

St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School

URN: 144243

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

29–30 November 2023

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

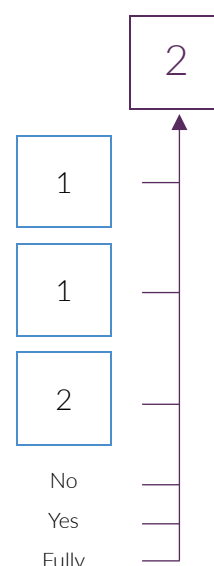
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Staff, governors, and students are ambitious and passionate in their vision for improving this deeply caring school, and the fruits of this ambition are evident. The culture of continuous improvement permeates the school community, with good and outstanding practice the norm.
- The inspirational head teacher ensures that the school's Catholic identity impacts the whole school, aided by staff and governors who are rightly proud of the outstanding climate for learning and interpersonal relationships that mark this deeply loving community where every student is known and loved.

- The religious education team, led by an ambitious, dynamic and capable head of department are on a path of rapid improvement, embedding the core content of the *Religious Education Directory* and ensuring that outcomes and provision are excellent.
- The outstanding chaplain leads a chaplaincy team that is at the heart of the school and drives the lived ethos of prayer and worship.
- Students, parents and staff are proud of what makes the school different. They all feel very fortunate to be at St Philip Howard, reflected in the students returning as staff members and continuing the tradition.

What the school needs to improve

- The school is not yet compliant with the Bishops' Conference stipulation on the choice of GCSE curriculum, but steps taken by school leaders mean it will be by 2025.
- Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that student leadership of prayer, including student creation and evaluation of prayer and liturgy, is consistently evidenced across the school.
- Leaders need to ensure that Catholic social teaching and its significance is fully embedded across the school to ensure students and staff members understand the social consequences of their community's Catholic identity.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Students in this remarkable school value, embrace and actively contribute to the school's Catholic life and mission, as evidenced by student voice and the pride they take in their community. Consequently, students are happy and secure; one student said: 'This school is so supportive. My friends at other schools don't get the same help.' Students' behaviour is exemplary, showing the respect they have for themselves and others. Students are proud of their school's ethos, which informs both their learning and their relationships with peers and staff. Students speak confidently about how their school welcomes those of all faiths and none, provides a safe and empowering space for all and, therefore, aids their moral development. One sixth form student commented, 'The school trusts us to lead charitable work and take decisions.' Their understanding of Catholic social teaching is embedding, and they recognise its place across the curriculum, as well as foundational to it. Staff recognise that students discuss their faith confidently in lessons other than religious education. Parents love the school. One parent commented: 'My child has not always been perfect, but the school has never given up on him or stopped supporting him; they never give up.'

Christ is at the centre of the community, fully inclusive of non-Catholic Christians and those of other faiths who feel their tradition is respected. The whole school curriculum reflects Church teaching. The majority of staff feel that their mental wellbeing and physical health are well supported and that leaders effectively support them. One member of teaching staff said: "As a non-Catholic I was somewhat nervous when I started in the school about leading prayers in tutor time, but I have been very well supported by the school." The strong Catholic signature owes much to the dynamic head of chaplaincy who works tirelessly to ensure staff and students recognise what is meant by Catholic distinctiveness in school. For one parent, "The new mission statement 'becoming the people God calls us to be' is very appropriate - as the school develops student skills, whether academic, athletic, or artistic." Staff commitment at all levels is exceptional; they readily serve the community and participate in activities and routines which

promote the school's high standards, and especially those which reinforce the ethos of the school. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) meets all statutory requirements and is firmly rooted in Church teaching. The school environment coherently reflects its Catholic character, including a well-used chapel.

Leaders, including governors, are energised, joyful and determined in their duty as guardians of the Catholic life of the school. The inspirational head teacher works tirelessly for the good of the school and models its ethos in the compassion and love he shows, not only in celebrating the good, but in exercising just, if sometimes difficult, decision-making, proper to his role. Staff think very highly of him and recognise in the school's broader leadership a very real integrity and generosity. The head of chaplaincy is an excellent role model with a passion not only to maintain but to strengthen the Catholic life and mission. Leaders are positively aligning the school with the Diocese and the Bishop's vision, as well as ensuring it provides an inspiration for other schools within the multi-academy trust, itself led by a dynamic and capable Chief Executive Officer. Aided by the good will of local clergy, who speak warmly about the school, "being in the best place ever in terms of Catholic identity." Governors are deeply committed to the school and take their role seriously, benefitting from the advice of the board of directors and the inspirational CEO.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

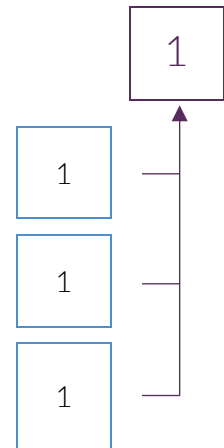
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Students develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills from a committed team, well led and motivated by an effective subject leader. Most make consistently good progress and the majority demonstrate a high degree of religious literacy and can engage in sophisticated thinking. The ‘Write like a theologian’ guidance to students is an instance of this. Students can recall and articulate what they have learnt and produce written work of a high quality which reflects understanding. Year 9 students looking at the ethics of artificial intelligence benefitted from an outstanding lesson, well prepared and offering a variety of learning experiences. Students in multiple lessons spoke of peer leading and discussion being of a higher level than their other subjects. Their work compares well to work undertaken in other core subjects, reflecting their engagement with the subject. They report enjoying the subject and have a high degree of confidence in how they are taught. Behaviour is outstanding, allowing for pair and group work and extended periods of engagement. This allows staff to take risks and employ highly engaging teaching activities. Attainment is good and improving as the relatively newly constituted religious education team respond generously to the vision of the subject leader. Post-16 attainment is excellent and numbers recruited to the A-Level course are growing.

