

St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School

URN: 142042

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

06–07 March 2025

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

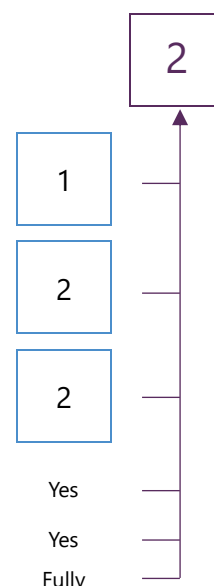
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



Compliance statement

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has fully responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The school is an inclusive community of students and staff, committed to journeying together with Christ at the centre.
- Catholic identity is built into every layer of school life, with an explicit commitment to Catholic social teaching and formation of the whole person.
- Leaders and governors have responded to self-evaluation in Religious Education with drive and determination.
- Strong leadership means that the Catholic curriculum has been imaginatively embedded.
- Staff commitment to prayer and liturgy is strong because all are invited to participate in its development.

What the school needs to improve

- Simplify and streamline the school's mission statement and values, so that all students can clearly articulate the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the school.
- Ensure the consistency of formal teacher feedback in religious education lessons so that students understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning.
- Equip students to prepare and evaluate engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy.

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

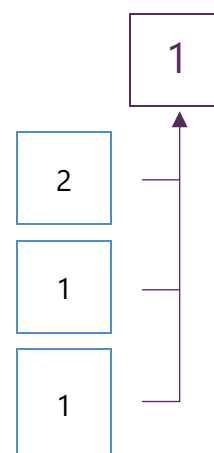
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Students enthusiastically support the school, embodying the mission at St Philip Howard, summarised as '#TeamSPH – Together on the Journey'. Students describe an inclusive community, where they are accepted and can be themselves. As a result, students feel a responsibility to respect each other. Some students link this with human dignity and following the example of Jesus. Students express a strong understanding of the importance of faith, and the respect which must be accorded to those of other faiths and none. With staff, they contribute to the mission statement which describes journeying together as a united Catholic family. The mission statement is discussed in celebrations of the word, and times of prayer in form classes. All students recognise that the school ethos is built on 'values': they reference school values, Gospel values, the SPH student values, Catholic values, as well as 'virtues', articulating different versions of the mission statement. Despite some confusion of labels, all students know about Catholic social teaching, the action of which is profoundly evident. They articulate an imperative to serve others 'locally, nationally and globally' and list many examples. Some link this to the common good. Students express gratitude for what they have and are aware of injustice in the world. Following student feedback, the Gratitude Club has been rebranded as the Justice Club, where, for example, students discuss how to challenge injustice with 'temperance' (the diocesan 'word of the week'). Students organise fundraising activities for school charities, including a foodbank and Cafod.

All staff understand, appreciate and support the Catholic identity of the school. Catholic life and mission is understood as everyone's responsibility. Staff feel strongly supported by the lay chaplain; many students also appreciate her quietly significant presence, though not all are

aware of her role. There is a commitment to pastoral care which addresses individual needs as a matter of course. Staff overwhelmingly agree that Christ is at the heart of this school. The staff survey records a typical response: 'SPH is more than a school, it is a community and a family. Students are provided with lots of opportunities for spiritual and personal growth. SPH is a fantastic place to work, learn and grow. The school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where faith is not only taught but lived out in everyday interactions'. Staff describe ways in which they are valued, including special 'thank yous' and recognition of their work on saints' days. As a result, staff understand shared initiatives and work hard to embed them. The physical environment is explicitly Catholic, referencing Catholic ethos and liturgical seasons. The chapel is a clear example of the contribution of students to the Catholic environment, though inclusion of student response is not as clear in classrooms. Relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned. Students confirm it makes a difference to their lives and relationships. A reflection room is available for the small number of students of other faiths - evidence of the school's commitment to inclusion and the common good.

Catholic life and mission is embedded in school policies and processes at every level. Strong evaluation ensures that it is regularly revisited to ensure clarity and impact. Participative and listening leadership is championed by the headteacher: this values all voices and ensures the empowerment of staff and effective adoption of policy. The Catholic curriculum is impressive. A thread from policy to everyday practice means staff know what is expected of them. Lesson plans link to Catholic social teaching and refer to 'head, hands and heart' activities, reflecting the school mission to 'form the whole person'. The school takes seriously its parish partnership, supporting the Confirmation programme and ensuring classes participate in a weekly parish Mass. Governors are experienced, enthusiastic and regularly present in the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

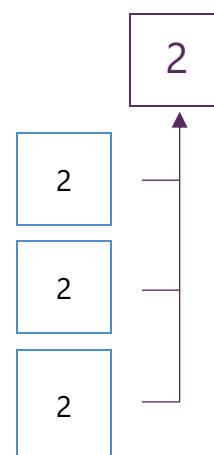
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



In many lessons, students develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills through consistent, varied and well-devised activities. Students are currently focusing on making 'a speedy start' to their lessons. Strong relationships contribute to good behaviour for learning in most lessons, and students, particularly in Year 10, readily concentrate on their work and complete tasks independently. A small number of lessons lack pace and engagement, meaning that student progress is sometimes impaired, and students can be passive in their learning. Many students show a high degree of religious literacy, particularly where teacher questioning is strong. Students are very proud of their impressive books, most of which showed frequent self-assessment and improvement. All students can state the level at which they are working. Their understanding of how to improve is variable, with some suggestions being generic and of limited practical application. Year 11 students have been provided with revision guides, which they describe as very helpful, though a number have not yet used them and do not have a plan about how to do so. Revision sessions run voluntarily by the department are not always reaching the groups that need them most. Because the fruits of new initiatives have not filtered through completely, student GCSE attainment is below average for some.

