



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Richard's Catholic College

Ashdown Road, Bexhill-on-Sea

East Sussex TN40 1SE

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School Unique Reference Number: 114612

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| Headteacher: | Miss Doreen Cronin |
| Chair of Governors: | Mrs Alison Horan |
| Lead Inspector: | Mr Damian G Fox |
| Associate Inspector: | Mr Peter Ward |
| Inspection date: | 13/14 November 2018 |

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| Overall Effectiveness | Previous Inspection: 1 |
| | This inspection: 1 |
| Catholic Life: | 1 |
| Collective Worship: | 1 |
| Religious Education: | 1 |

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Richard's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is an inspirational Christ-centred community with a strong moral purpose that underpins their life and work. ▪ It has a distinctive Catholic ethos. Pupils know they belong to an overtly Catholic Christian family. ▪ Governors provide highly effective support and challenge to the headteacher and work with her to ensure prayer and service underpin the life of the school. ▪ The vision of leaders and managers for the success of each person is based on Gospel values and the Church's teaching. ▪ The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Her vision for progress in embedding spirituality into school life is understood and shared by pupils and their parents. ▪ Senior leaders and teachers embrace this vision. They provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their God-given talents and so prepare for adult life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. ▪ Governors are totally committed to developing a spirit of Christian living based on love and service. They work effectively with school leaders and ensure a Catholic school in faith and practice. ▪ Pupils' response to the needs of others is profound. It reflects the impact of a school that puts the care of others at the heart of their mission. ▪ Pastoral care is a significant feature of the school. The welfare of each person inspires the whole community in building a calm, harmonious and prayerful school. ▪ Pupils articulate their overwhelming appreciation of what the school offers. They know they are valued as unique individuals and made in God's image. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious Education is a strength of the school. It is a lead department. ▪ The attainment and progress of pupils have consistently risen since the last inspection. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are outstanding and reflect the totally inclusive nature of Religious Education lessons. ▪ Teaching is generally outstanding and never less than good. It motivates pupils with a variety of resources and strategies. Pupils' engagement in and attitudes to learning are excellent. ▪ The headteacher, in partnership with senior leaders, is deeply committed to pupils' success. The department is fully staffed with Catholic teachers who demonstrate strong subject knowledge. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collective worship is an integral part of daily life. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the wide range of opportunities to plan and lead acts of worship. ▪ The chapel is used extensively for Mass and periods of reflection. Pupils show great respect for the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. ▪ Governors and the headteacher are deeply committed to the inclusion of pupils of all faiths and none. ▪ The chaplaincy team of teachers and pupils play an important role in planning and leading acts of worship. Resources are produced for all teachers to use as form prayers and in year assemblies. Music enhances all services and acts of worship. |

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FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Richard's Catholic College is a voluntary aided secondary co-educational school which serves the St Leonards Deanery of the diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by East Sussex LA. The school serves the parishes of Eastbourne, St Leonards, Bexhill and Hailsham. The Catholic primary feeder schools are St Mary Magdalene Primary School, Bexhill. Sacred Heart Primary School, Hastings, St Mary Star of the Sea Primary School, Hastings, St Thomas A Becket Primary School, Eastbourne. The number of pupils on roll is 1020. The academic profile of the College reflects the full ability range. The attainment of pupils on entry is broadly in line with the national average. The overall proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 83%. A further 12% of pupils are from other Christian traditions. 18% of pupils are on the Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) register covering all categories of need. Of these, 8% have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Pupil Premium funding is received for 14% of pupils. 68% of pupils identify themselves as White British or Irish. 7% are Asian and the remaining 25% are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of homes where English is an additional language is 13%.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Increase the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education at Key Stage 3 to meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Continue to develop pupil understanding and clarity of the assessment criteria with regards to the demands of the new GCSE.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils derive great benefit from and make a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They are excellent ambassadors for Catholic education. In discussions and in lessons, they articulated their understanding of what it means to belong to a Catholic school.
- The school is totally inclusive of pupils with different strengths and challenges. It offers unstinting support to their families.
- Pupils understand and live out the mission of the school, *Comitas, Scientia, Caritas* (community, knowledge, charity). Pupils know they have a responsibility to serve others and to respect each person as unique and a child of God. As a result, pupils take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and wider community.
- Fundraising for people in need is an established part of school life. Pupils are aware of the needs of others in the local and wider community and willingly take up the many opportunities to raise awareness of their challenges and to raise funds.
- Over £24,000 was raised last year in response to the needs of others. 475 charity boxes were collected for the Romanian charities. Through the interact club, pupils organise activities such as the pensioners' tea party or join campaigns, for example, to raise funds to end polio.
- Pupils are given many responsibilities to lead through service. Prefects play an important role in promoting the ethos of the school. Pupils are actively involved in the School Council and Wellbeing Council. The school seeks their views and has invited them to meet with governors. They also benefit from a range of extracurricular activities, including trips both nationally and internationally.
- The profound impact of the school is evidenced in the calm harmony that characterises pupils' daily lives. There is an impressive degree of mutual respect and care. No pupil is left out.
- Relationships are very strong. Younger pupils know they can turn to others when they have concerns. Older pupils take immense pride in serving others and in contributing to make the school evermore effective and spiritual.

