



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Wilfrid's Catholic School**

St Wilfrid's Way, Old Horsham Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8PG

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DfES Number: 126095

Headteacher: Mr J Morris

Chair of Governors: Mr P Gidman

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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

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Date of inspection: 20-21 November 2012

Date of previous inspection: 30 September – 1 October 2009

Lead Inspector: Mr P Ward

Associate Inspector: Dr J Lydon

## **Description of School**

St Wilfrid's Catholic School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Crawley Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by West Sussex LA. The school is located in the parish of Crawley and the principal parishes which the school also serves include Horsham, Horley, and East Grinstead. The proportion of students who are baptised Catholics is currently 69%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 8% in Key Stage 3, 10% in Key Stage 4 and 4% in the Sixth Form with a varied array of complementary curricular and extra-curricular Religious Education opportunities available. The school takes students from 11 to 18 years. The number of students currently on roll is 938. The attainment of students on entering the school is broadly below average. The proportion of students eligible for free schools meals is around average. Approximately 17% of the students receive extra support in class. About 80% identify themselves as 'White British' or Irish, while 7% are Asian and the other 13% are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students from homes where English is an additional language is above average at 13.5%.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

St Wilfrid's is an outstanding Catholic school. The distinctive nature of a Catholic school is tangible, its daily life and routines integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into the totality of school life. Daily prayer and worship, in tutor group or assembly, is based on the weekly Sunday gospel explored in age-appropriate ways, making use of a wide range of resources made available by the lay chaplain. Academic standards across the school have improved considerably since 2010, with little variation between groups of comparable ability due to positive school policies. Standards in Religious Education are high in relation to students' ability. Students are very respectful of one another and are proud of the school community to which they belong. Thus the school is living out its mission statement "to provide an inspiring and personalised education for all our students, enabling them to realise their full potential within a dynamic environment which follows the teaching and values of Christ and His Church." This is the result of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, fully supported by the leadership team and Governing Body, in promoting a flourishing Catholic educational community.

**Grade 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

All action points of the last inspection report have been addressed. In addition the Catholic life has continued to be developed and Religious Education strengthened.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase curriculum time for religious education in years 7-9 in order to meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and reflect the fact that it is the core subject in a Catholic school.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching in religious education lessons in order to fully engage all students in their learning.

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The leadership and management of this Catholic school are outstanding. The headteacher, who is a positive presence around the school, together with the leadership team, have a clear understanding of Catholic education and of the role of the Catholic school. This they are embedding effectively in the school so that students and staff, parents and carers and local clergy recognise and support its realisation. The governors involve themselves wholeheartedly, as appropriate, in the life of the school and are fully committed to promoting its religious and spiritual life. They ensure that the school's mission statement underpins all policies and that self-evaluation is rigorous in order to identify correctly areas for development. Pastoral care provision is outstanding, reflecting concern for the welfare of all. Behaviour around the school is very good. The exceptional chaplaincy provision supports sacramental celebrations, prayer and worship in school, links with local parishes and, with the Religious Education department, engages many students in exploring and living out their faith in school, in their local community and beyond. There are significant opportunities for voluntary service while fundraising supports projects near and far. Relations with the diocese and local deanery are very strong. Local priests welcome the opportunity to celebrate Mass, including the well-attended weekly voluntary Mass, and support the termly celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The chapel is located at the front of the school, a clear statement of its significance. In addition a new chaplaincy base has been opened in the heart of the school, a tangible manifestation that complements its significant on-line presence, widely used by students and staff. Behaviour is very good because students feel valued and know that they are full members of the St Wilfrid's School community.

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

The celebration of Mass is central to the life of the school. Friday morning Mass, which typically attracts 100 students and staff in addition to the rostered form, is celebrated by local deanery priests including Bishop Kieran as part of the local parish provision and regularly attracts local parishioners. Mass is also celebrated at key times during the school year in addition to holy days of obligation. Students have been commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist following appropriate instruction while others undertake a very wide range of ministries and service. Local priests also enable the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be celebrated each term. Students interested in becoming Catholic can attend an RCIA (Right of

Christian Initiation for Adults) group which is also supported by the local clergy who facilitate the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Students attend a key stage and year assembly each week that reflects the liturgical cycle and on other days pray within their tutor group. The upper school assembly during the inspection was a thought-provoking reflection on the contemporary implications of the Sunday Gospel, including an appreciation of the work of Archbishop Oscar Romero and ending with videoclips of students and staff reflecting on the joy of life. Assemblies and tutor prayer are facilitated by an extensive range of varied electronic, visual and print material prepared by the school chaplain and made available to staff and students through a variety of channels including social media. One student commented 'Chaplaincy is a fantastic attribute of the school'. Students in years 7 and 9 have a reflective retreat while in years 8 and 10 there are immersion days which are designed to be more active, that for year 10 prompting students to reflect on their relationship with God and on what they believe. These events are held at different locations including the Dalesdown Centre. There are also well-supported optional residential retreats for students in years 10-13. Significant numbers of past and present students support pilgrimages to Lourdes and some attended World Youth Day.

