



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

The Salesian School

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Unique Reference Number: 125312

Headteacher: Mr J Kibble

Chair of Governors: Father J Dickson SDB

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 4th November 2008
Date of previous inspection: November 2004

Lead Inspector: Mr J Carvill
Associate Inspector: Mrs M Rebbitt

Description of School

The Salesian school is a voluntary aided 11-18 mixed all-ability school maintained by Surrey Education Authority. It is housed on two sites, although only the Sixth Form is on the Highfield Road site. The number of pupils on free school meals is lower than average as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school was awarded specialist school status for mathematics and humanities in June 2008.

The current roll is 1265 including 182 in the Sixth Form. The school takes pupils from the 13 parishes in the deanery, the majority coming from St Anne's, Chertsey; St Erconwald, Walton-on-Thames; The Holy Family, Addlestone; St Barnabas, Molesey; All Saints, Hersham; Our Lady of the Assumption, Englefield Green; Christ The Prince of Peace, Weybridge and St John of Rochester, Egham Hythe. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 89%. The proportion from other denominations and faiths is 9%. The average weekly amount of curriculum time given to religious education is 8% in Key Stage 3, 10% in Key Stage 4 and 6% in the Sixth Form, (General RE)

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

As a Catholic educating community the Salesian school is outstanding. Leadership and management are outstanding and there is a positive caring atmosphere, after the spirit of St John Bosco, in the school. Governors very effectively fulfil their role as critical friend. Pastoral care is excellent and chaplaincy is a real strength of the school community. The opportunities for private and public worship are excellent and the quality of acts of worship is, overall, good. The school is outstanding at promoting and achieving community cohesion. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils feel secure, safe and valued. Religious education results are outstanding at all key stages. Pupils make very good progress. Teaching in religious education is good and sometimes outstanding. The department, made up of hard-working and dedicated teachers, is exceptionally well led and organised. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed most of the issues raised in the last inspection report. The quality of worship is now, overall, at least good and pupils and staff have the opportunity to attend a voluntary weekly Mass. The use of ICT in religious education lessons is now very good. There has been improvement in the quality of marking pupils' written work in exercise books and this should continue.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Given the enthusiasm of the Head, the support of the governors and the commitment of the staff, the inspectors believe the school has a very good capacity to become outstanding in all areas.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve even further the governors and senior leaders should:-

- Develop the Retreat programme further.
- Ensure the high standard of some acts of worship seen becomes the norm for all.
- Ensure that the practice of teachers making diagnostic comments when marking pupils' written work is consistent throughout the department.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of this Catholic school are outstanding. There is a tangible positive and caring ethos, based on gospel values, which pervades all aspects of the school. The headteacher, who has a positive presence around the school, and the leadership team have a clear vision for the development of the school as a Catholic centre for learning and as an active Catholic community created and supported by pupils, parents, staff and governors. The governors fully involve themselves, where appropriate, in the religious and spiritual life of the school, for example, by observation when they visit, by attending Masses or services and by regular meetings of the Ethos committee through which they very effectively monitor and support the Catholic life of the school. School policies are based on and reflect the school's mission statement. In the school development plan two of the four strategic objectives focus on the promotion of the school's Catholic identity and the Salesian ethos. The school's self-evaluation process is robust and has correctly identified its strengths and areas for development. The pastoral care provision is excellent and chaplaincy is a real strength of the school where the lay chaplain supports the liturgies and acts as counsellor to staff and pupils. Links with the local parish are very good indeed. For example the parish priest is on the governing body, he visits the school weekly, celebrates Mass on Feasts days and, together with other priests of the deanery, the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Many of the Salesian pupils are members of the local parish youth group. Pupils are happy to be at the school and they feel valued and respected. Behaviour around the school is very good.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

There are excellent opportunities for private and public worship. Mass is celebrated on all holy days which fall in term-time and on Salesian feast days, in addition to a weekly voluntary Mass during lunch time on Fridays, which is well attended. The extent of pupil involvement in the Masses through music, readings, drama, leading bidding prayers is very good. Local priests assist in providing very good opportunities for pupils to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent & Lent. Every pupil has two assemblies per week, a Year and a Form assembly. An excellent themed booklet is produced by the chaplain to support the form tutors and this is well used. The quality of the acts of worship seen during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding. When outstanding, a prayerful ambience was created by the use of music and burning candles, excellent use of ICT and there was good participation by the pupils. The school chapel, although small, is well used by pupils and staff for private reflection and meditation. All religious education lessons begin with a prayer. The current half-day Retreat experience for pupils could be expanded and developed.

