

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton

SECTION 23 INSPECTION REPORT

Report on the inspection of denominational education  
under Section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996

The Salesian School  
Guildford Road  
Chertsey  
Surrey  
KT16 9LU

Chair of Governors:	Mr G Littlecott
Headteacher:	Mr D Cleworth
Inspectors:	Mr J Carvill Mr P Walker

Inspection dates:	22-23 November 2004
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## KEY

The evaluation scale used in this report is 'strong'-'developing well'-'developing'-'limited' unless otherwise indicated. If left blank, the area has not been evaluated. If an item under 'what could be improved' is marked KEY ISSUE, it should be given priority for attention in the school's action plan following the inspection.

## PART ONE: THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Ethos, values, character, mission	Strong
Leadership and governance	Strong
Caring for pupils	Strong
Chaplaincy	Strong
<b>What the school does well</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The very strong Catholic ethos, based on the teachings and example of St John Bosco, is the basis for the very good quality of relationships within the school. There is a sense of purpose and belonging in the school in which all are made to feel part of the local and wider Salesian community.</li><li>• The school works well, through the "Educating Community" group, to develop the distinctive Salesian charism and emphasise the school's involvement with the wider community. It does this by organising social and spiritual occasions for the Salesian schools in the South East throughout the year.</li><li>• The mission statement, inspired by the Gospel teachings and the life of John Bosco, pervades all aspects of school life. The school proclaims its distinctive Catholic identity by displaying religious artefacts in the entrance area, Christian images in corridors, and records of retreat activities, sponsored walks and other works for charities. The sense of community is reinforced by the very attractive and inspiring Don Bosco calendar which the school produces, containing many quotes from the Founder of the Order.</li><li>• The leadership of the school is particularly strong. The Head and senior management team, who are good role models for staff and pupils, have a clear vision for the development of the school, not only as a centre for learning but also an active Catholic community created and supported by staff, pupils and parents. In this vision they are supported by the staff and governors.</li><li>• The governors fully involve themselves, where appropriate, in the religious and spiritual life of the school, for example, by attending Masses or services and by regular meetings of the Ethos committee, through which they effectively monitor and support the Catholic life of the school.</li><li>• The care of the pupils is clearly evident. For example, many of the staff are available to support pupils at lunchtime and after school and the chaplain and the part-time counselor provide valuable pastoral support. The parents acknowledge and appreciate this caring aspect.</li></ul>	

The vast majority of pupils feel valued and safe here and are happy to be in the school. The system of Year 10 and sixth formers mentoring Year 7 pupils is another good example of the way the school cares for the welfare of the pupils.

- The school improvement plan reflects the spirit of the mission statement in that it places a priority and focus on people as the school's most valuable asset, followed by the environment and curriculum.
- The school has addressed very well the issues raised in the last inspection.

**What could be improved**

- The priest chaplain makes an invaluable contribution to the spiritual, religious and pastoral life of the school. The scale of the work justifies a full-time post.

<b>Worship, spiritual development and moral education</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Provision for worship	Strong
Provision for spiritual development	Strong
Provision for moral education	Strong

**What the school does well**

- There are good opportunities for worship. Mass is celebrated on all holy days and on the Salesian feast days. Weekly year and form assemblies, supported by an excellent booklet with weekly themes compiled by the chaplain, provide further opportunities. These themes incorporate the Church's liturgical year. On the week of the inspection the theme, "Christ the King" was most appropriate.
- In a Year 8 assembly, the themes "Christ the King" and "the Kingdom of God" were explored with meaning and respect through very good pupil participation, excellent use of props and a lot of fun. A reading of "One Solitary Life" by a pupil ended a prayerful act of worship.
- An assembly for Year 9 successfully explored the same theme through drama in which pupils acted out the scene between Jesus & Pilate.
- The school makes very good provision for retreats. Every pupil has a "think day" every year with his or her form group. The venues for these days, the Comboni Missionaries in Sunningdale and Anglican Churches in Guildford and Thorpe, give witness to the school's efforts to extend its links with the local communities. The pupils speak very highly of these opportunities.
- The school has its own chapel which, although small, allows pupils excellent opportunities for quiet reflection. It is widely used by pupils, especially during breaks.
- There are excellent opportunities for spiritual growth in RE lessons, all of which begin with a prayer. There are also often moments for meditation or reflection. Some other subject areas also contribute to spiritual growth, for

example, Media Studies, as do some extra-curricular activities like the senior choir.

