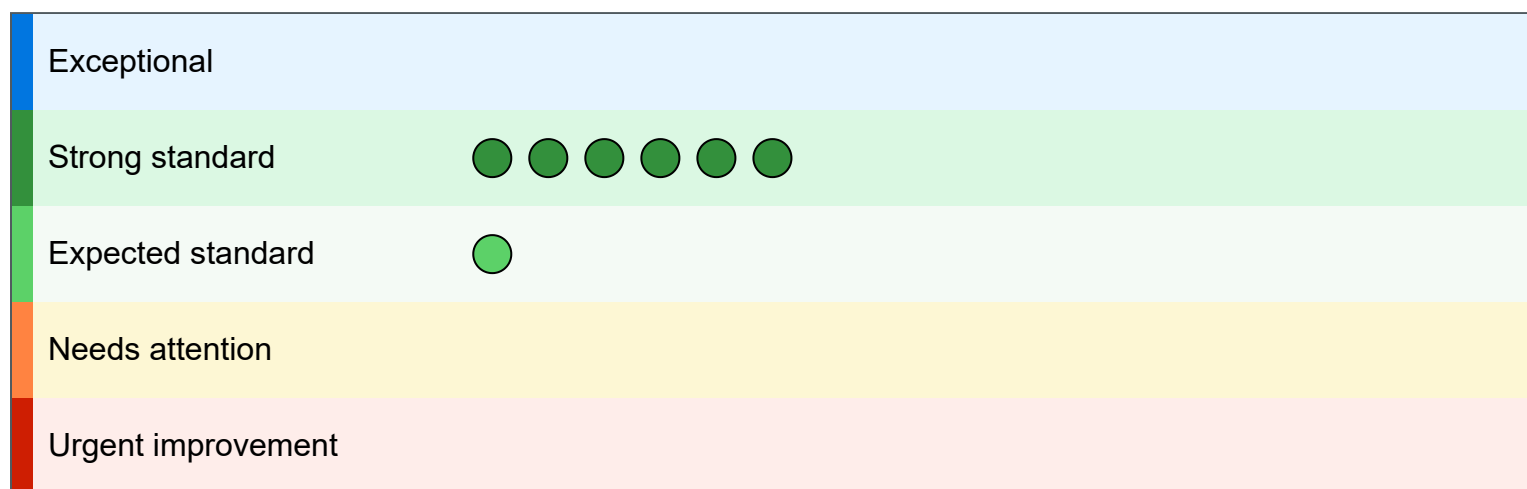


St Philip Howard Catholic School

Address: Elm Grove South, Barnham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 0EN

Unique reference number (URN): 144243

Inspection report: 14 April 2026



✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve very well in this school. They develop secure knowledge across subjects, supported by a curriculum that builds understanding in a logical and connected way. Over time, pupils' achievement and progress have remained above the national average, including in post-16. This strong performance includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

Most pupils join the school with low or average starting points. From these starting points, pupils make sustained and often accelerated progress compared to peers nationally. The school's commitment to raising standards is evident in the rapid improvements in how well disadvantaged pupils have achieved over time. In lessons, they articulate their ideas clearly and make sophisticated links between prior and new learning. Leaders' focused work on literacy is evident in the precision with which pupils explain their thinking. Nearly all pupils progress to ambitious next steps in education, employment or training. They are very well prepared for their futures.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders set clear strategic expectations for attendance and behaviour. They monitor attendance information closely and act quickly when pupils show signs of decline. Many pupils attend very well because leaders promote high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Attendance for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), remains above national figures. Leaders understand the barriers that some pupils face, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have multiple vulnerabilities. They provide enhanced pastoral support and work with external agencies to help families improve attendance. Where persistent absence exists, leaders take effective action that secures steady improvement and supports pupils to re-engage with school life.

