

Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School

URN: 114611

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

02–03 May 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

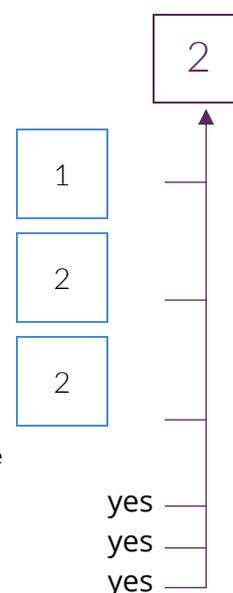
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



What the school does well

- Staff, governors, and students are proud of their school and dedicated to improving this deeply caring community. The culture of continuous improvement permeates the school with progress in religious education and collective worship clearly in evidence.
- The dedicated and highly regarded principal ensures that the school's Catholic identity now impacts the whole school, aided by staff and governors who are rightly proud of the progress being made, and of their deeply loving community where every student is known and loved.
- The religious education team, led by a dedicated and very capable head of department, are on a path of improvement. They are embedding the core content of the *Religious Education Directory* and securing good provision which is leading to improved attainment.

- The outstanding chaplain, aided by the director of faith and ethos, ensures excellent provision. She has made a significant impact in a short time.
- Students, parents, and staff are proud of their school, of its love, and of what makes the school distinctive. They all feel very fortunate to be at Cardinal Newman. This is reflected in some former students returning as staff members and continuing the tradition.

What the school needs to improve

- The quality of religious education is good, but the challenge, pace and variety of lessons is not yet fully consistent across the school. High expectations of presentation and pupil outcomes should now be consistently applied.
- While there are examples of good and very good collective worship, there remain missed opportunities where students should be more involved. Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that student leadership of prayer, including student creation and evaluation of prayer and liturgy, is evidenced across the school, with continued investment in staff professional development.

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

Students in this large happy school have pride in the school's Catholic life and mission. In spite of its size, students and staff feel known and valued. One student said, 'I arrived in the sixth form last year from another school. I have been amazed at the kindness and welcome I have received.' Students' behaviour is good, confident and respectful. They are proud of their patron, Saint John Henry Newman, frequently referencing their place as a 'link in a chain', and as people created for some 'definite service'. The notion of Caritas is alive in the language and the artwork of the school, linking mission to charitable work and service. The commitment to social justice, both across Brighton and beyond, is exemplary. This allows Catholic social teaching to become the natural common ground where those of a deep Catholic faith and those of other faiths or none can align in the service of those in need. Students and staff speak confidently about how their school welcomes all, provides a safe and empowering space and, therefore, aids their moral development. One Year 9 student said, 'The staff listen to us here and take our views seriously,' whilst a parent said, 'I feel listened to and respected whenever I contact the school.' Another parent said, 'My daughter lost all confidence at her previous school; now she has come to Newman, it is truly amazing and has transformed her.'

Aided by a dynamic school chaplain, Christ is at the centre of the community, fully inclusive of non-Catholic Christians and those of other faiths and none. 'I just could not believe how kind and accepting the staff were when I arrived. It really is a community,' said one teacher. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education meets all statutory requirements. It is firmly rooted in Church teaching. The school's stunning Victorian chapel is well used and is a source of pride to students and staff alike. A teacher in the school's 'Forest School' said, 'Caritas is lived out - we embody the principle of common good by having children of all ages planting trees together.' In a deeply impressive staff briefing, predicated on staff prayers in a range of languages, staff discussed the needs of individual students stipulating, 'We need to surround them by our Newman love.'

Leaders, including governors, are proud of their school and its focus on kindness and love in its Caritas motto. They are committed to continuous improvement and express great confidence in their principal, who works tirelessly for the good of the school, modelling its ethos. 'The principal will check on how you are,' said one member of staff, 'and she really cares. I have never worked anywhere like this.' Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and their treatment as employees. One teacher said, 'Newman is a very special school to work in. There is great love and support shown towards staff.' Another teacher commented, 'I have been through a difficult time and the school has been so supportive.' Early career teachers are confident in the way they are inducted, including the school's Catholic identity. Parents feel their role as the first educators of their children is strengthened by the communication they receive. The principal, chaplain and the head of religious education are embedded in the life of the diocese and are dedicated to support the Bishop's vision. The outstanding sixth form leadership team are committed to supporting their local area, ensuring that all their students learn the place of service and volunteering. Governors are both supportive of their principal and able to hold her to account. They recognise they are fortunate to have a leader of the calibre of this principal.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

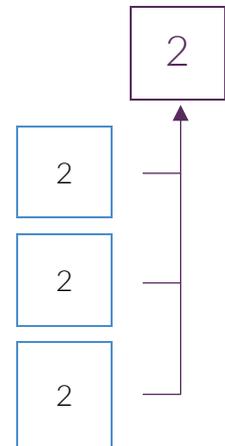
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are making good progress in an improving religious education department, taught by a committed team. They are well-led and motivated by an effective head of department. Most make good progress and many demonstrate a good degree of religious literacy, with evidence of sophisticated thinking, particularly in the older years. The school is implementing the *Religious Education Directory* effectively. In the majority of lessons, student progress in terms of knowing more, remembering more and doing more was evident. Occasionally in key stage three, the climate for learning was too passive, pace was lacking and there appeared to be a lack of variety in the lessons observed, therefore leading to less than expected progress. Student books are good in general, showing a pride in their work, but less so on some occasions, suggesting the need for consistent high expectations across the school. Students spoken to report that they enjoy their lessons and older students can see how religious education, the school’s mission and their impressive work in social justice, interlinks. They can recall their learning and apply their knowledge. Attainment is good and broadly benchmarks with English.

