

Salesian College

URN: 116543

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

06–07 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

N/A

Compliance statement

- The college is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The college is compliant in relation to the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- There was not a previous inspection within the relevant period.

What the school does well

- An inclusive Salesian ethos permeates the life of the college, with all members of the community readily identifying what makes their school experience unique.
- The headmaster is alive to the charism of Saint John Bosco and cherishes his intentions for a Salesian school to be guided by reason, religion and loving kindness.

- The staff in the religious education department are highly experienced, expert and effective practitioners who inspire a love of the subject in their students. The department is led with integrity and wisdom.
- Outcomes in religious education are outstanding, both at GCSE and A level. Students in Key Stage 3 enjoy a wide variety of tasks and experiences in the classroom.
- The spiritual highlights of the year, such as retreats and Masses are given precedence and provide the community with opportunities to unite in faith and mission.

What the school needs to improve

- The college's innovative and embryonic approach to the Bishops' Conference requirement of 10% religious education curriculum time in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 needs to be given time to embed. This should then be externally evaluated during the school year 2025/26 to ensure it fully meets the Bishops' requirements.
- Ensure that the physical environment better reflects the traditions of the Catholic Church and the Catholic life and mission of the college.
- Use the opportunity provide by the implementation of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* to ensure that the rich and broad worshipping and prayer traditions of the Catholic Church are firmly and consistently embedded into the daily life of every student.

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Students are incredibly proud of this inclusive college, with all members of the community identifying as Salesian. Their deep understanding of the Salesian educational system, firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition allows all students, with their diverse backgrounds, to draw from and flourish in the spirit of Don Bosco. Students are happy, valued and at home, with one commenting, 'Everyone loves each other here. It's just like a family'. Students display high levels of confidence and work together as a team, looking out for one another. The college values, whereby the atmosphere should be one of 'home, school, playground and church' are fully embraced by all. Students who are not Catholic prize the efforts of staff to include and embrace diversity, Catholic social teaching is highly visible through the college's charitable programme, which is broad and exceptionally successful. It thrives because there is a clear understanding of caring for your neighbour and the importance of the common good. One sixth form student explained their experience of the college, 'When you look at students, we are all different. Everywhere around us is love, care and support and there is a real beauty in that.' The overwhelming majority of parents are highly satisfied with the college's ethos and approach to educating their children. They value its distinctive Salesian ethos, with one writing, 'It is the most wonderfully inclusive and welcoming community, with Catholic life and mission at the heart of everything it does. Everyone feels valued at the college.'

The newly written mission statement is owned by all members of the community, with its central tenet of 'loving-kindness' obvious in word and action. Staff, each from their own perspective, feel that this is what drives the college forward and underpins relationships. Staff feel supported and valued, both as professionals and as people. One said, 'Staff share a feeling of collegiality, and we are all grateful for the opportunity to work in a Salesian Catholic school.' Students see staff

as role models, who care about their academic, sporting and cultural progress. They regularly give of their own time to participate in activities which foster individual talent, team spirit and concern for community. The provision for relationships and sex education meets diocesan requirements and is faithful to the teaching of the Church. Personal, social and health education is well resourced and delivered, with a member of staff explaining, 'Relationships with students are strong. We prepare them for a diverse world, creating confident young people, in a safe space'. The provision of chaplaincy, particularly through the person of the chaplain, supports the mission of the college. There are well planned opportunities for worship and moral guidance, with students readily asserting that the chaplain is 'always there for us, and always finds ways to help us'. New students are quickly inducted into the life of the school, not only explicitly by their teachers, but implicitly by the actions of their peers. Leaders should ensure that the physical environment better reflects the traditions of the Catholic Church and the Catholic life and mission of the college.

Leaders, including governors, are proud of their college. The headmaster is faithful and resolute in maintaining its Salesian charism and speaks eloquently of the principles and benefits that this world-wide tradition brings to the young people in his care. The lived reality of daily life at the college, both in policy and procedure, reflects this Catholic mission. Leaders promote the wellbeing and dignity of their staff, with one teacher affirming, 'As a Muslim member of staff, I feel at home'. Teachers are encouraged and supported in their own continuing professional development, with a good number pursuing higher degrees and other professional qualifications. Leaders are committed to supporting new staff to the college. Staff experience a good induction process into what it means to work in a Catholic school, finding that there are always colleagues who are ready to give of their time to deepen an individual's understanding of the Salesian spirit. The governors' ethos committee is supportive, and helps to shape the college year. Governors are mindful of their responsibility to ensure the calling of the Church to enlighten and improve the lives of young people. Leaders should take steps to enable students to regularly participate in evaluating and planning future improvements to the Catholic life of the college.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

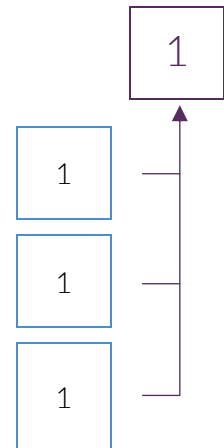
How well students achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 achieve superb examination results at both GCSE and A level. They are consistently above national averages and rank highly when compared to results in other departments within the college. This success translates into a good number of students going on to study theology, philosophy or religious studies at university. Students clearly enjoy their religious education lessons. They approach the subject with curiosity, openness and vigour, valuing the opportunities to discuss ethical and moral questions, and the effect they can have on their personal lives and faith. Students concentrate very well, and use their IT skills to good effect in the classroom. Students have a clear sense of their progress in religious education, and can speak about what they need to do to improve grades. Students use sophisticated theological language appropriately in their discussions, and in their written work. They are given numerous opportunities to develop oracy in activities such as the GCSE evaluation exercise - 'lawyers and judge'. Exercise books display a sound understanding of examination requirements, with consistent and conscientious attention to gaining or exceeding target grades. Their books are well presented and are an invaluable resource for revision. Students in Key Stage 3 respond well to the variety of tasks on offer. A particular favourite is the Year 7 project on Don Bosco, which elicits an imaginative and impressive array of responses to the life of this important college patron.