Pupils behave with maturity and courtesy. Classrooms are calm and purposeful so pupils learn well. Pupils describe a community built on kindness and respect. Bullying is rare because staff respond quickly and consistently, and pupils do not accept unkind behaviour. They feel confident to report concerns to trusted 'Go To' adults. Relationships between pupils are respectful and discriminatory language is not tolerated. Leaders set clear expectations rooted in care and mutual respect. Staff apply these expectations consistently and make appropriate adjustments for pupils with SEND. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their conduct and work.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a precise and well-informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They use this insight to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and to prioritise improvement effectively. The curriculum is ambitious and coherently planned so pupils build securely on prior knowledge. A broad range of interesting and demanding courses reflects leaders' unwavering commitment to raise expectations further.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils who have not yet secured essential literacy and numeracy skills. Diagnostic assessments inform a tiered approach that closes gaps in learning. Teachers ensure that pupils use important subject-specific vocabulary and articulate ideas with confidence and precision.

The quality of teaching reflects the school's commitment to inclusion. Teachers understand pupils' starting points and use assessment routinely to check understanding. When needed, they adapt their approaches so pupils access the same ambitious curriculum successfully. Adaptations are well judged and enable pupils with barriers to learn effectively. In doing so, teachers ensure pupils learn in a way that builds in complexity over time. Consequently, pupils articulate their learning with impressive confidence and skill. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Principles of inclusion guide every decision leaders make about pupils' education. Leaders foster a deep-rooted culture of belonging so pupils feel safe and overcome barriers to learning. Strategic decisions are shaped by a clear understanding of pupils' needs. This is evident in the expansion of the post-16 vocational offer, which provides accessible qualification pathways that prepare pupils for adulthood. Disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently above average GCSE and post-16 outcomes.

Staff know pupils extremely well. Rigorous checks on learning ensure that pupils receive timely and effective help. Leaders use pupil information to refine training so staff feel confident in meeting pupils' needs. Evidence-informed strategies help vulnerable pupils to learn well and additional funding is used effectively to remove barriers to education and attendance. Leaders work closely with external professionals, including specialist teaching services such as speech and language therapists. This ensures that pupils with an education, health and care plan receive high-quality support and care.

Leaders recognise that pupils' vulnerabilities change over time. They respond with approaches such as the wellbeing provision, which offers mental health support that builds pupils' confidence and resilience. Leaders use alternative provision appropriately to enhance pupils' wellbeing. They monitor the impact of therapeutic support to ensure it prepares pupils well for future success.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide clear and confident strategic direction. They understand the school's strengths well and identify priorities that place pupils' best interests at the centre of improvement. They communicate these priorities clearly and take a sustainable approach that strengthens provision over time. Staff understand the rationale for decisions and recognise the positive impact on pupils' learning and development.

Governance, including oversight from the diocese, is cohesive, knowledgeable and ambitious. Governors fulfil statutory duties with rigour and use well-established systems to assure themselves of impact. These systems enable governors and trustees to offer constructive challenge and support. They scrutinise the use of resources carefully and check that leaders' actions directly improve outcomes and experiences for pupils. Trustees

review progress regularly and hold leaders to account. Governance expertise, strengthened through training and experience, is a clear asset and contributes to a highly strategic approach to school improvement.

Professional learning is evidence informed and highly effective. Teachers at every career stage receive excellent development and support. The school uses its position in the trust and diocese to collaborate with other schools and strengthen practice. Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school. Leaders model care and support, remain mindful of workload and respond when staff raise concerns.

The school engages positively with parents, external agencies and community partners. Communication is productive and inclusive, ensuring families feel involved and supported. Together, leaders, governors and partners create a culture where pupils thrive academically and personally.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

The sixth-form ethos of providing love and guided independence shapes clear strategic leadership. Leaders understand the strengths of the provision and refine the curriculum so it meets the needs and ambitions of all students. Their inclusive approach widens access through additional vocational pathways and adjusted entry requirements. This enables students with lower prior attainment to study courses that match their aspirations. Study support helps these students succeed.

Students achieve well, making positive progress from their starting points. Outcomes in A-level and vocational courses sit above national figures, particularly for those with greater barriers to success. A high proportion of students successfully progress to ambitious destinations and universities.

The curriculum is sequenced appropriately and taught expertly. Teachers receive regular training so they understand course requirements and deliver content with clarity. Leaders plan curriculum time carefully to ensure students learn securely. Staff use assessment information purposefully to address gaps or extend learning, enabling students to produce high-quality work.

