival. They will be asked to sign the visitors' book and be given a security badge or lanyard that must be worn whilst on site. On departure visitors are asked to sign out and return their badges/lanyards. All members of staff wear identification badges displaying their name and designation. Health and

Safety inspections are completed of the premises twice a year. The school also has a Health, Safety & Wellbeing policy and an audit (Health & Safety Internal Monitoring) is completed annually.

## HOMEWORK

Principally, we would like to think children from St Thomas' will have completed a good day's work in school. We would like them to enjoy their time at home and have plenty of opportunity to play board games, join clubs, play outside and see friends. However, we strongly believe that children do not only learn whilst in school but there are wide, varied and valuable opportunities to engage in learning experiences beyond the classroom, often facilitated by parents and carers.

In response to discussions with parents, children and staff we have evaluated our homework policy. We are very aware of the base of goodwill amongst many homes, and have sought, through a range of practices, to enable parents/carers to help their children at home.

These are the three objectives drawn from the policy:

1. Consolidation of key skills.
2. Consistent communication between home and school.
3. Enabling of high quality interactions between parents/carers and their children.

Children, parents and teachers all have clearly defined responsibilities in the homework policy and these are summarised here:

### Pupils will:

- Read regularly, neatly recording at an age appropriate level their views and opinions about what they have read in a well kept and highly valued school homework diary (KS2 only);
- Practise mental maths skills, especially times tables and also learn key spellings in order to apply these to their maths and writing;
- Undertake age appropriate independent research projects to further explore areas of interest.

**Teachers** should provide pupils with the following:

- Two books appropriate for the pupils' ability: A library book (for reading) and an

ELS book/ 'coloured' scheme book (to particularly support phonics progression and writing but will also support comprehension);

- A homework diary that is used to support communication between home and school (KS2 only);
- Activities to practise and consolidate key maths skills (with a focus on times tables) adapted to suit the abilities of the pupils and the opportunity to apply these skills in lessons;
- Spellings to practise and develop and the opportunity to apply these skills in lessons (adapted to suit the abilities of the pupils).

#### Teachers will:

- Provide parents with updates via pupils' homework diaries;
- Meet with parents, where necessary, to discuss homework arrangements and to provide feedback and support;
- Suggest research projects at the start of each term/half term, linked to the curriculum for the academic year (also available on the website);
- Value homework undertaken by pupils.

#### Parents/Carers will:

- Read regularly with their child/children;
- Provide feedback in the reading diary (KS1)/ school homework diary (KS2) at least once a week;
- Practise spellings and mental maths skills (especially times tables) with their child/children;
- Approach classteachers if they have any queries regarding homework;
- Support the completion of age appropriate research projects and topic based activities at home for sharing in school;
- Give appropriate recognition for pupils' efforts.

#### Parents/Carers are also asked to:

- Support the school by ensuring that their child attempts the homework;
- Provide a suitable place for their child to carry out their homework, free from distraction;
- Encourage and praise their child when they have completed their homework;
- Become actively involved and support their child with homework activities;
- Make it clear that they value homework and they support the school by explaining how it can help learning.



## KEY STAGE 2 TESTS

National Curriculum Tests were given to all Year 6 pupils in **May 2023**. *[NB: No SATs were taken in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID-19 adjustments]*

Details of the School's performance (2023) compared with National figures (brackets) are as follows:

### READING

**83% (73) achieving expected standard**  
**35% (29) achieving a higher standard**

### WRITING (Teacher Assessment)

**83% (71) achieving expected standard**  
**35% (13) working at greater depth within expected standard**

### MATHEMATICS

**83% (73) achieving expected standard**  
**36% (24) achieving a higher standard**

### GPS (Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling)

**82% (72) achieving expected standard**  
**50% (N/A) achieving a higher standard**

### COMBINED (R, W & M)

**Reading, Writing & Maths: 72% (59) achieving the expected standard**

### SCIENCE (Teacher Assessment)

**95% (80) achieving expected standard**

Further information regarding school performance tables can be accessed at [www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk](http://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk)

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The staff and Governors prefer children not to be absent from school as this is invariably detrimental to the child's learning and progress. The curriculum is often sequential and absence can disrupt learning. It can also disturb the progress of children who have not been absent because the teacher needs to give more attention to the returning child. The nature of the curriculum is also such that it is not possible to set 'holiday work'.

