



Notre Dame Catholic Senior School

URN: 125375

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

30–31 January 2025

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

No

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

No

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- Regarding the general norms for religious education, the school is not fully compliant as it does not currently offer 10% curriculum time for religious education in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Regarding any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop, the school is not fully compliant as it currently follows the AQA A specification for GCSE, which is not a compliant specification.
- The school has responded fully to all those previous areas for improvement which are applicable to the inspection framework.

What the school does well

- The charism of the Company of Mary Our Lady is known and lived by all; it is very much at the heart of the school.
- The extensive chaplaincy programme and its inspirational leadership are highly valued by all.
- The well-being of students and staff is a priority and there is extensive provision of support.
- Students enjoy their religious education lessons and are encouraged to apply their learning and understanding to their own lives.
- Staff and students appreciate the opportunities provided to receive the sacraments and to participate in a variety of ministries.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education in terms of curriculum time and GCSE specification by the time of the next inspection.
- Ensure greater consistency of feedback in religious education, including responses from students.
- Engage more staff and students further in the planning, preparation, and delivery 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

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

As a religious order school, the distinctive charism is known and truly lived by all; it is at the heart of the school and prepares the students for life. Students feel valued and supported in all aspects of their school life; 96% of parents agree that their child feels safe in school. One parent comments, 'The Catholicity of the school permeates through every aspect and all the girls are taught to be respectful and polite. The values of St Jeanne are clearly interwoven in all that is done.' Their understanding of Catholic social teaching leads to exemplary commitment by all students, particularly the chaplaincy group, supporting the most vulnerable through local and international charities, including the charitable work of the Order. Students also show remarkable respect for those of other faiths and none. The excellent chaplaincy provision is highly valued by all. A parent comments, 'My child enjoys all of the voluntary aspects of chaplaincy as she feels a moral sense of duty that has been taught to her through her ten years at the school.'

The impact of the charism of Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac in all aspects of school life cannot be overestimated, with its mission 'We are all educators, accompanying young people in their efforts to build their lives for today and tomorrow,' and its aims, which include 'Stretch out a helping hand, serve in a way that is always new, and keep friendship among us'; it is literally and metaphorically written on the walls and is fundamental to all that the school does. This can also be seen in the school's contribution to the world-wide educational programmes of the Company of Mary Our Lady (COMOL). There is a fundamental ethos of welcome and the extensive pastoral provision ensures that the well-being of students and staff is a priority, with highly valued elements including the 'Big Sister, Little Sister' mentoring programme, the open-access well-being centre and the school counsellor. The attractive school environment reinforces the

centrality of the charism and respect for everyone's dignity, contributing positively to formation. Staff comment, 'This school has been transformative in my own religious journey.' The relationships, sex, and health education programme is a particular strength; its thorough, well planned and well delivered material is greatly appreciated by students.

Leaders and governors are an inspiring element of the school's Catholic life and mission; they are deeply committed to the ethos and mission of the school. The familiar presence of Sisters from the Order offers expertise and experience and is highly valued by all. There is a wide range of skills in the governing body. The chaplaincy programme is thoroughly planned, monitored, evaluated, and reviewed by the chaplain, who works closely with leaders and provides an inspirational lead with great humility. The school makes efforts to engage parents and the physical and mental well-being of all staff and students is always the priority. One member of the staff panel comments, 'People are always at the heart of every decision we make.' The careful programme of induction of new colleagues is valued highly by staff. Staff comment, 'The inherent dignity of every member of the school community is promoted and maintained,' and 'The opportunity to attend the pilgrimage to Bordeaux was really valued and helped me to enhance and live my understanding of COMOL and St Jeanne. I also find the support of the Sisters and their active work in the school really inspiring.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

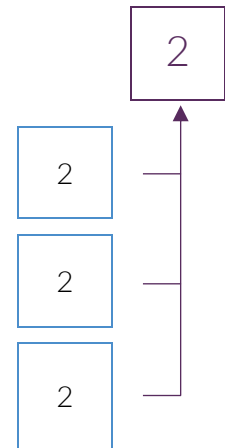
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education, can explain what they have learned and apply this to their own lives. They are developing secure subject knowledge, with examples of excellent knowledge in class and written work. Carefully planned, well delivered lessons mean most students are actively engaged, generally concentrating well, and reflecting upon their learning when given the opportunity. There are many curious and interested learners, and the consistently high-quality presentation of their written work demonstrates their commitment to the subject; it is generally better than in other core subjects. There are clear signs of emerging individuality and creativity in their work, for example in the use of storyboards to present narratives. Students have a good sense of their level of achievement in the subject, which is reinforced by curriculum outlines and progress tracking in their books, and generally know how to improve, although the written feedback from staff is inconsistent, as is the students' response. Data demonstrates that achievement in religious education is nevertheless on a par with other core subjects and that students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, achieve well.