Grade 2

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The Salesian school is outstanding at both promoting and achieving community cohesion. The Mission Statement acknowledges that, in the spirit of St John Bosco, the school tries to be a place "of welcome where all feel at home and a sense of safety and security". This spirit underpins the everyday life of the school. Behaviour among the pupils is very good. They are co-operative with and respectful of staff and each other. Understanding and tolerance is promoted through religious education lessons and assemblies, all of which are inclusive. The caring Salesian ethos is extended to the local, national and international community, such as, gifts to schools in Africa, older pupils gardening for senior citizens in the area, links to the international network of Salesian schools, all of which develops the pupils' understanding of and respect for the diversity of cultures of others. There are also links with Kolkata and Bangalore provinces in India. There are very many opportunities for pupils to raise money for good causes, for example, sponsored walks, rag days, Advent & Lenten collections, sleep-outs- raising over £12,000 to CAFOD, Street Child Africa, Catholic Children's Society, Crisis at Christmas, The Sean Devereaux Fund.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Achievement and standards in religious education are outstanding. At key stage 3, where 89% reach level 5 or above, standards are very high and are comparable with other core subjects. At key stage 4 results are exceptionally good with 87% gaining A*-C grades and 41% of these achieving A*/A grades. These results are significantly above all schools nationally and well above Catholic schools regionally. At GCSE just under 75% of the pupils achieved or exceeded their target grades, with girls performing better than boys, which reflects the national trend. At Sixth Form results are very good. All students gained a pass in 2008, with 45% getting an A or

B grade. Numbers opting for Religious Studies at AS and A2 level have been constant over recent years. Students enjoy the subject and appreciate the high level of guidance they receive from teachers and they feel well prepared for the examinations. Most pupils have a very positive attitude to religious education. For example, in a recent survey, (Kirkland Rowell May 2008) religious education came top of all subjects in the pupils' responses, and their behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils are making good progress across all key stages and are gaining knowledge and understanding at a very good rate.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching and learning is, overall, good with some outstanding features. Where lessons are good or better they are well planned and structured with lesson objectives shared with and understood by the pupils. Pupils are encouraged and affirmed and classroom management is good, as are relationships, behaviour and attitudes. Pupils generally are on task and most like the subject. Pupils make good progress within lessons and overtime. The use of ICT in lessons is very good. Written work is mostly of a high standard and most pupils take care with it. Most lessons have solid pace but sometimes the pupils are not sufficiently challenged to extend their thinking. Most pupils know the level they are working at and understand the marking system. There is evidence of peer assessment and teachers, when marking written work, sometimes make comments indicating how pupils could improve, although there is still inconsistency in this area. A system for tracking and recording pupils' attainment and for setting targets is in place and parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. All lessons in religious education begin with a prayer and the subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

In following the national project's "ICONS" programme at key stage 3 the religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the needs of the pupils. The GCSE course also fully addresses the four areas of study identified in the Bishops' Conference Directory and provides the pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of scripture and social and moral issues. The GCSE examination entry rate at 100% is outstanding. The school has a successful Philosophy & Ethics AS and A2 programme in Religious Studies, which is well planned and delivered. 50% of the AS Ethics course is concerned with exploring religious attitudes towards social issues, including current topical issues like hybrid embryos, while the A level course includes opportunities for students to focus on formation of conscience and relationships. Both these courses include an examination of the Catholic perspective of these issues. The curriculum time allocated to the subject is 8% at key stage 3, which is slightly below that recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales (10%), and 10% at key stage 4. General RE in the Sixth Form has 6% of curriculum time. There is an excellent programme of external visits to places of religious interest or significance to enhance the pupils' religious experiences. For example Year 7 visit the Marian shrine at Aylesford and the Salesian parish church at Farnborough, Year 8 go to Guildford and St Alban's cathedrals and Year 10 and 11 visit the shrine of Our Lady at Kevelaer, Germany, St-Martha's-on-the-Hill and Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of the religious education department is, overall, outstanding. The head of department has a clear vision for the place of the subject within the school. He has excellent organisational skills and he sets high standards for himself and others. He leads a team of well-qualified, dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working people. There is a very good and informative departmental handbook, while the department's development plan clearly identifies the needs of the department and constructs strategies and pathways to meet them. There is also in place a robust system for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress at all key stages which contributes significantly to the pupils' achievements. This is reflected in the outstanding examination results at GCSE level. The practice of teachers making diagnostic comments when marking pupils' written work in exercise books has improved and now needs to become established throughout the department. Examination results are analysed with meticulous thoroughness and the data used to inform teaching and planning. Resources are very good, especially the ICT provision which is well used and the newly built suite of rooms provide a stimulating and attractive learning environment. There is an effective programme of lesson observation within the department and the internal mentoring of and support for staff is outstanding. For example one member of the department has been coached and mentored internally and now successfully teaches A level Ethics. The department is recognised by the regional Catholic higher education provider as an exemplar in mentoring PGCE students.

Grade 1