Parents should not normally take their children out of school during term time. **There is no legal right to do so.** The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed references to 'family holiday' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers and the Governing Body may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

The Governing Body discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason as absences have a negative impact on the pupil's educational attainment and progress. A child who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in a year. **This is below our school attendance target.** Ten days absence also means the child will miss 50 hours of education!

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Compliance Team who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made via the school office. Our Attendance Policy, including the Essex Code of Conduct, with further information is available via the school website. ([www.stthomaspri.org](http://www.stthomaspri.org))

## MEDICAL MATTERS

If your child becomes ill during the school day we will try to contact you. For this reason, it is essential that we have a home telephone number and at least **two emergency contact numbers** for your child. Keeping Children Safe in Education says that schools should have **at least two emergency contacts** for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home. If your child has a medical problem and requires regular prescribed medication this can be sent into school (clearly named) and handed in to the school office in its **original container** for safe keeping and a permission/consent form **must** be completed and signed. If your child has asthma they will need to keep an inhaler in the school office in order to administer it themselves.

A note is always sent home via the homework diary if they have suffered an injury during the course of the day. The School Nursing Team (HCRG Care Group) is available to advise and meet with parents – details can be obtained through the school office or SENCo.

## MISSION STATEMENT

- St Thomas of Canterbury CE VA Primary School aims for every child to experience a rich, varied and challenging curriculum.
- We feel all our children should be given every opportunity to achieve their true potential in an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- We will endeavour to encourage our children to make sense of their world, to enjoy life and to be sensitive to the needs of others, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, age or ability.
- We will do this within the context of the Christian faith as believed and practised in the Church of England.



## OFSTED INSPECTION



A summary of the most recent inspection (February 2023) is enclosed. This school is graded as **'Good'**.

We also enclose a copy of our latest SIAMS inspection (November 2017). This inspection is carried out by The Church of England Education Office as part of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. We are graded as **'Outstanding'** in this inspection. We have always been graded as outstanding in the SIAMS inspections.



## PARENT HUB

Parent Hub is a free app that helps keep you up to date with what's going on at our school. You will receive messages, pictures, documents and newsletters, all in one handy place. St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School would like you to join their channel on Parent Hub. Download the Parent Hub app from your app store (iPhone or Android) and just tap "Add a School" in the app and enter the handle **@StThomasPri**

## PARENTS' and TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

There is a very active primary school 'PTA' which gives tremendous support to the school by arranging social functions for children and parents. They also arrange a wide range of fund-raising events for the benefit of the school. Parents are automatic members of the Association.

The aims of the Association are to:

1. Advance the education of the pupils of the school by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the school (not normally provided by the Local Authority).
2. Foster more extended relationships between the Staff, Parents and others associated with the school.
3. Engage in activities which support the school and advance the education of the pupils attending it.



## PHOTOGRAPHY FOR SCHOOL EVENTS

Under data protection legislation and guidance given to school by the Local Authority, it is necessary for all parents of primary age children to give their consent to their children being photographed at school.

Photography is regularly used in school to support the curriculum and the special activities that characterise the children's year (e.g. Sports Day, Christmas Play, Year 6 Leavers' Yearbook, themed days). Photography enables children to share their successes with each other and to celebrate their achievements.

From time to time, we also put small low resolution photographs on the school website as they still make a valuable contribution to celebrating success.

In order for us to continue capturing such events we ask every parent to confirm their permission. This then allows us, under careful supervision, to use the photographs of your child taken by official photographers or by other staff present during any school events on or off site (e.g. a football match).

We would like a response from **every** parent as it is not practical to single out individual children who cannot be photographed. Some schools have had to ban photography as they were unable to gain such permission. We do hope that parents will continue to work with us to ensure that such a situation does not develop here.



## PRAYER GROUP

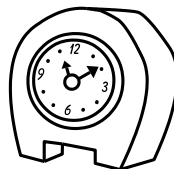
A group of parents meet with the Headteacher and any available governors/staff to pray and share fellowship every **Wednesday at 9:00am**.

The meeting takes place in the Key Stage 2 library and is open to all. Please come along!

