



# DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 138961

St Michael's Catholic College

Llewellyn Street

Bermondsey

London SE16 4UN

Inspection date: 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Chair of Governors: Marjorie Bannister

Headteacher: Felicity Corcoran

Inspectors: Catherine Burnett

Bridget Durrant

## EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

Interim Director of Education: Angela Cox OBE



## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's Catholic College is an oversubscribed co-educational secondary school with provision at sixth form. St Michael's is a Salesian fellowship school founding its mission and values on the Salesian charism. In addition to the Salesian values St Michael's college embraces the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

St Michael's is situated in the parish of The Most Holy Trinity Church, Dockhead in the Archdiocese of Southwark and is a Single Academy Trust.

St Michael's is a smaller than average secondary school which draws from a large number of parishes across Southwark and Westminster with the highest numbers coming from the local parish. No one feeder school provides more than 14% pupils in a year group. The percentage of Catholic pupils remains consistently high, currently at 94%

Outcomes at Key stages 4 and 5 are consistently above local and national averages. This is set in the context of a higher than average number of pupils with Education Health Care Plans, (EHCP) at 3% and those eligible for free school meals at 26%

Inspectors were able to evidence clear progress towards targets set at the last inspection.

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Michael's College is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The school is deeply rooted on principles of care and compassion based on the Salesian values of respect, understanding, affection and humour (RUAH) evident at all levels within the school and extended community.
- Pupils at all key stages benefit from extensive opportunities to excel and participate in school life which impacts directly on the whole school community.
- Leaders and governors ensure all pupil have opportunities to engage with and lead projects within the school through extensive student voice and student leadership opportunities.
- Outcomes at Key Stage 4 and 5 remain consistently above local and national averages.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Embed the language of RUAH to enhance its centrality in planning and action across the school.
- Review the current marking and feedback policy and practice to enable a wider range of feedback.
- Extend the celebrations of personal gifts and achievements to further enhance Catholic worship.

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## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	1
<b>Catholic Life</b>	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
<b>Religious Education</b>	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	1
<b>Collective Worship</b>	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	1



## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- Salesian values and Catholic Social Teaching priorities are embedded in the life and learning of the whole college with respect, understanding, affection and humour, (RUAH) providing a foundation stone for all activities. This was evident through pupil and parent comments who speak of the strong relationships, care and support provided by the school.
- Pupils readily engage in opportunities to support their local community and spoke of being proud to be able to give to, and support others. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the faith in action activities they can both lead and participate in expressing how good it makes them feel to be able to help others.
- A comprehensive and highly proactive pupil and student leadership programme through student voice, chaplaincy and faith in action groups, enables all pupils to engage with leadership across the school. One member of the pupil chaplaincy group stated that these opportunities 'made me feel I could make positive changes. Another pupil described chaplaincy responsibilities as 'one of the most influential opportunities I have had in the school, this is a bridge between everyone in the school'.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- A wealth of opportunities and experiences are available throughout the college calendar for pupils to engage with and give of themselves. Examples during the inspection included Lenten fund raising, a Salesian school exchange with Italian pupils and teachers being hosted, a year 9 celebration assembly and a drama rehearsal for the Lenten presentation of the Stations of the Cross.
- Pupils expressed how they are able to choose appropriate charities both locally and internationally, charities supported include CAFOD, the Catholic Children's Society, Christmas hampers for local senior citizens, Southwark Pensioners Association, Young Minds as well as fundraising activities for the Ukraine. A pupil stated to inspectors that 'these events give me an opportunity to give back to the community'. Weekly student notices inform morning tutor sessions, provide consistency of prayer focus for the week and spiritual reflection which are student led. Inspectors observed pupils leading prayer, discussion and reflection in the Year 9 tutor sessions.
- Whole school multi faith festivals are held throughout the year. Pupils spoke animatedly about the most recent Purim festival, where the Faith in Action group held a sustainable fashion show and pupils experienced a Purim festival meal. Other multi faith days, all pupil led, include exploring the Lunar Calendar, Sukkot and Diwali celebrations.