- Pastoral care is outstanding and a significant feature of the school. It inspires pupils to respond respectfully and willingly to the mission to serve others. 75% of parents returned questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection. The view of the vast majority of parents is that the school is highly successful in everything it does for them and their children. There were several comments expressing gratitude for the support they receive.
- The moving, community response to several bereavements reflects the impact of pastoral and spiritual care. Pupils spoke openly of their confidence in people to listen to their concerns.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

- The school mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. The spirit of service permeates the community. In interviews, pupils spoke warmly about the opportunities they are given to grow as people.
- The school is distinctly Catholic. The Catholic ethos and identity of the school community is visible through the centrality of religious icons and images displayed and treated with respect throughout the school.
- They are blessed to have the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. It serves as the spiritual centre of the school and is an inspiration for teachers and pupils. It is open all day.
- Liturgical music is a strength of the school led by an inspirational leader who supports all services and acts of worship with carefully chosen hymns, music and Mass settings.
- Pastoral care is a significant strength. Behaviour policies are rooted in Gospel values that are promoted through clear and consistent communication of the school's expectations. The school provides the highest level of pastoral care to pupils, which they and their parents overwhelmingly appreciate.
- The manifest sense of community is evident in the quality of relationships that prevail amongst staff and pupils. The highest standards of moral behaviour displayed by pupils makes for a supportive and happy learning environment.
- Pupils' understanding of their personal responsibility to others is evident in their exemplary behaviour towards each other.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The headteacher has a clear vision of what a Catholic school should provide for pupils. This is shared and fully supported by all stakeholders. She is highly respected and valued by pupils, teachers, governors and parents. She has a high profile around the school, cares deeply about the community and feels passionately that everybody should be provided with the highest quality religious and spiritual education.

- Governors are deeply committed to their mission to lead and serve. They are dedicated to the development of the Catholic life of the school. They visit regularly for Mass and special events. They have established an Ethos committee which evaluates and monitors the provision for Catholic life. The headteacher reports termly to governors. The self evaluation prior to the inspection was fully endorsed by inspectors in all areas.
- The three year improvement plan for spiritual life is clear evidence of the vision leaders have for providing opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Outstanding leadership has ensured very high staff morale. Teachers are fully committed to developing the Catholic life through the high level of pastoral care for all pupils.
- All staff are an integral part of the fundraising that is a significant feature of school life. The whole community willingly participates in ensuring that the needs of others are recognised and addressed.
- The school has developed an impressive depth of sensitivity to bereavement, separation and loss. The headteacher's leadership has led to an openness that allows people to share their concerns, knowing they can rely on the support and prayers of others.
- The programme to address bereavement, loss and separation reflects the experiences within the school and their understanding of how to support pupils and families. 'Sophie's Secret postcard' Auction was a powerful response to a pupil bereavement that brought the school together in prayer.
- The dedication of leaders and managers to their pupils has resulted in a highly effective transition process for pupils from primary school who need further support. They are given a personal mentor and a bespoke timetable to help them assimilate.
- Staff training is in place. The pastoral team recognise that 'being poor is not always financial.'