## PUPIL PREMIUM

The Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) is designed to ensure that funding to tackle disadvantage targets the children who most need it. At St Thomas' we ensure that teaching and learning opportunities always meet the needs of all the children through personalised learning. Appropriate provision is made for children who belong to vulnerable groups; this includes ensuring that the needs of socially disadvantaged children are adequately assessed and addressed. Pupil Premium funding is allocated to schools for children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) and looked after children. For more information please speak to the Headteacher/SENCo or visit the school website to view our Pupil Premium Strategy Statement.

## SCHOOL HOURS



Each school day begins at 8:55am and finishes at 3:25pm. The mid-day break is 12 noon to 1:10pm. Children are not normally expected to arrive at school before 8:45am and should have left by 3:30pm

unless they are taking part in a club, match or other extra-curricular activity. The length of the school day is **6 hours 30 minutes** a day; **32 hours 30 minutes** a week.

To ensure the safety of all, before and after school, we do not allow children to play on: the adventurous equipment, the all-weather pitch, outdoor cardio gym or the field. Similarly, ball games are not allowed before/after school or during morning break times. Scooters/bicycles must not be ridden on the school premises under any circumstances and should be dismounted at the school gate and pushed sensibly to the scooter/bike parks being wary of pedestrians.

## SCHOOL MEALS

A free healthy snack (fruit or vegetable) is provided for all children in EYFS and KS1. Children are also encouraged to bring in a water

bottle (with sports cap) which must only contain water.

For children in KS2, a healthy snack (which must **not** contain nuts) may be eaten during the morning break and water bottles (with sports caps) may be used throughout the school day. Fresh drinking water is also available from our water fountains.



We are able to offer a hot school dinner option everyday which is prepared and cooked on site by our own catering staff in our new, state of the art kitchen.

There is a 3 week rolling menu (winter & summer) which parents and children can choose from with a main and vegetarian

option every day.

Children in EYFS and KS1 are eligible for universal infant free school meals (Reception – Year 2).

The cost per meal for children in KS2 is **£2.43** a day. Some families may be eligible for benefit related free school meals. Details are available from the school office.

Children can also choose to bring in a packed lunch which they can eat in the dining hall with the other children having a school dinner. Further details related to school meals are available from the school office.

## SCHOOL MONEY

St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School offers the facility for parents/carers to make payments online for school activities such as swimming, school trips, educational visits and drama/theatre workshops. We also use this method for collecting school dinner money. **We no longer accept cash payments in school.**

Until recently the school office staff have spent a great deal of valuable time collecting and keeping track of payments that have been received for the numerous events that take place. This combined with the sometimes difficult task of finding the correct money to pay for your child's activities can at times be frustrating!

Our [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) facility will allow for both parties to experience a more streamlined, cost effective and efficient payment collection system in a secure and safe environment.

From time to time you may receive a Parent Hub message from the school inviting you to access the

website to make a payment for an activity. We would greatly appreciate your support in this matter.

To ensure that we all experience maximum benefit from this service, we would ask all parents/carers to notify us immediately if you have recently changed your mobile number and/or email address.

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION



The children work in their year group/class for English and Maths every morning.

In Key Stage 2, children in the two mixed age classes are taught in two smaller single year groups in separate rooms throughout the

morning.

The children are divided into classes according to chronological age as follows:

### EYFS/RECEPTION

Class 1\*

Class 2\*

Class 3\*

\*Reception classes are vertically grouped with 25 children in each class.

### KEY STAGE 1

Class 4: Youngest Year 1

Class 5: Middle Year 1

Class 6: Oldest Year 1 & Youngest Year 2

Class 7: Middle Year 2

Class 8: Oldest Year 2

### KEY STAGE 2- LOWER SCHOOL

Class 1: Youngest Year 3

Class 2: Middle Year 3

Class 3: Oldest Year 3 & Youngest Year 4

Class 4: Middle Year 4

Class 5: Oldest Year 4

### KEY STAGE 2 - UPPER SCHOOL

Class 6: Youngest Year 5

Class 7: Middle Year 5

Class 8: Oldest Year 5 & Youngest Year 6

Class 9: Middle Year 6

Class 10: Oldest Year 6

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

School uniform is compulsory for all children. The uniform list is as follows:-

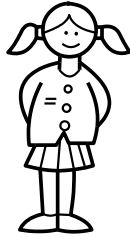
## GIRLS' UNIFORM

### Winter

*[Must be worn for the second half of the autumn term and spring term]*

#### EYFS/KS1

Grey skirt or pinafore dress,  
**\*white polo shirt, \*bottle green cardigan or jumper,**  
White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.