The appointment of the current subject lead has led to rapid improvement in teaching and learning, and student experience. These improvements are stronger in some year groups than others and have yet to filter right through the whole cohort. Staff have strong subject knowledge, readily engaging with student questions and enhancing lessons which were already well planned and sequenced. This enhances students' moral and spiritual development. Expectations are high in almost all lessons, with considerable participation through cold-calling and some skilful questioning. This skill is more evident in some lessons than others. There is considerable

consistency in teaching thanks to whole school and departmental initiatives. Explicit teaching of exam skills is present in many, though not all, lessons. In-class oral feedback is regular and clear. It checks student learning and addresses misconceptions. There is some inconsistency in formal teacher feedback, in terms of frequency and clarity. The front sheets in workbooks are not always utilised fully to achieve this.

A considerable journey has been undertaken in Religious Education since the last inspection. The leadership team show strategic vision in using recruitment opportunities to recognise and raise its profile. The headteacher is generous in praise of the head of department, and his pride in her achievements is indicative of the ethos of the school. The subject leader is passionate and committed. Her clarity of vision and tireless, pupil focused initiatives are pivotal to current improvements in the department. The curriculum and resources are well planned, and processes are in place to ensure rapid improvements continue. The curriculum, as a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory, has been planned and introduced to all year groups. The impact of planning and leadership is clear in Key Stage 3, where strong foundations are improving confidence, participation, religious literacy, and awareness of targets. Assessment for learning within lessons in the classroom addresses the needs of individual groups of learners. Opportunities to develop the skills and impact of teaching assistants are sometimes missed. Leaders, including governors, undertake strong self-evaluation, meaning that attainment is being addressed. Religious education is at the heart of the school curriculum and enjoys core parity. Staff professional development opportunities mirror those for the whole school, with the department also receiving support from the diocese and the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Enrichment is strong, with students particularly appreciating their visits to places of worship.

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Students are comfortable discussing prayer. They recognise the impact prayer has on the school community, saying it makes them feel calm and unified. One student said prayer 'helps me feel grateful for what I have and angry for those who have less'. They appreciate that everyone is included, but no-one is forced. All students express respect for prayer itself and for the faith beliefs of others. As a result, prayer strengthens the school. Students appreciate that prayer is relevant to current events and their own lives. For example, in addressing International Women's Month, prayer related to scripture, the diocesan 'word of the week' and Catholic social teaching. In some groups, prayer resources are adapted by form teachers so that students are invited to participate beyond reading. This greatly enhances the experience. However, opportunities for greater engagement are sometimes missed so that, at times, prayer is provided to students, rather than with them. Students show consistent respect, though this is sometimes accompanied by passivity. As the school recognises, students' confidence and skill in planning and leading prayer is at a very early stage. Prayer resources, such as prayer boxes, the 'Let Us Pray' materials and reflective journals are not fully embedded as tools to achieve this. There is an emerging pattern of student evaluation of prayer and liturgy, and an active and growing chaplaincy team which is ready to take the lead in encouraging greater engagement. Although students are clear about what happens during prayer, they are less confident when asked about traditional Catholic prayers and the richness of tradition.

Prayer takes place regularly with daily form prayers, weekly celebrations of the word, a termly Mass for each form and 'in-school pilgrimage'. The staff team pray together when they meet, and all staff lead this. The chapel is well used, and is a beautiful space, enhanced by student displays. Scripture is always a part of prayer. The lay chaplain ensures that a weekly scripture

passage, the diocesan 'word of the week' and aspects of Catholic social teaching weave a thread of unity through the week for both staff and students. As a result, scripture and Catholic social teaching are part of the lived experience of this school. Supportive resources ensure that staff are confident and prayerful role models. All staff are committed to play their part in the prayer life of the school. Everyone's involvement is expected and timetabled - it is seen as normal. This is strengthening staff confidence, though not all staff feel equipped to adapt resources creatively for their students. Some students and parents feel that families are not sufficiently invited to share the prayer life of the school.

The Prayer and Worship Policy shows early consideration and adoption of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory. An impressive engagement plan has been drafted to monitor its implementation. This shows understanding and intention on the part of leaders and governors to drive the vision for prayer and liturgy contained in the directory. This intent is backed up by generous and creative professional development for all staff, complemented by the lay chaplain, and thoughtful resources such as the prayer box. The Catholic tradition is honoured, in partnership with the parish team, through provision for Mass and participation in the parish Confirmation programme. Holy days of obligation and other significant days are marked; for example, having received the ashes the day before, students explain that they are marking Lent by 'giving up and doing more'. There is a humility in leaders' and governors' self-evaluation which is driving the school to further improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142042
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8304005
Full postal address of the school	St Philip Howard Catholic Secondary School, Sunlaws Street, Glossop, SK13 8DR
School phone number	01457 853611
Headteacher	Michael Kays
Chair of local governing body	Clare Parker
School Website	https://www.stphiliphowardglossop.srscmat.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 June 2018 / 17 June 2019 (Monitoring Visit)
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Catherine Danaher
Seanead O'Neill

Lead
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