Teachers show confidence, engage positively with students, display a strong subject knowledge and question students effectively, and sometimes very effectively. Teaching and learning is more effective at Key Stage 4 and 5, where lessons are good and outstanding, and less impactful at Key Stage 3 where lessons are generally good, though not always. There is a need for greater consistency, ensuring that the whole class is engaged. Planning links to assessment and is based on a coherent and challenging curriculum. Feedback is provided, however greater attention is required to ensure students’ presentation shows individuality, creativity, and pride in their work. A range of questioning was witnessed, some more probing than others. All staff demonstrate very good subject knowledge. In a lesson on Buddhism, the teacher made links to relevant

contemporary moral challenges. In an outstanding sixth form lesson, not a second was wasted during a high-challenge lesson where every student was able to express their thoughts.

The *Directory* is being implemented effectively by leaders, and the link governor monitors thoroughly. The curriculum is given the appropriate amount of time at Key Stages 3 to 5, with financial support close to that of the other core subjects. The head of religious education is ensuring a solid programme of professional development for her large team, who respond well to, and greatly value, her leadership. The measures she is taking to improve the department are solid and coherent; these need time to embed. She deserves great credit for what has already been achieved. She engages in diocesan network meetings and has formed positive professional links with other Catholic schools in the diocese ensuring transfer and formulation of ideas. The curriculum is sequentially written to ensure that material is introduced in an increasingly demanding way. In one post-sixteen lesson, *Google Classrooms* was used very effectively to support a group of Year 12 students who were passionate about their study of key philosophers of religion. Strong teaching of core religious education is well-received by a diverse student population at Key Stage 5. This, alongside the significant uplift in students taking the allied qualification post-16 in sixth form, reflects the profile of the subject among students due to the strong leadership.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Students' response and participation in collective worship are generally good. A more extensive leading role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of prayer and worship in the school should be developed. Most students have an age-appropriate understanding of Catholic prayer and are proud of the patrimony of St John Henry Newman, whose prayer they revere, and recite with passion. In one Year 7 lesson, the teacher created a spiritual environment, giving students the opportunity to reflect on reasons to be grateful and to pray for others. During form time, students read prayers and scripture reflecting the typicality of this good practice in school. The chaplain has galvanised considerable support and enthusiasm in students which has greatly increased their commitment to improving the quality of prayer and liturgy. This is helped by a very committed and well-respected priest who spends one day a week in the school, providing pastoral care and introducing many students and staff to what a priest is and does. In less strong liturgies, some students were not engaged and did not display a recognition of this being a sacred time and place.

Carefully planned provision of materials and events by the chaplain, includes a range of approaches to worship and is a strength in the school. Scripture is used appropriately, mindful of the Church's seasons. Some examples of the use of music were seen and the school has many talented musicians able to contribute to sacred music. Opportunities to develop regular communal singing remain. Teachers are confident to share their personal stories which draw students into liturgies. Delivery, however, is variable in quality and still too teacher-led. In some cases, student engagement is inconsistent, reflecting the need to ensure quality in the provision of liturgy and prayer. In one powerful liturgy, a student gave a personal reflection, which was moving and impactful. Parents really appreciate an invitation to Mass and the chaplain has created prayer spaces in addition to the chapel, described as the beating heart of the school. In an innovative model, 'Open the Book' students are visiting local primary schools and planning liturgies for the benefit of younger children, to great effect.

Leaders and governors are aware of the centrality of prayer and liturgy. Their policy is appropriate and fit for purpose. Liturgy is planned carefully throughout the year, celebrating all key dates as well as responding to the needs of the community at times of particular celebration, or grief. Students of all traditions value these opportunities. One governor, a Benedictine priest, takes an active role in overseeing this area. Ongoing monitoring of the delivery, quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, together with the continued investment in training for staff and students is a priority. The chapel is extremely well-used and steps have been taken by governors to improve the fabric of the building to preserve this beautiful feature. Further investment in staffing, including succession planning for the excellent school chaplain, is required to ensure increased capacity for the chaplaincy provision of what is the largest Catholic school in the country. The presence on the leadership team of the very experienced director of faith and ethos is also a powerful driver and shows the importance of every aspect of Catholic identity at the very top of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	114611
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8464605
Full postal address of the school	Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School, The Upper Drive, Hove, BN3 6ND
School phone number	01273558551
Head teacher	Claire Jarman
Chair of Governors	Gerard Silverstone
School Website	http://www.cncs.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	6-7 July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Simon Uttley	Lead
Sadie Whyte	Team
Damian Fox	Team
David Purcell	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