

Charlton House Independent School

URN: 116567

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

31 January 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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

3

Collective worship (p.7)

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

3

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

3

What the school does well

- Charlton House School has a genuine Catholic identity and all staff are highly committed to the Catholic life of the school.
- The commitment, impetus and determination of the headteacher and other senior leaders to move the Catholic life of the school forward, is commendable and already having impact.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Warm and nurturing relationships, permeate the entire school community, which is founded on the mission statement, 'Love One Another'.
- The school environment is very attractive, well maintained and clearly emphasises its Catholic ethos.

- The rigour, accuracy and pace of self-evaluation by leaders, is proving to be highly effective and is enabling them to plan an accurate path towards improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a robust programme of continual professional development so that the best practice in religious education already present within the school is consistently applied in all classrooms.
- Ensure that during religious education lessons, tasks are designed to provide an appropriate degree of challenge, so that all pupils fulfil their potential.
- Develop staff understanding of scripture so that they are able to confidently and effectively explain its meaning to pupils during times of collective worship and enable pupils to reflect on the 'Word of God', at a deeper level.
- Train and empower pupils to take more active roles in the planning, delivery and evaluation 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

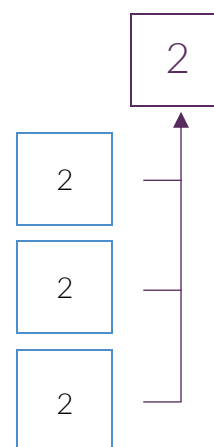
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils at Charlton House have a good appreciation of its Catholic character and mission and value the ethos of the school. They know that they are cared for and have a strong sense of self-worth, stemming from the Catholic belief in human dignity. Pupils have a growing awareness of Catholic social teaching and are keen to put this into practice through their proactive work to support a variety of charities and good causes, such as the Guide Dogs for the Blind charity, a local food bank, and the CAFOD charity. Pupils also benefit from further teaching around Catholic social teaching through a dedicated unit of work taught in the autumn term and through visits from CAFOD. Pupils are highly respectful of each other and there is a warm and friendly feel to the school. One child commented during the inspection; *'All the teachers are really nice and we all get along as one family'*. Chaplaincy is strong in the school with regular visits from a local priest, who celebrates Mass several times a term and also supports by visiting classrooms to speak to the pupils. He is valued by the whole school community and has a positive influence on everyone.

The school's mission statement 'Love One Another', is known and appreciated by everybody, although a few pupils are not fully aware of how it explicitly links with the Catholic nature of the school. Staff are highly committed to implementing the mission statement and their dedication to the school's Catholic identity is without question. A strong sense of the presence of Jesus is apparent through the witness of all community members and each visitor to the school is welcomed and valued. All staff act strongly as exemplars to the pupils, whom they treat with courtesy respect and kindness. Throughout the school, highly attractive Catholic symbols, images and statues strongly express the school's character; the oratory and chapel in particular, are much valued spaces. The school teaches relationships education through the use of a

recognised Catholic resource and children benefit from learning about healthy ways in which to relate to each other, as they grow and mature.

Leaders and governors are clear about the Catholic mission and character of the school and are determined to prioritise this, despite a period of recent challenge. They understand that in order to further enhance the Catholic life of the school and its place in the wider community, stronger links with the Diocese and the local parish will be beneficial. The school has very good links with parents and they are appreciative of the care and support received by the pupils, with one summing up the general mood stating; *'I am grateful for the positive impact the school has had on my daughter's life, creating an environment that nurtures both academic and spiritual well-being'*. Staff appreciate the care and support that they receive from leaders and governors with many expounding views that they feel that they are part of a school family. Governors are ambitious for the school and work hard to play an active role in its running. Whenever individual governors visit, they take particular note of indicators associated with the school's Catholicity and report this back to the main governing body at meetings. They also ensure that the religious education curriculum implemented by the school, meets the expectations of the Diocese. Leaders' ability to accurately monitor and self-evaluate the Catholic life and mission is bringing about swift improvements in all areas. Leaders understand that in order to further advance provision, they will need to carefully plan a structured approach to developing staff understanding of the Catholic mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

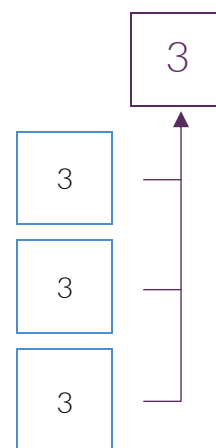
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils make variable rates of progress within religious education across the school; in some year groups, pupils make very good progress whilst in others, their progress is not strong enough. A number of pupils are adept at understanding the religious education curriculum and are able to reflect spiritually and theologically at an age appropriate level, however, this is not the case for all. Pupils speak about what they have learnt in religious education lessons, with variable degrees of confidence. In general, they are able to recall facts and information that they have been taught more recently, however, key concepts and information taught over time, are not sufficiently embedded for a significant proportion of pupils. Within lessons, the majority of pupils work diligently, although a few find it difficult to sustain strong levels of concentration for longer periods. The work in pupils' religious education books, is variable with some demonstrating very strong standards of attainment and progress, whilst others do not. During religious education classes, the engagement of pupils is inconsistent, due to the differing levels of expectation placed upon them, however the majority of pupils do enjoy religious education lessons on the whole and their behaviour is generally sound. Some pupils are able to effectively self-evaluate their work and learning which enables them to determine what next steps they need to take. The attainment of pupils in religious education lessons fluctuates across the school. This is because staff in some classes set work that is not challenging enough for their pupils and therefore need to raise their ambitions for them.