Teachers, under the leadership of the new subject leader, have high expectations and are delivering well planned lessons, based on a coherent curriculum which allows for sequencing and progression. The overwhelming majority of lessons observed included very effective, and regularly outstanding, questioning, allowing for progression and stimulating deeper reflection. For one student, “The questions help the teacher know who is struggling and lets her correct them.” Teachers know their students and the head of department’s ambition for ever-greater progress for the disadvantaged students is having an impact. Teachers use the school site

imaginatively, including a simulated wedding in the chapel. Teachers use praise effectively and in most, though not all lessons seen, feedback was excellent.

Leadership of the department is now outstanding. Leaders and governors are now ensuring the implementation, by 2025, of a GCSE curriculum consistent with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The curriculum development properly reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*, and the highly capable subject leader is ensuring his team are fully conversant with the requirements. The head teacher ensures that religious education has full parity with other subjects and that the department has the resources to deliver a comprehensive professional development programme. The subject leader is ambitious for the department to surpass the attainment of other core departments in the school. Imagination and creativity go into the department's planning, including attention to the needs of the individual. Supported by the head teacher, he has appointed a colleague to drive progress for disadvantaged students. Links are made with other schools, as well as faith communities, to ensure the department learns from the best and can also draw on people of other faiths to help students understand religious diversity. The subject leader is accurate and realistic in his departmental self-evaluation, aware of progress made in a short time, rightly proud of his team but also aware of, and ready for, the challenge of embedding this practice over time.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Students' responses to, and participation in, collective worship are good and they now need to develop by taking a more extensive leading role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of prayer and worship in the school. Students at this school have the confidence and aptitude to take on such greater responsibility, supported by the climate of trust and an outstanding staff, including the excellent chaplaincy team leader. During form time, students read prayers and scripture reflecting the typicality of this good practice in school. In a Year 9 assembly, a member of the chaplaincy team delivered a scriptural reflection, to which students responded attentively. In a Year 10 main assembly, students were invited to engage in discussion of the significance of the parable of the sheep and the goats. In a Year 7 tutor period, students enthusiastically sang, while in a Year 10 tutor period, students were offered time for quiet reflection, in which they engaged well. Students' behaviour in worship is excellent. They are familiar with major traditional Catholic prayers. Ample evidence was seen of the capacity of these students' to become the leading voice in prayer and worship, aided by staff.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. Prayer and worship is central to the life of the school. The daily pattern and rhythm maps across the daily tutor prayer, the weekly assembly and the season of the liturgical year. The 'chaplaincy small group' meetings enable students to engage in prayer and reflection specific to them as individuals. The use of scripture is strong, and traditional prayer is used alongside more contemporary forms. Staff, including recently-appointed staff, feel supported by the chaplaincy team to pray with their students. Going forward, these skills should be honed to help students create and co-create prayer and liturgy, drawing also on their life experience, concerns and interests. Staff are powerful role models, led by the head teacher. The general climate of trust, respect and collaboration in this very well-run school greatly enhances the authenticity and impact of prayer. The chapel is well used and is physically central in the school. The supportive local clergy, who give their time generously, express their confidence in the school. The local dean reported,

'Masses and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are all well prepared by the staff by the time I get there.'

Leadership of collective worship is strong, developing, never less than good and often outstanding. Scope now exists for governors to review, develop and better understand the school's prayer and worship policy in the context of ever greater student leadership. This will allow governors to continue to engage in this central feature of the school, and both support, as well as hold to account, leaders. Liturgical events are well thought through and impactful. Leaders recognise the need to develop student leadership of prayer and worship. They are open to learning from good practice and the school chaplain is actively involved with diocesan chaplaincy meetings. She is a dynamic force in the school, supporting students and staff alike. She undertakes a range of roles and is very visible and hands-on. Prayer in tutor time is monitored by heads of year, and standards are good. Capacity exists for the chaplain to develop a more strategic approach, including longer-term planning to ensure student leadership of prayer and worship becomes the norm. Governors and senior leaders already express their support for this, and will have a role in setting the key performance indicators for success. Training delivered by senior leaders ensures that all staff are developing an understanding of the centrality of prayer and are supported in developing their skills in providing high-quality collective worship. An effective system of evaluation is in place to help students reflect on worship.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	144243
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9384800
Full postal address of the school	St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School, Elm Grove South, Barnham, Bognor Regis, PO22 0EN
School phone number	01243552055
Headteacher	Tim Hulse
Chair of Local Governing Body	Richard Meredith
School Website	http://www.sphcs.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bosco Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	01/11/2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Simon Uttley	Lead
Philip Turnham	Team
Grainne Byrd	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement