

St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School

URN: 401710

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Wrexham

27–28 March 2025

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

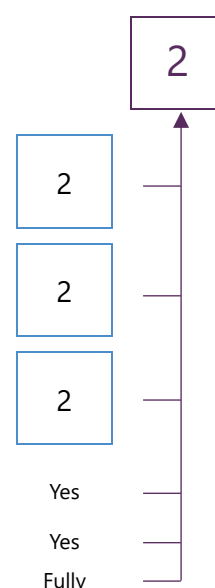
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School is a welcoming school that respects the dignity of every member of the community. The level of pastoral care provided for all members of the community is a strength of the school.
- The school's Catholic virtues are well known by students, who actively seek to live them in practical ways in their daily lives.
- Outcomes in religious education (RE) at Key Stage 4 are consistently good, and all members of the department contribute effectively to students' spiritual and moral development.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong, creating an environment in which students can learn in a purposeful way.
- The work of the lay chaplain permeates all aspects of school life and is highly valued by students, parents, and staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure there is a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation that leads to informed development planning for Catholic life and mission, RE, and collective worship.
- Embed the feedback policy in RE so that students are confident in knowing precisely what they need to do to improve their work, and all students achieve the best possible outcomes, particularly boys at Key Stage 4.
- Develop a clear strategy to build up the skills of students in the planning, delivery, and leadership of prayer and worship.

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

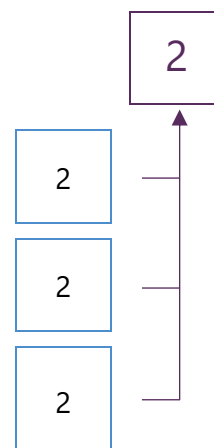
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Students at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School thrive within a strong family and community ethos. They actively embrace the school's unique Catholic identity and speak eloquently about the St Richard Gwyn virtues. Students explain clearly how they put these into practice in their daily lives. They speak enthusiastically about the opportunities to pray, to celebrate the Eucharist, and the importance of helping others. Departments are working towards embedding the principles of Catholic social teaching within their curriculum. However, this is not yet fully realised. Consequently, students have an underdeveloped understanding of this ethos and struggle to articulate its meaning. Students demonstrate respect for the school's rich diversity and foster a sense of unity and pride within the school community, reflecting its inclusive Catholic nature. Students have a strong sense of justice and care for those in need in the wider community. This is evident, for example, in the extensive range of planned charitable events, letters written, and visits made to the elderly in local care homes. Students clearly understand that they are valued and cared for equally. Most students know what is expected of them to ensure that they are able to learn in a purposeful way.

The mission statement reflects the Church's mission in education, and the values expressed within this are widely known and impact effectively on all aspects of school life. A strong sense of community is evident within the school, which is reflected in the quality of trusting relationships throughout. The supportive and caring environment is demonstrated through a commitment to nurturing the most vulnerable members of the school community. Students facing daily challenges are looked after and offered a quiet space to think and share their worries. Pastoral care at St Richard Gwyn is excellent, with one student saying, 'there is not a single teacher that you cannot talk to'. Parents regard the school highly, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive parental questionnaires. They speak enthusiastically about the school's caring and supportive ethos. Staff at all levels encourage students to try their best in all aspects of their work. This underpins the belief that each student has gifts and

talents that are unique to them. Students articulate a strong sense of belonging to the family of the school and feel welcomed regardless of background, faith, or ability. The school's environment reflects its mission and identity through effective displays, and images, which are clearly visible throughout the school.

Leaders and governors have a shared understanding of their responsibilities in leading a community of faith and are committed to further developing Catholic life. The head teacher has a clear vision for Catholic education. Leaders ensure that every decision supports the needs of the most vulnerable, both materially and educationally. The governing body is informed about the Catholic life of the school via the head teacher's report, visits, and meetings with chaplaincy team representatives. Student reviews are conducted regularly, however, students' involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission is underdeveloped. The school prioritises professional development, ensuring that staff are well versed in the personal development curriculum, the relationships and sex education programme and the Catholic identity of the school, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to its mission. Consequently, staff speak eloquently about their responsibility in developing a community of faith. Leaders and governors support diocesan events and participate in all training provided. Communication with parents takes place via the school website, letters home, and the termly newsletter 'Gwyn News'. However, a very few parents do not feel they are kept well enough informed about school developments and would appreciate more frequent updates from the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

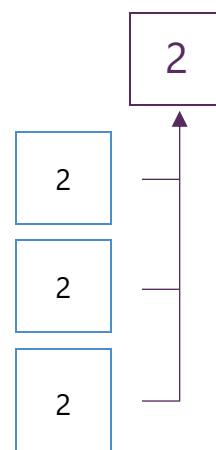
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 develop secure subject knowledge, understanding, and skills in RE. Lessons begin with recall activities building on prior learning. However, in a significant number of lessons, too much time is spent on this before the main focus of the learning begins. Oracy is a particular strength of the department. In the best lessons, students develop oral responses before moving on to written work, allowing students to clarify their thinking. This was observed, for example, in the Year 8 lesson on 'suffering'. Literacy skills development is evident in lessons and books with a key focus on subject-specific vocabulary. Consequently, students can explain their responses effectively and use appropriate vocabulary and expression fluently. Work is scaffolded to enable students to make progress and build effectively on prior learning. However, an over-reliance on this strategy for learners in Key Stage 4 inhibits the progress of more able students. Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with national outcomes. However, a significant gap remains in the attainment of boys compared with the results achieved by girls. Additionally, outcomes for students receiving free school meals also need developing. The department is aware of this, and strategies have been put in place to secure improvement.

Students are taught by a committed team of teachers who have fostered good relationships with all those they teach in RE. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. As a result, they ask searching questions to both test and develop student understanding in lessons. However, further development is needed to ensure that all teachers are delivering the same high-quality experience for students. Consistency in lessons is evident with the use of 'what, how and why' at the start of each lesson to both set the scene and introduce the learning through the 'learning journey'. Clear planning is in place for the delivery of the *Religious Education Directory* in Years 7 and 8, with a range of activities and opportunities for individual and collaborative work. Students in Key Stage 4 are provided with opportunities for extended writing throughout units of work, with specific reference to examination

technique. Work in books is typically well presented. However, boys' writing skills are less well developed when compared with the written work of girls. Feedback from teachers is inconsistent, and not all comments are detailed enough to enable students to fully understand what they need to do to improve their work effectively and make progress.

Leaders and governors have ensured that RE receives the required time allocation in all year groups, which complies with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The core RE programme in the sixth form is well received and allows students time to reflect and engage with world issues. They articulate that they enjoy 'sharing ideas' and the 'opportunity to debate'. Leaders have a clear vision for the department and acknowledge the role that religious education has as a core subject in a Catholic school. The subject is valued and has full parity with other core subjects. Line management is a strength, with fortnightly meetings focussing on teaching and learning, and student progress. Teaching and learning remains the focus for development; this accurately reflects the needs of the school so that they can continue to improve. Monitoring and evaluation is consistent and the link governor meets with the head of department regularly to monitor progress and discuss issues for development. They undertake 'learning walks' to gather first-hand evidence of the learning students experience in lessons. However, the impact of quality assurance processes remains unclear, and milestones are not always identified well enough to ensure that the department achieves the intended outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

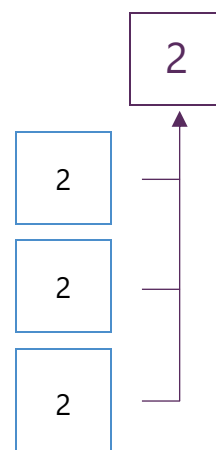
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Students engage in prayer and worship reverently, reflecting thoughtfully on the themes presented. Prayer is planned throughout the school day with students participating during form time in the morning and through year group assemblies. The school's emphasis on prayer affirms self-worth and human dignity. Prayerful silence was evident at the start of the year group assemblies observed. Students accurately describe the Church's liturgical year and how this connects with the prayer life of the school. They embrace different ways of praying, including traditional prayers and meditation. Liturgical ministries are undertaken by students; they participate as eucharistic ministers, altar servers, ministers of the Word, musicians, and choir members, for example. Voluntary Mass is provided whenever possible each week. The Lenten Mass celebrated during the inspection was a truly spiritual experience for all involved. Students engage well with the lay chaplain through the chaplaincy team. However, students' active participation in the planning, preparation and delivery of acts of prayer and liturgy is underdeveloped. Student participation and leadership of prayer is also less visible in form time prayer. The chapel is a calm, reflective space which supports the school's ethos well. However, students in Key Stage 4 would like to see this used more frequently, for example, for class Masses.

Praying together is central to the daily routine of the school and the use of 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' is consistent across the school. Themes are linked to the liturgical calendar, and seasonally appropriate activities, such as carol services and Lenten reflections, enhance students' experience of prayer. Formal Catholic prayers are used regularly, including the Angelus during Advent and Stations of the Cross during Lent. Examen is used very effectively every Friday to support students' experience of meditation and reflection. Reflection is used appropriately to allow students to make connections between current issues being experienced by communities around the world and the impact this has on their daily lives. Retreats to Alton Castle, Savio House, and Rome are available for students. Opportunities are also provided for students to take part in national events, such as 'Flame' and

diocesan events, such as the commissioning of eucharistic ministers. Students from other religions, and indeed no faith at all, are supported and feel welcomed and valued as members of the school community. The lay chaplain demonstrates commendable commitment to fostering a spiritually rich environment. She acknowledges that there is further work to be done to fully enhance the experience of prayer and worship for all students.

School leaders have put in place a policy which identifies the expectations for prayer and liturgy. Although leaders ensure that the school day is shaped by prayer and worship, students' experience of form time prayer is inconsistent. Professional development is well planned and appreciated by staff. Staff acknowledge that good practice is shared and they are confident in delivering prayer with students. Staff report that they can ask the lay chaplain, members of the RE department, and senior leaders for support and clarification at any time. The governing body is kept informed about the prayer life of the school through the head teacher's report, meetings with the chaplaincy team, and by attending important celebrations in the year. A number of parishes have well established links with the school, although parents indicated that parish links could be stronger. A very few parents felt that they were not adequately included in the prayer life of the school. Students contribute to, and participate in the evaluation of prayer and worship, however, this is underdeveloped. Governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating collective worship. Systems need to be formalised further to allow outcomes to be shared and to ensure the consistency of what is being delivered.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	401710
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	664/4600
Full postal address of the school	St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Albert Avenue, Flint, CH6 5JZ
School phone number	01352 736900
Head teacher	Catherine McCormack
Chair of governors	John Callan
School Website	strichardgwynflint.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	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	3

The inspection team

Garry Maher
Rebecca Moore

Lead
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

