

Mayfield School

URN: 114627

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

13–14 November 2024

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

1

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

1

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

N/A

1

Compliance statement

- Mayfield School is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- Mayfield School is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Mayfield School has not previously been inspected by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate or the predecessor framework for inspection under Section 48.

What the school does well

- Catholic life and mission permeate all aspects of life at Mayfield School. The Cornelian principles and charism on which the school was founded are alive and evident in the school community today.
- The words of foundress Blessed Cornelia Connelly 'Actions not Words' are a lived experience in the school community. Students are empowered to take on leadership roles in all areas of the school and community.
- The religious education department is truly at the centre of the school. Academic excellence is evident in students' experiences and in the outcomes achieved.
- Students' engagement in prayer and liturgy is outstanding and their levels of religious understanding are exceptional, especially in the sixth form.
- There is a lived sense of community in this exceptionally joyful and supportive school.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the twice-yearly conferences and shared retreats to develop further opportunities for outreach and co-operation with schools of the same charism.
- When the existing prayer and liturgy policy is updated, it should reflect the requirements of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory '*To love you more dearly*' which comes into use from September 2025.

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

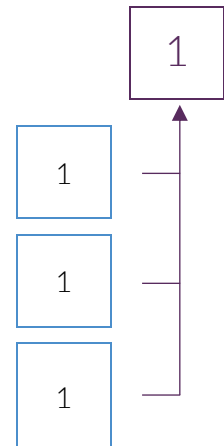
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Mayfield School is a community that places Christ at the centre of all that it does. Beside Him are the principles of their foundress Blessed Cornelia Connelly. Students are proud to be part of a community that not only teaches the dignity of the human person but also puts it into everyday practice. Students know that they are loved and that they are called to 'Be yourself, but make that self all that God wants it to be' (in the words of Cornelia Connelly). Students at Mayfield are happy, confident and secure. They can articulate enthusiastically the Catholic mission of the school and the wider mission of the Church. Students take pride in and ownership of their Cornelian principles and they truly live out the school motto of Actions not Words, for example by taking on roles of service in the local community. Student leadership is exemplary in the Catholic life of the school because they are confident to take a leading role in charity and outreach work, such as Live Simply Day. Students appreciate the role of chaplaincy in the school and student chaplaincy ambassadors play a significant role in the shared mission of the school. The pastoral care that students receive at Mayfield is outstanding and is evident in all interactions; students feel empowered to strive to be the best they can be in all elements of their lives. Parents are actively engaged in the community and value the way that Mayfield supports them as primary educators.

Kindness, welcome and respect are the golden threads of the school. Induction programmes for students, staff, governors and parents are very strong, enabling the school to be clear about what is important and why. All stakeholders speak about just how much it means to them to be part of the community and the positive impact it has had upon their lives. Cornelian principles and Catholic social teaching are taught and modelled by the staff, who are exemplary role

models who consistently go above and beyond in their commitment to the students, thereby inspiring them to do the same. The school prayer books include translations into home languages to ensure all feel welcome and valued. Older students also lead by example and support younger members of the community in many ways including the delivery of elements of the personal development programme. Students value peer support and know that their voices are heard. Recently, Cornelian principles have been promoted in the school rewards system, this is greatly valued by students and parents.

All levels of leadership demonstrate a joyful and loving vitality in carrying out their role as custodians of the Catholic life of the school and its Cornelian values. Sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus take an active interest in the life of the school and are represented on the board. Governors have long-standing links with the school and local community, encouraging outreach for example the traditional Live Nativity led by sixth form students. Staff training is well planned to ensure that all are confident and equipped to take on their own level of leadership within the Catholic life of the school. School leaders ensure that principles of Catholic social teaching are followed, for example in the management of the estate with a bio-diversity focus, reflecting God in the beauty of creation. Governors have a specific ethos committee for monitoring and evaluation and they are clear that the Catholic life and mission of the school underpins all strategic planning. The senior leadership team know their school well, providing clear strategic direction and support when necessary. Staff feel overwhelmingly supported and affirmed by the leadership of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

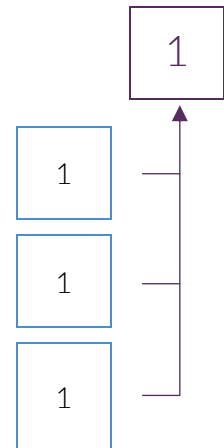
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students at Mayfield School cherish their religious education and speak fondly of inspirational lessons learnt and the dedication of the staff to their progress. They know that their classroom is not only a place of academic endeavour but also a place where they feel safe to share their opinions and viewpoint. Students display a high level of age-appropriate religious literacy drawing upon prior learning and their experiences within this Catholic community to support their academic work. The quality of work and presentation of exercise books is consistently high because students take great pride in their work and ownership of their progress. They benefit from a comprehensively well-planned and well-resourced curriculum. External exam results are outstanding. Religious education achieves the highest number of top grades in the school and the highest value - added of the core subjects. Benchmarking it against target grades, there is a significant positive difference made by the school with 70% of grades at GCSE being 7-9. The pattern of value-added achievement has been consistently maintained over a significant period. A-level results also show consistently excellent outcomes and religious education is a popular choice. Students feel confident and well prepared for assessments and external examinations and have high aspirations instilled by their teachers.