It is evident that some teachers are able to teach religious education with a strong degree of confidence and ability, however, others need further support in order to improve their practice and subject knowledge. In certain classes within the school, pupils are capable of producing religious education work that is of a higher standard than that which is currently expected of them. Although planning is linked to the approved diocesan scheme of work, it often lacks

challenge and ambition, so that pupils do not always achieve their potential. In the best religious education lessons, teachers skilfully use effective questioning techniques to elicit pupil understanding. However in weaker lessons, questioning is often closed, meaning that children are not encouraged to articulate their learning in depth. Teachers are beginning to feedback more effectively to children regarding their progress in religious education with praise and other efficacious techniques which motivate pupils, both verbally and within written work. Nonetheless, this is not yet consistently applied across the whole school, meaning that certain children do not have sufficient support to progress further. Teachers use a variety of resources, techniques and approaches to vary the way in which religious education is taught; resources are of a good quality and are plentiful. Some more able children in Key Stage 2 would benefit from being given opportunities to produce more substantial pieces of work in religious education, so that they are able to demonstrate a greater depth in their learning and understanding.

Across the school, standards in religious education do not consistently match those of other core curriculum subjects such as English. Despite this, the head of religious education is an asset to the school and alongside the headteacher and other senior leaders is having a positive influence on the subject in order to move it forward. All leaders who have any form of responsibility for religious education, have recently and enthusiastically begun a process of change, which is rooted in very accurate self-evaluation. Over the last few months leaders and governors have begun to implement a variety of approaches to improve the overall provision in religious education. Nevertheless, at this stage many of the strategies that they have begun to implement, such as some initial staff training, have not yet had sufficient time to embed and bring about sustained improvement.

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

3

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

3

Leadership

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

3

3

Pupils obviously enjoy times of prayer and liturgy and take part in a joyful and reverential manner. They are sometimes given opportunities to recite prayers and take on minor roles during times of prayer and liturgy. However, pupils do not currently have many opportunities to plan, deliver and evaluate collective worship and in order to more fully engage in the prayer life of the school, should be given the chance to do so. Some older pupils are beginning to understand how the Church's liturgical cycle influences the way that prayer takes place, but such understanding is not yet commonplace. Some pupils are beginning to understand how prayer and liturgy can be linked to the religious education curriculum and wider life of the school, although many have not yet begun to comprehend this. Whilst some children in classes at the upper end of the school are beginning to reflect more deeply during their experiences of prayer and liturgy, others, have a less developed understanding and need further support during times of reflection.

There is a daily pattern of prayer across the school which is linked to an annual planner, outlining how weekly prayer should fit in with the Church's liturgical year. Efforts have been made to ensure that children and staff experience particular traditional prayers at certain points in the year, such as the rosary in May and the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Whilst scripture is predominantly used during acts of collective worship, it is not consistently understood by those who share it and therefore pupils do not regularly benefit from being supported to reflect more deeply. Staff are committed to the prayer life of the school and appreciate working in a Catholic environment. However, a coherent and sufficient level of skill amongst all staff, required to provide successful prayer and liturgy across the school, is not yet uniform. Whilst music and other art forms are used successfully to some degree within worship, this needs further development in order to be fruitful throughout the school. The school is fortunate to have some

beautiful spaces dedicated to prayer, such as the chapel and oratory, and these are used to enhance the experience of worship for pupils and staff alike. Parents are invited into the school for opportunities to participate in prayer.

Whilst leaders have developed a cohesive policy on prayer and liturgy, the impact of this is not yet consistently successful across the entire school. Currently, most staff do not have an adequate level of understanding and expertise to deliver prayer and liturgy that is as beneficial as it could be. However, the visiting priest who acts as the school chaplain, is able to celebrate Mass at key points in the year, such as holy days of obligation. Leaders are keen to ensure that such opportunities take place regularly and prioritise them. Whilst leaders have begun to implement some initial training around prayer and liturgy, this is yet to have had a sustained impact on the level of worship across the school and needs to be continued and built upon, so that all staff can successfully plan and lead worship and also enable pupils to do so. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy, but also acknowledge that they would benefit from further support to enable them to ensure that it is successfully delivered. Leaders and governors have ensured that there is sufficient resource, time and funding available, to enable prayer and liturgy to take place. They have used self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy effectively, enabling them to recognise that improvements need to be made, in order for the prayer life of the school, to reach a good standard overall.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Charlton House Independent School
School unique reference number (URN)	116567
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8526003
Full postal address of the school	Charlton House Independent School, 57 Midanbury Lane, Bitterne Park, Southampton, Hampshire, SO18 4DJ
School phone number	02380671739
Headteacher	Lea Pay
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Christopher Holliss
School Website	www.charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk
Trusteeship	de la Mennais Brothers
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	n/a
Previous denominational inspection grade	n/a

The inspection team

Mr Jamie Carroll
Mr Daniel Gibbons

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