#### Key Stage 2

Grey skirt or pinafore dress,  
white shirt, school tie,  
**\*bottle green cardigan or jumper,**  
White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.

### Summer

*[Must be worn for the summer term and first half of the autumn term]*

#### EYFS/KS1

Green gingham check dress, **\*bottle green cardigan or jumper**  
White socks must be worn.

#### Key Stage 2

Green gingham check dress (compulsory for Year 3 & 4) and/or  
**\*white polo shirt** with grey skirt (Year 5 & 6 have option of both).  
White socks must be worn.

**N.B. Items marked \* must have the school badge embroidered on the garment.**

## BOYS' UNIFORM

### Winter

*[Must be worn for the second half of the autumn term and spring term]*

#### EYFS/KS1

Grey trousers (or shorts), **\*white polo shirt, \*bottle green jumper**  
Grey or black socks only.

#### Key Stage 2

Grey trousers (or shorts),  
white shirt, school tie,  
**\*bottle green jumper,**  
Grey or black socks only.



### Summer

*[Must be worn for the summer term and first half of the autumn term]*

#### EYFS/KS1 & KS2

**\*White polo shirt**  
with grey shorts or trousers.  
Grey or black socks only.

**N.B. Items marked \* must have the school badge embroidered on the garment.**

## SHOES

Sensible black leather shoes (not boots or trainers) or black leather sandals. We do not like lights or toys in the shoes so please bear this in mind when you are purchasing any new shoes. **No trainers.**

## P.E. /GAMES KIT

PE: Green shorts;

**\*white t-shirt.**

plimsolls

Games: as PE with trainers and plain tracksuit/sweatshirt (green, grey or black).

## SWIMWEAR (KS2 only)

Green or black swimsuit, trunks and  
**\* school hat** (with name clearly written in large letters in permanent black marker pen).

## ART

Pupils can bring a painting apron (an old shirt will be very suitable) or one will be provided.

All uniform is available from:

### **Smarty Pants**

Unit 1 Chancerygate, 33 Tallon Road, Brentwood,  
Essex

CM13 1TE

[www.smartypantsschoolwear.com](http://www.smartypantsschoolwear.com)

[office@smartypantsschoolwear.com](mailto:office@smartypantsschoolwear.com)

Tel 01277 363275

The following items are available from the **School Office**:

- School ties (clip on)
- Swimming hats (with school badge)
- PE bag (with school badge and house colours)
- All essential stationery items

### **ALL UNIFORM ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY NAMED!**

The school PTA always have a good stock of second hand, pre-loved uniform which is on sale at numerous PTA organised events across the year. By providing this the Governing Body look to ensure that the cost of school uniform is reasonable and secures the best value for money in keeping with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).

### **EARRINGS, JEWELLERY & HAIR**

Only small plain gold or silver studs are allowed in school – ear lobes only, one per ear. No jewellery may be worn other than studs (as above). No studs for P.E, games, swimming, adventure trails & all-weather pitch - we would appreciate children not wearing studs on these days. No adult or other child is able to help with studs i.e. each child has to manage it themselves. Tape may not be used to cover earrings under any circumstances.

When hair is long enough, we request it is tied back all the time, using plain green, black or white hair bands/clips. Hair accessories (in approved colours) should be small and discreet and not cause distraction within the class.

Children are not permitted to come to school with patterns, logos or designs shaved into their hair; dyed hair or hair colouring is not permitted; braided hair must not contain coloured thread/ribbon and must not contain beads for health and safety reasons.

No nail varnish. No stick on tattoos.

### **WATCHES**

Children may wear an inexpensive watch (analogue or digital) to school providing it is not too big or colourful and they are not distracted by wearing it. **Smart watches are not permitted in school.** Smart watches can cause issues with data protection and data security if these devices are trying to access our school Wi-Fi or have the ability to record and/or capture video or audio.