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- Acts of worship engage pupils' interest and inspire them to act with reverence. Pupils respond reverently and respectfully to the many daily opportunities there are to experience and participate in prayer and worship. They are involved in preparing liturgies and are keen to be involved in reading, serving and singing.
- Priests confirmed the Inspectors' findings that pupils respond with reverence and respect in acts of worship. Pupils were engaged in preparing and leading the assemblies and services that took place during the inspection. There was always an atmosphere of calm and prayer which inspired pupils to participate prayerfully and enthusiastically.
- The impact of working and praying together was affirmed by pupils who spoke confidently about the value of prayer and their understanding of the effect it has on the community.
- An assembly for Key Stage 3 pupils included drama, question and answer sessions between pupils and very moving signed hymn singing. It was an outstanding example of pupil led worship.
- Each day starts with prayer and collective worship whether in the form class, year assembly or upper/lower school assembly. Pupils are keen to lead prayers and to write their own prayers. They all respond when invited to pray for special intentions.
- Pupils are confident enough to celebrate differences and act with integrity when praying together.
- Each form has a liturgy representative who works with the chaplain in preparing reading and hymns for mass and assembly. Liturgical celebrations are enhanced by the many pupils who act as servers and readers.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Acts of collective worship are given a high profile and are well resourced. There are extensive and varied opportunities for prayer and worship. Pupils confirmed that prayer is part of daily life in the school; it is not something added on to the day.
- The school is fortunate to have the support of local clergy. Mass for the whole school is celebrated each term and on all holy days of obligation, but the lack of a large hall necessitates three Masses on each day so that all pupils and teachers are able to enjoy the spiritual annual celebrations. Pupils also have opportunities for class Masses and year Masses throughout the year. Many celebrations are enhanced by music, drama and dance. Pupils are invited to offer their own intentions publicly on the liturgy boards in classrooms.

- The chapel is a feature of the school and is always open to the community for prayer and reflection. During the inspection, a class were having a service of reflection. It was led by pupils, all of whom read and sang. Pupils had the opportunity to receive holy communion. The chapel enhances the strong prayerful spirit in the school. It is open at all times for teachers and pupils to use for private reflections. It is available throughout the week for Mass and prayer services.
- The dedicated chaplain is well known and respected by pupils. She is an outstanding role model who is comfortable sharing her faith with others. She ensures pupils are provided with carefully planned, high quality collective worship that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Staff are integral to collective worship. Resources are provided to assist in the preparation and delivery of assemblies and daily prayer. Staff understanding of the value of collective worship is developed through inset on the delivery of Mass and other liturgical celebrations.
- Collective worship has a clear purpose and message. Weekly themes are provided for daily prayer and assemblies to reflect the liturgical season and Gospel values that underpin the life and work of the school.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers, including senior leaders, have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences for collective worship.
- They have ensured that collective worship is integral to the growth of a Catholic, spiritual community with opportunities for prayer and worship. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year. As a consequence, pupils respond to acts of worship with enthusiasm and great respect.
- Governors visit the school regularly and are proud of the way pupils come together and show respect for each other. The headteacher is passionately committed to building a totally inclusive Catholic community and serves as an outstanding model for staff and pupils.
- The headteacher's vision for embedding spirituality in the lives of staff and pupils, is understood and shared by the whole community. Her spiritual strength and personal faith are manifest in her own relationships with pupils and the obvious 'Gospel in action' which permeates the whole school.
- She is supported by teachers who demonstrate their own deep understanding of service in the way they conduct themselves and ensure that all pupils are included in preparing and leading.
- Chaplaincy is line managed by the headteacher.