All teachers in the religious education department are highly committed professionals, who are passionate about their subject and the difference it can make to students' lives. They are experts in their fields and communicate with ease and confidence to all students in all stages of the college. Their personal commitment to faith is evident, and they are trusted by students to take their questions and opinions seriously. Teachers respond to students' current knowledge of a topic, assessing their understanding frequently, thereby enabling students to make rapid

progress. Previous learning is built upon and extended by careful scaffolding and expert questioning. Teachers make excellent use of analogy and metaphor to deepen students' understanding of complex theological and philosophical concepts, particularly in the sixth form. Planning and resourcing is evident across the department, with colleagues collaborating to allow both autonomy and consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. Marking and assessment are in line with college policy. Feedback to students enables reflection and improvement in their academic work. Verbal feedback also deepens students' spiritual and moral understanding of issues tackled.

The RE department is physically situated in the heart of the school, reflecting leaders' attitudes towards the subject which is seen to be 'the core of the core'. It is well resourced, and time is given to ensure commonly used teaching materials demonstrate best practice. The department enjoys useful continuing professional development, with time given to enable excellent teaching to be further improved over time. Senior leaders line manage the department and are well informed about progress and curriculum developments. The head of department has carefully analysed the practicalities of introducing the new *Religious Education Directory* in Key Stage 3, with respect given to the opinions of her colleagues and the necessity of its implementation. Leaders have devised an innovative and, as yet, embryonic method of delivering lower school RE, with dedicated Catholic social teaching lessons overseen by the RE department. This approach needs time to embed and to be evaluated. The head of department is forensic in her approach to planning, lesson design and supporting her colleagues. Her vision for religious education is completely in line with the Salesian ethos of the college, emphasising both its 'school' and 'church' elements. Loving relationships within the college are key, and the department epitomises the RUAH approach to Salesian education, by its use of Reason, Understanding, Affection and Humour.

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 respond well in the main to the variety of experiences of prayer and liturgy which are offered to them by the college. In whole-school events such as the six Masses celebrated each year, behaviour is superb, with students participating reverently. Remembrance Day is marked with particular solemnity with staff in particular noting its importance in the tradition of the college. Younger students enjoy their choir practice and look forward to participating in events such as the Advent service of readings and carols. Some students can explain the significance of the Church's year and can identify the distinct practices that occur at these times. Limited numbers of students are involved in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. When students do lead prayer, such as in assembly for example, they do not appear well-prepared to do so. However, those chosen, for example as 'spiritual ambassadors' are guided in the lower school by their tutors, and can eventually plan and lead prayer in their form time authentically and with great thought. Students see the worshipping life of the college as important and integral to their Salesian experience, but these opportunities need to be further embedded in their daily lived experience. Students revere the chaplain whom they love. Many students echoed one peer who commented, 'Father Pat understands us. He always brings a smile to our day and a unique perspective on life'.

A daily pattern of prayer exists within the college, but there is much scope for staff training about how it may best be delivered consistently. Use is made for example of the Salesian prayer swatch, with students or staff picking out a prayer for the day. Space and time needs to be given around these moments to ensure that an appropriate and prayerful atmosphere is the typical experience for all students. The chaplain ensures that the celebration of the Mass is supported by well-trained servers and that all ministries are carried out in an exemplary fashion. He has responded to the request for weekly exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which is growing in

popularity among the students and staff who are keen for this to become a permanent feature of college life. Weekly Mass is offered in the college chapel. This space is always open, and is used by staff and students alike for moments of prayer and contemplation. Students respond respectfully in this sacred space. The college entrance, hall and refectory clearly point to the college's Salesian and Catholic identity. While classrooms have a crucifix and picture of Don Bosco, there is a lack of consistency in the provision of focal points within learning spaces or other traditional Catholic iconography which may enhance the prayerful life of the college, and better reflect its identity as a worshipping community.

The college has a useful policy on prayer and liturgy which is used by the chaplain and those preparing major liturgical events. The policy and timetabling of the year are overseen by the governors' ethos committee which ensures that the key moments of the Church year take precedence in the college calendar. The professional development of staff in terms of liturgical formation, alongside those already responsible for leading prayer and liturgy, would further enhance the consistency with which this is delivered to all students. The chaplain and religious education staff take the leading role in chaplaincy across the college; leaders may wish to consider how to widen participation in this area. Leaders have provided some prayer resources for form time. The weekly prayer sheet provides a brief reminder of the whole school focus, scripture for reflection and a pertinent prayer for students. Leaders have responded to the views and wishes of their young people by opening a new multi-faith room. This is available during social times in the school day and has been welcomed by students and staff alike. It very well reflects the inclusive nature of this Salesian institution. Year 7 and other new members to the community are inducted into its worshipping and Catholic life by the chaplain, religious education team, form tutors and heads of year. They feel very comfortable in their new surroundings and quickly pick up the distinctive ethos and norms of the college.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Salesian College
School unique reference number (URN)	116543
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8506022
Full postal address of the school	Salesian College, 119 Reading Road, Farnborough, GU14 6PA
School phone number	01252 893000
Headteacher	Gerard Owens
Chair of governors	Mirek Gliniecki
School Website	www.salesiancollege.com
Trusteeship	Salesians of Don Bosco
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys (11-16) Mixed (16-18)
Date of last denominational inspection	N/A
Previous denominational inspection grade	N/A

The inspection team

John Wright	Lead
Sadie Whyte	Team
Daniel Gibbons	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