

# St Charles' Catholic Sixth Form College

75, St Charles Square, London W10 6EY

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 2-3 May 2019



## Summary of key findings for parents and students

### A. Classroom religious education is good

- There is evidence of a creative approach to using the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, which makes it relevant to students' needs. Students are very appreciative of the curriculum that develops their critical understanding of the interface between religion and culture
- With staffing more stable recently, student progress in A level is good and the department expects that there will be improvement. Students are generally very positive about their experiences of core religious education and now there are high levels of engagement.
- Teaching is consistently good across the department. Teachers demonstrate rich theological subject knowledge that is also apparent in high quality resources, especially at A level.
- The newly appointed head of religious education has quickly made a very positive impact on the direction of the department. There is a shared focus on improving teaching and learning and the ground work has been laid for the department to excel.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- At A level, students' grades need to improve so that more achieve higher grades and all students achieve their target grades.
- In core RE lessons there is a need for additional stretch and challenge for more able students as well as enabling students with lower prior knowledge and attainment to fully access the curriculum.
- Assessment procedures for core religious education need further refinement.

### B. The Catholic life of the college is good

- Religious education is considered the core of the curriculum and as such meets the 5% teaching time required by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education has a good status within the college.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the college's understanding of itself as a Catholic college. The school meets its commitments to ensuring that prayer is a daily part of the students' experience.
- Service and social justice are strong features of the work of the college. Pastoral care is very strong, students speak with passion about the how the staff really care about them.
- The college promotes good links with parents. One parent wrote: 'The school embodies inclusivity and I feel that my son has grown in faith.'
- The mission statement is lived and staff feel passionately about the Catholic educational mission. The college has worked hard to develop a community that is welcoming and clearly values the all its students.

### The Catholic life of the college is not yet outstanding because

- The partnerships with other Catholic institutions on St Charles Square could be improved through engaging in outreach work with the neighbouring two Catholic schools and local parish.
- There needs to be a review of the governing body's committee structure so that governors can be more strategic in the support and challenge they provide regarding their responsibilities to the religious education department and Catholic life of the college.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### The content of classroom religious education is good

Overall the religious education (RE) curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). Students are very appreciative of the curriculum that develops their critical understanding of the interface between religion and culture. There is evidence of a creative approach to using the RECD, which makes it relevant to students' learning needs. The A level provision is linked to the RECD with the Christianity unit for the study of religion section meeting a number of key topics. A level lesson resources are of a good quality in that they provide the basis for students to construct their arguments and work independently. The newly appointed head of RE has brought about rapid improvement to the curriculum provision, especially at core RE (RE that is taught to all students at the college). As a result there are coherent plans in place to further develop the core RE curriculum. Evidence from learner surveys and discussion with students revealed that they feel that the content is challenging and inspiring.

### Student achievement in religious education is good

There has been staff turbulence that accounts in some way for the need to improve students' A level grades at the end of the course. There is scope for more students to achieve higher grades and for all students achieve their target grades. With more recent staffing stability student progress in A level has been good and the department now expects that at A level there will be improvement. Attainment for A level is generally at least as good as in other A level subjects in the college. Teacher written feedback is consistently of a good quality. Marking at A level is strong, with a good culture of peer marking, and as a result students have a good understanding of what they have to do to improve. Students display very positive attitudes to their learning with high levels of participation in lessons. Student achievement in core RE is good, however there is further development required in marking student assessments. Where students make good progress, they know and understand what they have to do to improve their work. Student attendance for core RE is below the college target of 90% and as a result this is an area for improvement. Students are generally very positive about their experiences of core RE and as a result there a high levels of cooperation.

### The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good across the department. Teachers demonstrate rich theological subject knowledge that is also apparent in high quality resources, especially at A level. Where teaching is at its best, students are challenged appropriately and lessons were characterised by detailed planning that enabled quick pace. In a lesson on developing essay writing skills, the teacher provided resources that scaffolded learning and through targeted questioning drew out from students a rich theological vocabulary. In a lesson on business ethics, students successfully engaged with up to date examples that challenged them to make links to ethic theories. Some areas of A level teaching have rapidly improved, as a result students are more confident about what is expected of them and how that are going to achieve. In core RE lessons students were exploring the Christian teaching on forgiveness. Sometimes teachers dominated the lesson at the expense of student engagement. In core RE there is further scope to engage all learners, especially in terms of stretch and challenge so that the more able as well as students with lower prior knowledge and attainment have accelerated progress. Students value the opportunities in core RE to openly express and shared their own opinions. Overall students demonstrated excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to the subject, especially in A level lessons.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good**

The newly appointed head of RE has quickly made a very positive impact on the direction of the department. The leadership of RE is good and consistently communicates a clarity of purpose and a commitment to raising standards. There has been a positive impact in terms of the raising the profile of the department as RE now seen as more rigorous by many students. Systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning with the result being that where there have been instances of weak teaching this has been addressed rigorously and successfully. The self-evaluation judgements of the department are accurate and the head of RE has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The head of RE models excellent practice and is supporting the development of other members of the department. There is a shared focus on improving teaching and learning and the ground work has been laid for the department to excel.

**What should the college do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- At A level improve students' grades at the end of the course so that more achieve higher grades and all students achieve their target grades.
- In core RE lessons provide additional stretch and challenge for more able students as well as enabling students with lower prior knowledge and attainment to fully access the curriculum.
- The assessment procedures for core RE need further refinement.
- In line with the college target of 90% and above, improve attendance for Core RE.