- The school, assisted by some local clergy, provides good opportunities for the pupils to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
- In keeping with the Salesian tradition of caring for the vulnerable, the school provides very many opportunities for the pupils to raise money for good causes. The pupils respond very generously in a variety of ways, for example, sponsored walks; Sixth Form rag day; Advent and Lenten collections; pupils designing and selling Christmas cards; sponsored sleep-outs. The school commendably raised over £12,500 to be shared among local, national and international charities including CAFOD, Street Child Africa, Catholic Children’s Society, Crisis at Christmas and the school’s own special cause, The Sean Devereaux Fund.
- The school has developed an extremely good programme for improving the transition from the main Catholic feeder schools.
- The school promotes a strong moral code. The pupils have a very good understanding between right and wrong. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss moral and social issues. For example in RE they were debating euthanasia and in a Year 9 English lesson bullying was discussed through the study of “Growing up” poetry. A human rights group has recently been started in the school, which re-enforces the awareness of moral responsibilities.

**What could be improved**

- While the school more than meets its statutory obligation for a daily act of collective worship, the governors should ensure that this is monitored more rigorously, especially in form periods, to ensure that the high quality found in some form tutor groups is replicated across the school. KEY ISSUE.
- In a sixth form assembly there was a very good slide presentation by the youth charity “Raleigh International”. However an excellent opportunity to reflect on the awe and wonder of God’s creation was missed due to lack of time. More thought could be given to this aspect in planning assemblies.
- The school leadership should ensure that all subject areas are aware of the contribution they can make to the whole-school provision for spiritual growth.
- With the availability of a priest chaplain, the school should consider offering the pupils and staff the opportunity of a voluntary weekly Mass. KEY ISSUE.

Partnership	Evaluation
Partnership between the school and parents	Strong
Partnership between the school and parishes	Developing well

**What the school does well**

- Parents are kept well informed about the Catholic life of the school and pupil progress in RE. Parents are also well informed and consulted about the content of the Personal, Social and Health Education programme.
- Parents are very warm in their praise for the retreat programme.
- The school has established very good links with some of the deanery parishes. Some priests visit regularly and assist with the services of reconciliation during Advent and Lent. The school continues to explore ways of involving all the priests in the Deanery, while many of the staff and some of the pupils are very active in their own parishes.

#### **What could be improved**

- The school has very strong links with some parishes. It should continue to invite and encourage all the parishes in the deanery to become more active participants in the school-parish partnership.

## **PART TWO: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

<b>Pupils' attainment (Key Stage 3)</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Pupils' attainment judged for their age (high, above average, average, below average, well below average)	Above average
Pupils' attainment: are they doing as well as they should be doing? (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Good
Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in RE (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Good

<b>Pupils' attainment (Key Stage 4)</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Pupils' attainment judged for their age (high, above average, average, below average, well below average)	Above average
Pupils' attainment: are they doing as well as they should be doing? (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Good
Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in RE (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Good

<b>Students' attainment (Sixth Form)</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
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Students' attainment judged for their age (high, above average, average, below average, well below average)	Above average
Students' attainment: are they doing as well as they should be doing? (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Good
Students' attitudes and behaviour in RE (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor)	Excellent