**Grade 1**

### **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

St Wilfrid's is a manifestly Catholic school community in which all – students and staff - show respect for one another. This is evident throughout the school day, in recreational times as much as in class and assembly, a high level of courtesy being displayed. Students spoke of being happy and feeling safe in school, a strong support system ensuring that any concerns were promptly and effectively addressed. The elected student council meets fortnightly to consider issues of moment and has met with several key staff and a governor. Students welcome the opportunity to contribute to school life, for example at parents' evening, and in serving the local community through opportunities provided, for example, by the SVP. Supporting the extra-curricular activities of the local community primary school for pupils with additional learning needs and participating in 'worship days' at local Catholic primary schools were two instances cited by students, one of whom said "when you go and give something back, it is really rewarding." The chaplain also spends one morning a week in a local Catholic primary school and also undertakes work in the Deanery as part of his school role. Extensive fundraising supports not just local projects but also extends to link schools in Pakistan and Rwanda.

Prayer and worship is clearly Catholic but respects other Christian traditions represented in the school. A Muslim student appreciated the respect given to faith in general, explaining how it supported his own faith journey. The Religious Education programme also specifically supports mutual faith and belief understanding.

**Grade 1**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Achievement and standards in religious education are outstanding. At key stage 3 81% of students reach level 5 or above, in line with other core subjects. End of module tests indicate that the vast majority of students are achieving above their target levels. At key stage 4, GCSE results show that students make outstanding progress relative to their ability with 56%

exceeding their target grades. 70% achieved grades A\*-C and 27% grades A\* or A. At GCE A Level students have consistently achieved their target grades over the last three years, several going on to read Theology or Philosophy and Ethics at university including two at Oxford. There is very little difference in achievement between different groups of students of comparable ability. Students displayed very good evidence of progress in becoming religiously literate and engaged young people with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically. Based on pupil interviews with inspectors, most students have a very positive attitude to religious education. Behaviour in lessons is overall very good.

## **Grade 1**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

Based on the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. Students display a positive attitude to religious education and work well with teaching and support staff and with each other to advance their learning. Collaborative learning is a regular feature and when carefully planned is very effective. There is a wide range of resources, including an extensive departmental ICT library, which meets the needs of the students. Where lessons are outstanding they are well planned and structured to make full use of lesson time by means of imaginative teaching and assessment strategies that engage students. A year 13 lesson exploring Aquinas' explanation of conscience engagingly drew on a wide range of contemporary situations to clarify his views. In a GCSE lesson when one Year 11 student remarked to an Inspector "We are treated as adults and the subject is approached in an adult way" the other four students in the group readily agreed. However in some lessons there is a lack of clarity in the learning objectives so resources and teaching strategies such as questioning are not specifically matched to the ability of students. Assessment by means of levels of attainment continues to develop.

## **Grade 2**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The religious education curriculum of the school is aligned to the 1996 Religious Education Curriculum Directory and adapted to the needs of students. In years 7-9 it is based on the National Project's 'Icons' programme and has been specifically developed to address relationships and sex education in year 9. In years 10-11 it is based on the Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies 'Catholic Christianity' and 'Religion and Life based on a study of Roman Catholic Christianity' specifications. In years 12 and 13 it has been designed by the school and follows the structure of the NOCN General Religious Education qualification and includes service in the local community. There is also an alternative course specifically exploring the Catholic faith which numbers about twenty students, two of whom spoke passionately about it to the Inspectors.

GCE Religious Studies is a popular option in years 12 and 13, specifically studying Philosophy of Religion and Christian Ethics. The school is committed to reviewing its provision in the light of the publication of the 2012 Religious Education Curriculum Directory to ensure that it continues to conform to current requirements.

The curriculum time devoted to religious education is 8% in years 7-9, 10% in years 10-11 and 4% for General Religious Education in years 12-13. General Religious Education is augmented with an annual day conference. GCE Religious Studies has parity of time with other GCE subjects. Thus curriculum time is slightly less than the Bishops' Conference requirement of 10% in years 7-11 and 5% in years 12-13.

## **Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. A link governor undertakes an annual visit of the department, observing lessons and meeting staff, and maintains regular contact with the head of department in order to keep the Governing Body informed, This enables governors to be fully involved in the school's self-evaluation of religious education as well as its Catholic life. The department is led by an Assistant Headteacher who reports to the headteacher and is a member of the senior leadership team. The head of department has a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and a clear understanding of how the school should contribute to it. Line managing the school chaplain as well as the staff of the religious education department enables him to ensure that religious education contributes very positively to the religious and spiritual life of the school. There is a strong and successful focus on raising standards and ensuring that the curriculum contributes positively to the faith development of students. The subject is very well managed, witness the extensive departmental ICT resources that are regularly reviewed and updated and available to students through the Virtual Learning Environment. Dedicated religious education classrooms located adjacent to the subject base are well appointed and equipped, Displays that illustrate elements of the curriculum and celebrate students work contribute to a positive learning environment.

**Grade 1**