## B. The Catholic life of the college

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

Religious education is considered the core of the curriculum and as such meets the 5% teaching time for core RE as required by the Bishops' Conference. The recent curriculum change to core RE, from weekly lectures delivered in the hall, to a regular weekly classroom experience of RE is to be commended strongly. RE has a good status within the school. The RE budget is in line with other core subjects. The staffing allocation and accommodation are good. There is scope for the governors to be more active in their support for the RE department. The leadership team is committed to supporting the RE department and developing a high quality RE experience for students.

### The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole college community

is good

Prayer and liturgy are central to the college's understanding of itself as a Catholic college. Inspectors observed some outstanding examples of tutor time prayer, for instance, students had structured opportunities for discussion, sharing and quiet reflection around the theme of forgiveness. However, there is further scope to improve the experience of tutor time prayer by developing staff confidence in facilitating age appropriate reflection. There is monitoring of tutor time prayer, but this could be more systematic and structured so that it has a greater impact on student experience. The school meets its commitments to ensuring that prayer is a daily part of the students' experience in the college. There are opportunities for Mass throughout the year, on key occasions as well as offer at some Friday lunch times. Inspectors attended a Mass for students and staff in which students had prepared a reflection on the weekly theme of forgiveness. Students attend an assembly once a week, these occasions are vital ways in which the community is developed in the college. In one assembly seen on the theme of Easter, the atmosphere was very calm and reflective and students engaged well. Reconciliation takes place in Lent, however it should also be offered in Advent as is the Catholic tradition. The programme of retreats to Kintbury is a key feature of the chaplaincy work. Students from other faith traditions experience understanding and respect for their faith tradition. The chaplaincy team successfully develops the leadership potential of students, as they assist the chaplain in liturgies and Masses, ensuring that they run smoothly. There is a good induction programme that helps students understand the role of the chaplain and the support that is available.

### The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

is good

Service and social justice are strong features of the work of the college. A particularly effective strategy to support the idea of service is through corridor displays that feature former students to inspire and encourage current students to contribute to their communities and beyond. There is a well thought out policy statement on supporting charities that sets out a rationale based on Catholic Social Teaching. Student members of the charity committee were able to succinctly articulate the theological underpinning of their charitable activity. The college was in the past a strong supporter of the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes; however this is now an area to revitalize as this can be an effective way for students to serve others. The college provides good opportunities for students to be involved in responding to those in need locally, nationally and internationally. The college has raised money for the Catholic Children's Society in response to the Grenfell disaster. Students speak highly of the support they receive from the staff and they feel that their college works very hard to be inclusive. Pastoral care is very strong, students speak with passion about the how the staff really care about them.

**The partnership with parents, college and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf****is good**

The college promotes good links with parents. During parents evening, the college carries out a parents' questionnaire, these demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the college. Even though there was a low response to the diocesan questionnaire these were positive, one parent wrote: 'The school embodies inclusivity and I feel that my son has grown in faith.' The growing use of the college's social media has been effective in communicating a 'thought for the day' to students and parents. Links with the local parish, the Catholic primary and Catholic secondary school could be developed. The college is one of four Catholic institutions on the St Charles Square site and could improve the partnerships through engaging in outreach work that provides opportunities for students to serve others. There is good engagement with the link adviser for the diocese; as well as this college staff have engaged with diocesan inset.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the college****is good**

The mission statement is lived and staff feel passionately about the Catholic educational mission. The principal articulates a clear understanding of what it means to be a Catholic college. The principal is effective in leading and managing the college as a living faith community. The college environment is utilised well to convey the Catholic life of the college through religious iconography and displays. The name given for the pastoral groups that students belong to (divisions) could be renamed so that they reflect the Catholic identity of the college. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the college's self-evaluation form; however this document would be more useful if it had been more evaluative. The governing body shares the ambition of the leadership team for improvement. With the appointment of a new chair of governors, there is an opportunity to enhance the strategic support and challenge they provide regarding their responsibilities to the RE department and Catholic life of the college by reviewing the governing body's committee structure. The college has a strong sense of inclusion and belonging underpinned by respect for the individual. The college has worked hard to develop a community that is welcoming and clearly values the all its students.

**What should the college do to develop further the Catholic life of the college?**

- Improve the partnerships on St Charles Square through engaging in outreach work with the neighbouring two Catholic schools and local parish.
- Review the governing body's committee structure so that governors can be more strategic in the support and challenge they provide regarding their responsibilities to the RE department and Catholic life of the college.
- Further improve the experience of tutor time prayer by developing staff confidence in facilitating age appropriate reflection.
- Rename the 'divisions' (the name for the pastoral groups students belong to) so that they can be utilised to further develop the Catholic life of the school.

## Information about this college

- The college is a Catholic sixth form college in the locality of North Kensington that recruits 600 students per year.
- The college directly serves the parishes of the North Kensington Deanery as well as other parishes further afield.
- The proportion of students who are baptised Catholic is 25%.
- The proportion of students who are from other Christian denominations is 31% and from other faiths is 40%. The remaining students are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the college is 45%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is four.
- There are 19% of students in the college with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 29 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of students speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free meals.
- 388 students receive a bursary grant (35%).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	2078600
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130422
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea

<b>College category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of students</b>	16-19
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of students on roll</b>	1096
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Gianluca Marcato
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Elaine Taylor
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8968 7755
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stcharles.ac.uk">www.stcharles.ac.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@stcharles.ac.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, students and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection nine lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended two assemblies and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with college staff, students and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of students' work, observation of students in and out of lessons and examination of college documents.

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr Matthew Dell	Lead Inspector
Miss Susan Grace	Associate Inspector
Mrs Diana Roberts	Associate Inspector
Ms Winnie Greer	Associate Inspector

## Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

### Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:  
<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

Vaughan House  
46 Francis Street,  
London  
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005  
E: [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk)  
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>