## Illustrations of pupils' attainment

### Key Stage 3

- In Year 7 pupils show good knowledge of the structure of the Church and the place of the parish in that structure. Most are able to describe the nature of the parish community and are able to explore how they, as individuals, can contribute to the life of the parish.
- Most Year 7 pupils have very good bible-referencing skills and are able to find a given biblical reference. Pupils are aware that the Bible contains many different kinds of writings and most are able to describe these, while some can give examples of each type.
- Most Year 8 pupils show a very good knowledge of monastic life in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Most pupils in Year 8 have good knowledge of the role of a prophet. Very many are able to discuss with confidence the work of John the Baptist and his call for repentance.
- Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of why 'fire' and 'wind' are used in the Bible as suitable symbols for the Holy Spirit. Many are able to explain the symbolisms in the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Many pupils in Year 9 show good knowledge and understanding of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. Most pupils are able to describe the kind of Messiah the Jewish people expected and some can articulate how Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah was a disappointment to many.

### Key Stage 4

- There has been a pleasing upward trend in GCSE passes over recent years. While the percentage of pupils entered for examinations is broadly in line with other Catholic schools, the number achieving A\*-C passes is significantly higher than all schools nationally and well above Catholic schools in the South East of England. Pupils do marginally better in RE than in most other subjects they study and boys do better than girls.
- Most pupils show good knowledge of the authorship and source of Mark's gospel.
- Most pupils know and can explain the difference between parable and allegory. Most can also explain the meaning of the parable of the Sower.
- Almost all pupils have a very good knowledge of the healing miracles of Jesus.
- Most pupils know and can evaluate the Christian teaching on social issues like abortion and euthanasia.

### Sixth Form

- Students are able to discuss, with some confidence, Anselm's arguments for God's existence.

- Most students are able in the context of group discussion to talk confidently about the Aristotelian moral and intellectual virtues and to attempt reasonable criticism of his theory.
- In a group discussion on conscience the students were able to use appropriate theological language and terminology correctly. They were able to draw on the theories of St Thomas Aquinas and showed good knowledge by being able to cross-reference with, for example, Sartre or Simone De Beauvoir.

### **Illustrations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour**

Pupils are very well behaved in most lessons and around the school. They line up in a very orderly manner for assemblies, file into the hall in silence and are attentive throughout. In lessons pupils are very positive towards RE and their teachers. They interact well with each other and listen to each other's views. In general they take pride in their work, particularly at KS3. They are very willing to talk about "our school" and the vast majority indicated that they thought the Salesian, Chertsey, was a good school to be at.

<b>How strong is the contribution of these aspects to raising pupils' attainment in religious education?</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Teaching and learning	Strong
Curriculum	Strong
Assessment, recording and reporting	Developing well
Leadership and management	Strong
Staffing, learning resources and accommodation	Developing

### **What the school does well**

- Teaching is a real strength of the department. In the 16 whole or part lessons seen teaching was good or better in all 16. It was very good in 10 and excellent in 3 lessons.
- The school is very fortunate in having a team of gifted full-time RE specialists. In all lessons seen the teachers have a very good, sometimes excellent, relationship and rapport with the pupils. All teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Teaching styles are appropriately varied. There is a good balance between the use of encouragement, praise and correction. Teachers make very good use of questions and answers, often not accepting the first answer given, but challenging the pupils to extend their thinking by saying "Go on, explain what you mean" or by challenging others to join in and develop the answer further. In most lessons there is pace and challenge. Pupils are generally on task. When they are not the teacher mostly corrects them and brings them on board again. Lessons are all well planned and the content of the lessons fits

into the overall schemes of work. The curriculum is suitable and complies with the Curriculum Directory.

- The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the department. He leads by example and is a good role model for both staff and pupils. He leads a dedicated and committed team whose teamwork is excellent.
- The department successfully organises a series of beneficial visits, outside of school time, to places like Guildford & Canterbury Cathedrals, Douai Abbey, Golders Green and Wintershall, to re-enforce the RE curriculum.
- Year 8 pupils, in conjunction with the RE department, produce and edit a termly magazine, "Get Real", which is informative, reflective and humorous.
- The department has commendably initiated a new system of target-setting, monitoring and recording achievements for Year 7, in order to support lesson-planning and assessment for learning.
- Considering the difficulties associated with a split site school, the staff adapt very well, although 70 minute lessons is not ideal, particularly for the less able pupils.
- The resources held within the department are adequate, although more text books would be beneficial. The department produces some very good in-house resources, particularly for Key Stage 4 and sixth form. The RE library resources at Guildford road are good. Those at Highfield Road are unsatisfactory, particularly for AS and A2 level.