Students benefit from a comprehensively well-planned and well-resourced curriculum. Because of a purposefully rich and ambitious curriculum, students are given many opportunities to engage meaningfully with difficult ethical and theological discourse. The curriculum is designed to be systematic and increasingly demanding, whilst also being sensitive to the diversity of student starting points. Scholars and advanced learners are given opportunities to advance their understanding and performance both in lessons and with more long-term project work. The

curriculum has been updated to include the new *Religious Education Directory* in Year 7 and 8 and this will continue into Year 9 from September 2025, ensuring that the school is fully compliant with the requirements of the local Bishop. The religious education curriculum is enhanced with well-planned trips and experiences, such as world religions day. The provision for non-examination religious education in the sixth form is excellent. Parents and students value the dynamic and interesting critical religion programme and the role it plays in the students' wider education.

The lead teacher for religious education has a clear vision for the department, which is communicated with passion and integrity. Leadership in the department is grounded in high expectations and the head of department has worked hard to ensure consistency across all areas of the department. Monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of department practice; processes are robust and embedded, leading to direct impact on student outcomes, as well as shaping future planning. Religious education is given the highest priority by both the senior leadership and the governors of the school. The religious education lead contributes theological and philosophical elements into the school Oxbridge preparation programme. School leaders and governors are diligent in their duty to ensure that the religious education curriculum follows the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and has parity with other core subjects. The department is well-resourced with time, budget and physical space. There is strong dialogue and critical challenge between the subject lead, the senior leadership and the governing body, which ensures that excellent outcomes are consistently maintained.

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

1

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

1

1

Students actively engage in the prayer life of the school, demonstrating a deep appreciation for what it adds to their overall experience. Students are front and centre in the preparation and celebration of twice-weekly Masses held in the chapel, serving the community as altar servers and lectors. They regularly plan prayer and liturgy opportunities. Younger students collaborate with sixth form prefects to prepare weekly liturgy under the guidance of the chaplain who allows students to take the lead in these activities. Chaplaincy ambassadors play a crucial role as the link between the chaplaincy and school community because they make sure that all students have opportunities to contribute to the school's prayer life. Students show great confidence in leading a range of prayers, from traditional Catholic prayers to spontaneous offerings. Each liturgy includes a call to action, so students not only reflect on the message but apply it in their lives. During one liturgy, students were given a piece of cloth symbolising St. Martin's torn cloak; they were invited to perform an act of generosity, reflecting the Cornelian principle and effectively linking the liturgy to their daily lives. A significant event in the school's liturgical calendar is the village live nativity, organised and led by sixth form students. It fosters an outstanding sense of communal prayer because various school departments collaborate to support the students in this meaningful endeavour, as do the Old Cornelians and the wider community.

Provision for prayer and liturgy is varied and wide-ranging. Music and drama enhance the school's prayer life. For example, the head of music ensures that the hymns resonate with the themes of the liturgy. The flourishing chapel choir, the Schola Cantorum, add a beautiful dimension to worship. The chaplaincy provides a variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities; tutors are supported with resources to lead daily prayer, including intercessions and petitions

and students are actively involved in these activities. Additional prayer opportunities include the weekly Rosary group, Stations of the Cross during Lent, and termly opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Mustard Seed club, a student-led Bible study group meets weekly, offering students a chance to deepen their faith together. Taizé-style worship has been warmly embraced by students, providing a contemplative prayer experience. There are retreat programmes for both staff and students. Students participated in the Ampleforth Lourdes pilgrimage, demonstrating service to others. The school's calendar is planned to celebrate key moments in the liturgical year, including holy days of obligation and the founder's birthday. A well-received initiative is the Grandparents' Liturgy, which strengthens the connection between students and their wider families.

The leadership of Mayfield School is highly effective in ensuring strong provision and continuing improvement for prayer and liturgy through careful feedback and support for staff. Staff formation is a priority for the leadership team. The annual staff retreat at Easter fosters a deeper understanding of prayer and liturgy, empowering staff to lead and support activities throughout the school year. This contributes to a confident and engaged staff, who, alongside the chaplain, enable students to plan and lead liturgies and prayer experiences effectively. Evaluation processes, including senior leader reports to governors, ensure that prayer and liturgy are always a focus for the school and remain part of an ongoing cycle of improvement and renewal. Senior leaders, alongside the chaplain, provide energetic leadership so that staff new to the school receive thorough induction into the school's expectations for prayer and liturgy. The leadership's commitment to these areas ensures that students are not only participants but active leaders in their own spiritual development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Mayfield School
School unique reference number (URN)	114627
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8456035
Full postal address of the school	Mayfield School, The Old Palace, High Street, Mayfield, TN20 6PH
School phone number	01435874600
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Bligh
Chair of Governors	Lady Davies of Stamford
School Website	https://www.mayfieldgirls.org/
Founding Order	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Date of last denominational inspection	N/A
Previous denominational inspection grade	N/A

The inspection team

Rachael Shields
James Kilmartin

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