### **RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) arises from topic work and within the context of PSHE within the National Curriculum. It is introduced naturally at an age appropriate level and where it arises in a factual, caring and Christian manner.

When specific intentional learning is planned parents will be informed and invited to comment. We have a long and established programme for this that has been adapted to sensitively suit St Thomas' children.

Our PSHE policy, including RSE is available from the school website.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND)**

Any child who is performing considerably below the level of his/her peer group, or considerably below his/her potential is deemed to have 'Special Educational Needs' (SEND). The classteacher will usually identify such needs, or concern might initially be expressed by the parent.

The majority of special needs would be catered for in the normal classroom environment, but there may be a need to refer to our SEND staff who would make a further assessment.

Our SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) is qualified to the highest national level and has a wide range and experience of various specialisms. The SENCo can be directly contacted by choosing Option 2 when you ring the school office.

Any further action that might be necessary including additional support will be considered carefully. Further specialists are also available from the Local Authority as required.

## SPORT PREMIUM

The Government continues to provide funding each academic year in order for schools to offer new, substantial primary school sport experiences.

The sport premium must be used to fund additional and sustainable improvements to the provision of PE and sport, for the benefit of primary-aged pupils to encourage the development of healthy, active lifestyles.

For more information please visit the school website to read our Sport Premium Strategy Statement.

## STAFF

A full list of staff is available on the school website: [www.stthomaspri.org](http://www.stthomaspri.org). However, for reference here we list the senior staff and other staff whose names you will need to know.

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Moran
<b>Deputy Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Coughtrey
<b>SENCo:</b>	Mrs Moran
<b>Early Years Team Leader:</b>	Mr Beales
<b>Key Stage 1 Team Leader:</b>	Mrs Newman
<b>Lower School Team Leader:</b>	Miss Berner
<b>Upper School Team Leader:</b>	Mrs Antrobus
<b>Office Staff:</b>	Mrs Infanti Mrs Giddings Miss Forder Mrs Lawrence
<b>School Business Manager:</b>	Mrs Forder
<b>Caretaker:</b>	Mr Powis

## UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

For the previous academic year – **2022/2023**.

Attendance	<b>94.70%</b>
Unauthorised absences	<b>1.08%</b>
Authorised absences	<b>4.22%</b>
Current attendance target	<b>96%</b>

We work closely with the Local Authority Education Compliance Team. They support monitoring of attendance data and attendance concerns.

If a child's attendance falls below a certain level (90%) then a letter will be sent from the Headteacher to offer support with attendance.

If attendance fails to improve and no clear medical reason is given then a meeting will be offered with the parents to discuss things. Education Compliance will become involved if attendance or punctuality is persistently poor. The school has a clear policy for parents that wish to apply for leave of absence during term time. A summary of which is given when parents request a form. Parents are strongly encouraged to read the summary and/or the full policy.

## AND FINALLY...

We hope that this prospectus has given you a sense of what St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is like. It is designed to give a brief overview and give prospective parents and visitors an idea of what to expect.

However, the best way to get to know our school is to come and visit us. If you would like to do this, please contact the Headteacher via the school office and arrange a tour. It would be a pleasure to see you!

*N.B. Please note that the information in this Prospectus was correct on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Changes may have been made since this date.*

Comments (and compliments!) are always welcome. If you wish to make a comment about anything in this prospectus please get in touch:

[admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk)

or call

**01277 223651**

**THANK YOU!**



## **DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...**

*"The teaching at the school is engaging and stimulating. It provokes a thought process which allows students to extend their knowledge and also stretch and challenge themselves."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey

*"The teachers clearly work together to give consistently good teaching, support and encouragement to all children. My child has flown from a quiet, shy child to a confident and wonderfully developed child. Thank you."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey

*"Very supportive teachers. Teachers do listen to parents' concerns, if any – and act upon those."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey

*"The school encourages good moral values and encourages good citizenship values. There is a strong community. The school treats each child as an individual and encourages them to use ideas and opinions."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey

*"My child has special educational needs and I feel that the school work really well with us to help them and to understand how to best reach their potential. We are very pleased."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey

*"Great school. Great environment. Very happy with the school."*

Parent Comment – NFER Survey