**What could be improved**

- While the department adheres to the school's assessment policy, the marking within the department is inconsistent. Homework is not set regularly across the department. When written work is marked, teachers make many comments of praise and encouragement. However, no indication of the standard of the work is given at Key Stage 3 nor do teachers regularly make diagnostic comments, at either key stage, which informs the pupil what he/she needs to do to improve. The department needs to address this with urgency. KEY ISSUE.
- There is some, but nevertheless insufficient, use made of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in lessons or by pupils in their work. The department needs to explore ways of developing further the use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning. KEY ISSUE
- There is a need to develop further the general sixth form RE provision and the library resources for the sixth form.
- At AS and A2 level, more opportunities could be given to students to work in pairs or groups and also to develop their independent learning skills.

<b>OVERALL EVALUATION</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The school as a Catholic community	Strong
Religious education	Strong

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### **Information about the school**

The school is maintained by Surrey LEA. It takes pupils from 11 to 19 years. The current roll is 1220. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Anne's, Chertsey; St Erconwald, Walton-on-Thames; The Holy Family, Addlestone; St Barnabus, Molesey; All Saints, Hersham; Our Lady of the Assumption, Englefield Green; Christ The Prince of Peace, Weybridge; St John of Rochester, Egham Hythe. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 80%. The proportion from other denominations and faiths is 20%. The average weekly amount of curriculum time given to religious education is 7% in Key Stage 3, 10% in Key Stage 4 and 0.5% in the Sixth Form, (General RE)

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent 4 days in school, visited 16 lessons or part lessons, 3 assemblies, and carried out 7 interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents (including a meeting and a questionnaire), discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The governors of voluntary aided schools are obliged by the School Inspections Act 1996 to arrange for a Section 23 inspection, currently every six years. The inspection must evaluate the school's provision for worship and religious education. The local bishop also has the right under Canon law to inspect any Catholic school within his diocese. Section 23 inspections serve the bishop's purpose by including an Evaluation of the work of the school as a Catholic community. The Section 23 inspectors are appointed by the diocese. The Section 23 inspection is different from the 'Ofsted inspection', which is about the secular work of the school. However, the two inspections complement each other in the areas that they cover. The governing body is responsible for drawing up an ACTION PLAN within forty days of receiving the Section 23 report, showing what the school is going to do about the issues. This action plan is circulated to all parents with children at the school.

## What the parents say about the school

801 questionnaires were issued and 22% of these (175) were returned. Each box entry indicates **the percentage** giving that response, (*of all the parents who replied to the question*). Not all questions were answered.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
<b>ABOUT THE SCHOOL</b>					
The school offers a distinctively Catholic education	52	47.4	0.5		
The staff care effectively for the children	35.4	59.4	2.8	1.1	
There are good links between parents and the school	27.4	54.2	2.8	1.1	
There are good links between the school and parishes	19.4	49.7	20.5	5.7	1.7
There are good opportunities for service to others	36	56.5	6.6	1.1	
There are good opportunities for worship	38.8	51.4	6.2	1.1	0.5
<b>ABOUT THE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL</b>					
The children develop a clear sense of right and wrong	45.7	51.4	2.8		
The children develop in their personal relationships	35.4	61.1	2.2		
The children develop responsible attitudes to society	32.5	62.8	2.8	1.1	
The children develop in their spiritual life	29.7	58.8	8	1.7	0.5
The children make good progress in religious education	38.2	53.1	6.8	1.1	