

# St Peter's Catholic School

URN: 147430

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

01–03 May 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

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

1

## Compliance statement

- 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 fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- Attainment at GCSE religious studies across all groups is outstanding.
- The senior team model 'Christ to all' in the way they support all other staff so that all are equal, valued and celebrated.
- The staff body is fully committed to furthering the Catholic ethos of the school whilst keeping the students at the centre of everything they do, resulting in exceptional pastoral care and living out of 'Christ to all'.
- The chaplain is a highly valued member of the school community, and his provision enables the faith of staff and students to flourish.

## What the school needs to improve

- Fully embed the progression of skills in prayer and liturgy across the school so that active student engagement demonstrates progress over time in 'reading, leading, creating and innovating'.
- Within religious education lessons provide further opportunities for creative and independent learning supported by more diverse enrichment activities outside of lessons.

## 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 are incredibly proud of their Catholic school. They display a clear and consistent understanding of the distinctive ethos and are easily able to talk about 'St Peter's Rocks', being 'Christ to All' and how this relates to Catholic social teaching. Students express clearly how the ethos contributes to a great sense of community and that respect and kindness form the pillars of this, as witnessed throughout the inspection. Students value the work of the chaplain highly. Students know and live out Catholic social teaching with one student responding that 'it is the thing that brings us closer to Christ'. Students also celebrate and have good knowledge of their patron saint. The school feast day is a great opportunity for fund raising through the sponsored walk. Local, national and international charities are chosen by the students, and money is raised in many ways.

The school, and chaplain, has developed a whole school curriculum to map the marks of faith across all year groups. The result is that the Catholic life of the school is co-ordinated, planned and central to the journey of all students in their time at St Peter's. This links in well with Catholic social teaching and is an example of excellent practice. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their experience of working in this Catholic school. The transmission of the school's charism is passed down and reinforced from generation to generation, with several alumni presently employed as staff. Several staff have participated in their parish Right of Christian Initiation of Adults programme as a direct result of working in this school. The school reflects its Catholic identity through the beautiful chapel taking centre stage; the peace garden, which is tended by students; stations of the cross being displayed around school and used as a 'way of the cross'; prayer boards in each classroom, displaying themes, prayers and the school mission; each of the buildings is named after saints. Crucifixes, statues and other religious icons confirm to anyone in doubt that they are entering a Catholic school though they will see it most of all in the

relationships which exist among members of this Christ led community. Retreats, volunteering, Masses, St Peter's feast day and the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes are all key elements of students' faith journey.

Leaders are very ambitious and this is a school that wants to continue to move forward and improve, placing Catholic life and mission at its centre. The school's mission and ethos is visible in all that the community does, in prayer, lessons, at lunchtime, break times and during meetings. Catholic social teaching is woven into subject areas and throughout the whole school; students, and staff, can express this with ease. Governors work well with leaders holding them to account and providing the challenge and support needed for the continuous desire to improve and develop at a strategic level; Catholic ethos is a standing agenda item at meetings. The links with the local parish are strong, as witnessed by the provision of a weekly Mass and opportunities for students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Advent and Lent. All staff interviewed were extremely positive about working in the school. A staff member emphasised, 'I have never worked in a more supportive school'. Leaders have effective strategies for engaging with parents who as a result are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and staff. One parent commented, 'The school is genuinely committed to promote and live out its Catholic ethos and is supportive of children's spiritual development in faith', a sentiment which was repeated by many other parents through the survey.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

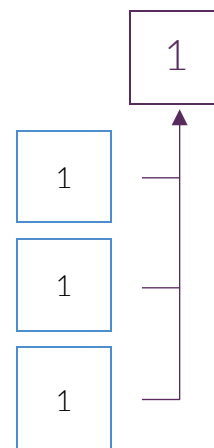
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 respond well to the curriculum, are enthusiastic and enjoy their religious education lessons, as evidenced in their commitment to working hard and in their behaviour. They can use subject specific vocabulary confidently, they can make links between topics and, at times, ask good questions of teachers. In Key Stage 4, students are thoroughly prepared for examination by making regular reference to exam criteria and techniques in lesson activities and they respond well to opportunities for practice questions, this leads to outstanding GCSE results. There are no gaps between different groups of learners and through the support given, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than all other groups. All students articulate clearly the role that religious education plays in helping them. Parental feedback is overwhelmingly positive around the enjoyment of learning in religious education.