The commitment of St Jeanne to the education of girls and young women is lived out in the teaching in the school, encouraging all to aspire highly. Teachers demonstrate a high level of subject knowledge, identified as a strength by the head of theology, and planning is linked to current assessment; there are opportunities for students to receive one-to-one support sessions with staff to support their progress. Effort is frequently and genuinely celebrated in class, and written feedback is generally used well, albeit inconsistently across classes. Open questioning is used well and there are opportunities for challenge; students are also given the opportunity to respond to tasks in a variety of ways, with examples including artwork, leading to greater engagement. There are also some opportunities for reflection in lessons, using recorded chants to improve focus, although this is not routine in most lessons. One parent comments, 'Theology

lessons are very good and I am proud of the knowledge the school provides.' The PILLARS programme of general religious education in the sixth form is innovative, well planned, and provides opportunities for discussion, debate, and the development of vocation and spirituality alongside more practical skills, always drawing the learning back to the aims of the school's charism. It has been freely shared with the diocese and other schools.

The head of theology has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is developing innovative ways of working, including the use of a collaborative online program to enhance student discussion, the saving of their work and their communication with staff. The department is following the model curriculum for the *Religious Education Directory* (RED) in Years 7 and 8, a well-established curriculum in Year 9, and the examination specifications chosen by the school in Key Stages 4 and 5 thoroughly and consistently, although there are only limited opportunities for students to engage in subject-related enrichment activities. The training, resourcing, staffing, and accommodation of the subject are commensurate with other core curriculum subjects, and additional funding is available to support developments. Governors have an excellent knowledge of standards in religious education and monitor its progress with care and understanding; the curriculum is faithful to the RED and there is a clear commitment to provide extensive training for all relevant staff. Very thorough monitoring and evaluation are real strengths, with detailed self-evaluation, forensic monitoring, searching analysis and genuine self-challenge shared with the department, the assistant headteacher responsible for teaching and learning, the headteacher, and the governors' Lestonnac Committee, leading to well-targeted planning.

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

Prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage students deeply, and extensive student feedback contributes to the development of collective worship. The thorough quality of students' evaluation demonstrates that they have the capacity to plan and deliver high quality prayer and liturgy. Staff comment that 'Student-led assemblies, that happen weekly, have all become Celebration of the Word assemblies: they all are based on scripture and include prayer and a hymn. This all helps to underscore that Christ is at the heart of the community,' and 'Some students are more active than others in preparing experiences of prayer and liturgy, but all are invited, and the very large majority take part with commitment and respect.' The students demonstrate a profound understanding of the influence of prayer and liturgy on their own lives and that of the school. Examples of prayers written by sixth form students for regular use in form time include some written in poetry or in the style of popular song, and all students are delighted when their own prayers are used throughout the school, understanding that prayer has a fundamental relevance to their everyday lives.

Prayer is central to the life of the school; it is part of the daily routine but there are also innovative opportunities provided, including the weekly Examen in Friday morning tutor time, following the Order's tradition of Ignatian Spirituality, and prayers offered before exams. The parish priest works closely with the school and opportunities to receive the sacraments are regular and highly appreciated by staff and students; for example, staff greatly enjoy the reflection and focus provided by Mass on staff training days. There is a good understanding of the varieties of prayer and a variety of spaces and opportunities for quiet reflection, including the beautiful school chapel and the La Motte prayer garden, which are both open, available and well-used by students and staff throughout the school day. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of ministries, including welcoming the congregation at Mass. A weekly communication from the

chaplain, *Chaplain's Corner*, engages parents and develops their knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year. Parents comment, 'There are many opportunities for prayer both for the girls and for parents.' The chaplain also provides extensive resources which are closely linked to the liturgical year and significant feasts of the Church to support staff and students in planning and preparing weekly prayer and liturgy.

The school has an excellent policy on prayer and liturgy, which clarifies its planning and preparation and is easily available on the school's website. Leaders, including the chaplain, demonstrate a profound understanding of the different skills and levels of participation of students and are working to develop these further in a variety of innovative ways. The school calendar is carefully planned to ensure that regular celebration of Eucharist and relevant feasts of the Church are a priority. Staff express a desire to make progress in their faith formation and a willingness to receive further training and opportunities to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. The priority given to collective worship is demonstrated by the resourcing of a full-time chaplain and a fully-funded biennial pilgrimage to the Order's Mother House in Bordeaux; discussions with staff demonstrate that this pilgrimage has a profound effect both upon their understanding of the history of the Order and upon their personal faith formation. There is regular, thorough and effective evaluation of prayer and liturgy by students and staff, which is analysed carefully by the chaplain and shared with other senior leaders and governors, leading to appropriate development planning.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Notre Dame Catholic Senior School
School unique reference number (URN)	125375
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9366163
Full postal address of the school	Notre Dame Catholic Senior School, Burwood House, Convent Lane, KT11 1HA
School phone number	001932869990
Headteacher	Anna King
Chair of governors	Simon Frost
School Website	www.notredame.co.uk
Trusteeship	Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	All Through
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Selective
Age-range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Date of last denominational inspection	17 th and 18 th May, 2007
Previous denominational inspection grade	Grade 2: Good

The inspection team

Andrew Maund
Roisin Toner

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