Students prepare very well for their next steps. Careers guidance is a strength. Students gain CV writing skills, support with applications to universities and tailored advice, including targeted help for disadvantaged and first-generation applicants. Wider opportunities, including leadership roles, volunteering and mentoring, help students develop confidence and character.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's programme for personal development supports pupils to grow into respectful, confident and resilient young people. A notable strength is the way the provision promotes

pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a clear moral compass that motivates them to act with integrity. This helps them become confident citizens who are well prepared for future life.

Relationships and sex education and health education is suitably planned and teaches pupils about healthy relationships, protected characteristics and risks to their wellbeing online and offline. Teaching approaches in key stage 3 and key stage 5 help pupils revisit learning regularly enabling them to gain secure understanding of concepts such as maintaining healthy relationships. Pupils speak confidently about how the school supports their mental health and wellbeing and know how to seek help from trusted adults. However, learning is not revisited often enough in key stage 4. As a result, some pupils do not secure long-term knowledge around concepts such as democracy. Systems to check pupils' retention and understanding lack precision.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that broaden their experiences and nurture their interests. Leaders understand pupils' pastoral needs and provide support that helps them feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Sixth-form students are ambassadors for the school and show leadership through organising charity and social events. Pupils in every year group contribute wholeheartedly to creating a positive and respectful environment where everyone feels welcome.

Impartial careers education is clearly structured and gives pupils access to employers, providers and work-related experiences. Pupils typically find this guidance useful when planning their next steps and make ambitious plans for the future. Sixth-form students receive well-planned careers guidance and take part in activities that help them make informed decisions about education, employment and training.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school's mantra of pupils being 'known and loved' is evident in the strong sense of belonging and pride that pupils feel. Pupils speak with genuine joy about their time in school and value the positive relationships they build with staff, rooted in mutual respect and authentic care. Staff recognise pupils as individuals and know them well because they understand their ambitions and needs. Expert staff support pupils who require additional help to manage their mental health and wellbeing. This support enables pupils to thrive personally and academically.

Pupils enjoy an interesting and ambitious curriculum that helps them secure essential knowledge. They learn well and achieve positively, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional barriers. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities that enhance their learning. Many pupils keenly attend. The school removes potential barriers to participation so that all pupils benefit from the exciting clubs on offer. Students in the sixth form receive high quality support that prepares them well for adulthood. They take part in opportunities that develop leadership skills and allow them to act as role models for younger pupils, which contributes to their wider development. Many students achieve their personal aspirations for future education, employment and training. Almost all complete their qualifications successfully, which equips them well for their next steps.

Pupils behave with impeccable politeness and courtesy. They treat one another with kindness and compassion and show confidence that staff respond swiftly and effectively to unkindness. Many pupils attend school well and arrive punctually to lessons. Staff provide targeted help for pupils who need additional support to attend regularly. Leaders maintain a sharp focus on securing sustained improvements for the pupils who need it most.

Next steps

- Leaders should analyse more precisely how well pupils in key stage 4 learn and remember the personal, social and health education and careers curriculum, and ensure the programme consistently meets pupils' needs.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Bosco Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dave Carter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Feast.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders including the headteacher, middle leaders, and other trust leaders, the chair of the trust and a representatives of the local governing body during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO and a representative from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Its last section 48 inspection was November 2023.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered for a small number of its pupils.

Headteacher: Tim Hulse

Lead inspector:

Michelle Payne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Summerfield, Ofsted Inspector


Peter Fry, Ofsted Inspector

Mike Serridge, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Anders, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,301

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,033

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.43%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.92%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.83%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	47.6%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52.8%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54.1%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	52.5	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	53.6	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	52.7	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.68	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.44	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	23.1%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.0	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	38.8	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.08	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.37	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	29.2%	53.1%	-24.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	23.1%	52.4%	-29.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	37.6	50.4	-12.8
2023/24 (final)	41.0	50.0	-9.1

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	38.8	50.3	-11.5

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.08	0.16	-0.09
2022/23 (final)	-0.37	0.17	-0.54

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	96%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.21	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.74	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.66	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.9%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	17.3%	21.9%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	18.3%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	20.1%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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