- Staff are enthusiastic about their role in developing the quality of collective worship and improving the effectiveness of the pupil liturgy group. The effectiveness of the chaplain was affirmed by governors, staff and pupils. She is highly respected by pupils who have responded with pleasure to her leadership.
- Leaders and managers recognise the significance of collective worship in a Catholic school. Each year they review the three-year chaplaincy improvement plan. Parents are kept informed about collective worship and confirmed that the school provides opportunities for spiritual growth and development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Pupils view Religious Education as one of their most important lessons. They respond with commitment to their learning. They benefit greatly from the range of teaching styles used by teachers, including debates, role play and paired working. They value their teachers highly. They develop excellent relationships based on trust and respect. One pupil said he enjoyed Religious Education because it went beyond knowledge and was 'an education for life'.
- The behaviour of the pupils in all lessons seen during the inspection was exemplary because they are keen to learn and support each other in their learning. Most pupils were on task throughout the lesson. Attitudes to learning are outstanding.
- Outcomes in Religious Education are outstanding and significantly above the school average in other subjects. This is in the context of a very high achieving school. The school is consistently among the highest performing in the diocese and pupil outcomes for Religious Education are above national averages.
- Pupils' ability on entry to the school is broadly above average and during their time at St Richard's they make excellent progress. Disadvantaged pupils make progress consistently above the national average with no discernible gender differences.

- By the end of their time at the school, pupils have developed excellent subject knowledge of their faith and of other faiths. Pupils make excellent age appropriate progress in becoming religious literate. In one lesson, pupils used, and applied in context, complex language that was challenging for their level of ability, for example, indulgence, ecumenism and schism.
- Observations and a review of written work showed that most pupils can apply a range of skills to enhance learning, including independence, collaborative work and the ability to interpret sources.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The school judges the overall quality of teaching in Religious Education as being outstanding and inspectors agreed that lesson observations, together with attainment and progress data in Religious Education, justify this view.
- Teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding or at least of a good standard, usually with outstanding elements. These were characterised by knowledgeable teachers who were passionate about the subject and inspired pupils to commit to learning. The pace and structure of lessons ensured that pupils were happy to engage and achieve.
- Teachers use a variety of well-chosen activities including individual, pair and group work to support learning. Questioning is used skilfully to promote understanding and further reflection.
- Marking and feedback is generally of a very high standard and ensures pupils know how to improve their learning, demonstrating the effectiveness of assessment. Data is collected and used to set targets for the department and for pupils across the ability range.
- The new booklet format at GCSE was welcomed by year 11 pupils for providing a single set of resources and opportunities for assessment and notes. They knew their current levels, target grades and the steps they needed to take to achieve them. Pupils in Year 10 were using the booklets for the first time and were less certain of their current levels and target grades, particularly if they had recently commenced a new booklet.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The curriculum fulfils the content requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The time allocation for Religious Education at Key Stage 4 meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Governors understand that the allocation at Key Stage 3 does not yet meet these requirements. They are actively searching for a

new teacher for September 2019 to increase the staffing of the subject and hence make it possible to increase the time for Religious Education to 10%.

- Extra time is systematically set aside for Mass preparation, clergy visits, retreat days and religious visits, factors that contribute to ensuring Religious Education has a high profile.
- The GCSE Religious Education programme is Edexcel Syllabus A with Islam as the second religion. This meets the requirement set by the Bishops' Conference.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious for improving outcomes in Religious Education further. The school's self evaluation is honest and accurate and reflects the pride the school has in the success of Religious Education, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are effective in their role in both supporting and challenging the senior leaders. They are kept fully informed through the headteacher's reports and regular learning walks. The link governor is active in monitoring standards of teaching and learning. The department plan is reviewed annually.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are inspirational leaders. They are driven by the desire to see pupils achieve their highest possible grades. They ensure that Religious Education is monitored and supported by regular discussions, observations and learning walks.
- With the head of department, they look at books and meet with pupils to improve consistency of teaching and assessment across the department. Outcomes in Religious Education and pupils' responses confirm that leaders are committed to their progress and welfare.
- Attainment and progress are monitored following assessments. There is detailed evidence of rigorous tracking of pupils' learning. The head of department meets with senior leaders to analyse data and plan for appropriate challenge and support for targeted pupils.
- The department has a full complement of specialist teachers. It is well led and managed. It has a suite of well equipped rooms with excellent displays that both celebrate the work of pupils and provide learning resources.
- Other faiths are covered through both key stages. Sikhism is covered in Year 7, Judaism and Hinduism in Year 8 and Islam in Year 9. Islam is the second religion studied as part of the Edexcel GCSE course.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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