- In the exceptionally high number of responses received, parents commented overwhelmingly positively about the welfare, care as well as education provided by the school. Comments include 'the school creates a great sense of belonging', 'the school supports my child's spiritual and academic education', 'St Michael's builds a wonderful base of faith'.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- Leadership of Catholic life sits at the core of senior leadership with a dedicated assistant head role ensuring that Catholic life is an integral part of whole school and department planning and implementation.
- Curriculum planning maps evidence RUAH opportunities across the curriculum which staff interviewed commented on as embedded within their subjects.
- Governor minutes show Catholic life is regularly discussed and is a main focus of planning at all levels. Governors have prioritised funding to ensure all staff are able to take part in retreats throughout the year to support understanding and delivery of Catholic life throughout the school.
- The school has a nurse who is proactive in supporting wellbeing of both pupils and staff. This includes the nurse training pupil wellbeing ambassadors providing leadership opportunities across the school which support care and wellbeing.
- Parent focus group meetings are held across the year enabling partnership and feedback in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- Outcomes at Key stages 4 and 5 are consistently above local and national averages.
- Pupils benefit from a strong team of Religious Education teachers who provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to explore subject matter in depth.
- In the range of lessons observed positive behaviours and mutual respect supported learning. Pupils cooperated with each other enabling interaction and discussion.
- Pupils were keen to show their work and talk about their achievements and appreciation of the Religious Education lessons.
- In a year 13 lesson observed, pupils were eloquent in expression and use of vocabulary and language, with regular and appropriate use of scripture being used to support their evidence base and decision making.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.**

- Inspectors observed a wide range of assessment tools and techniques during observations which provided pace and moved learning forward.
- The majority of books showed use of green pen marking in line with the school marking policy. Six weekly summative assessments are used consistently to inform departmental planning which supports learning and progress.
- The quality of teaching observed was consistently good across all key stages and as a result, data shows pupils make sustained progress over an academic year.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.**

- The head of Religious Education has a clear vision for the subject and awareness of current local, national and diocesan expectations, leading to a comprehensive Religious Education curriculum being in place with consistent and robust delivery.
- Strong leadership, training and support from the head of department and headteacher enable a high-quality approach to teaching and learning.
- Governors minutes and inspector's conversations with governors evidence Religious Education as being prioritised at a strategic level.
- An up to date RSE policy and programme is in place with faith elements being delivered by specialist Religious Education teachers.



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- A new school prayer created by the pupils has recently been introduced. Inspectors observed pupils and staff embracing their new school prayer with pride as evidenced by the number of pupils who had already memorised the prayer and used it reverently throughout the school day.
- Prayers tables are evident in every tutor room. Pupils described how they create their own prayers for their class prayer book. Prayer tables were bespoke to each tutor group with pupils taking ownership of the use and content.
- The reconciliation service observed by inspectors provided a calm spiritual space for the pupils attending. A prayerful silence was observed whilst pupils were asked to examine their conscience.
- In the very well attended weekly Mass observed, pupils led readings in both English and Italian in respect of the Italian Salesian guests who were at the school on an exchange visit.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- The college makes full use of the chapel which is always open for prayer and reflection during the day.
- Extensive opportunities are on offer for the whole school community to engage in collective worship. These include weekly Mass every Friday before school, Ash Wednesday liturgies, feast day Masses, retreats as well as extracurricular opportunities such as attending Flame, the largest Catholic youth event in England and Wales. A pupil commented that Flame was an 'experience which makes the younger generation feel more connected to their faith'
- Prayer is an integral part of college life. Inspectors experienced student led prayer commencing every lesson and tutor session, providing calm reflective opportunities throughout the day.
- A comprehensive assembly programme is in place with each pupil being given opportunities to design and lead content. A Year 7 pupil commented on how proud she was to have been given the opportunity to present to others in an Advent assembly.



**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- Chaplaincy is rooted in the strategic vision of the school with the member of staff responsible being line managed by a dedicated senior leader. Time is given for training support and guidance to enable all staff to lead and manage prayer and worship across the school.
- Training and funding for staff retreats is supported and prioritised by governors.
- A proactive governing body engages regularly with and attends collective worship opportunities.
- Strong relationships between the school, the local parish priest and neighbouring clergy ensure the school can provide frequent opportunities which support individual, small group and whole school worship and reflection.

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