Religious education is at the centre of the school's curriculum. The department is a strong team, and teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Staff are committed to the subject and to the teaching of a Catholic curriculum. Where learning is at its best, teachers use questioning skilfully to elicit articulate responses and to consolidate and develop knowledge and understanding. A Year 10 lesson on Judaism showed enjoyment and engagement from students due to the clear structure and challenge for all. Marking and feedback of assessments is consistent across the department and supports the outstanding outcomes at Key Stage 4. In the A level lesson observed, learning moved at pace and there were opportunities for students to be challenged in depth, to reflect and contribute. Core religious education at Key Stage 5 is enjoyed by all and deeper thinking is encouraged. Students feel that they 'have a voice and feel safe to raise topics for discussion'. Students enjoy the subject and value it as an integral part of the curriculum. This was supported by a parent who commented, 'My child very much enjoys RE lessons ... I am very grateful for this commitment and value it highly as a parent'.

Leaders and governors place the utmost importance on religious education; there is absolute parity between religious education and other core subjects. Careful consideration has been given to the intent and implementation of the religious education curriculum, leading to effectively sequenced, enhanced and built-upon learning. The leadership of the department robustly monitor teaching standards through comprehensive learning walks, book monitoring, assessment and standardisation. This information ensures accurate monitoring, with findings regularly reported to the leadership team and governors. The link governor is consequently well-informed, regularly meeting with the co-heads of religious education and contributing to the department's work. Therefore, the development plan for religious education is well-targeted and demonstrates ambition for the subject, teachers, and students. The *Religious Education Directory* has been successfully implemented at Year 7 and Year 8 and a coherent and robust plan is in place for full implementation in Year 9. The joint subject leaders for religious education model good practice through their wealth of experience, highly effective teaching and thoughtful leadership. The school chaplain is a key member of the team.

## 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

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

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

1

1

Students engage reverently with prayer and liturgy and understand its importance. The Student Action Leadership Team (SALT) contribute significantly to the planning and preparation of Masses, assemblies and liturgies and have input into the effectiveness of tutor prayers. This is to be commended. Students can participate and serve across all areas of collective worship, by singing, serving, planning and preparing. Students experience prayer in a variety of ways. For example, they pray different traditional prayers at certain times of the year, use silence to meditate, have scripture reflections and regularly use various visual stimuli to help focus their intentions. Further work is being undertaken to grow and develop the participation and engagement in prayer across all year groups as part of the seven-year programme of formation, developed by the school chaplain.

The well-crafted, and presented, tutor time prayer resources follow the liturgical calendar and are coupled with Catholic social teaching as well as 'St Peter's Rocks'. Routines and expectations for prayer are well established across the whole school. Scripture is the foundation upon which the times of prayer are built, and the Sunday Gospel is used as a key focus in assemblies and tutor time prayer. Catholic social teaching is highlighted, learned and used through the Key Stage 3-4 'Pilgrim Passports', allowing students to live out the ethos of the school and be active in their faith. The annual carol service and feast day are highlights of the school calendar. Inspectors witnessed a well-attended voluntary Mass and a Novena that was being offered up for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis. All staff are models of good practice because they are confident and feel empowered by the support they are given. Students know that the chapel and chaplaincy are available to them and appreciate the atmosphere of prayer provided.

The lay chaplain is highly visible to students, a model of excellent practice and an integral part of the school. The chapel is a calm space that is accessible to all members of the school

community and central to the life of the community. The seven-year mapped journey for growth in faith is an innovative and excellent programme that has been developed by the chaplain to foster faith. School leaders expressed that through his modelling and challenge he 'makes us better Catholic leaders'. Year 13 see themselves as role models and leaders for the younger years in all that they do. There is effective monitoring of prayer and liturgy through drop ins by heads of year, senior staff and the chaplain through an innovative use of QR codes. Governors participate in whole school events and model the prayer life of the school through inviting parents and local parishioners to participate in the weekly Masses and half termly prayer times in the school chapel. Staff commend the school for keeping prayer at the heart of all that they do, from their very first meeting in the school to it permeating all areas of school life. Staff value the support they receive in preparing and leading prayer by the school leaders and chaplain.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Peter's Catholic School
School unique reference number (URN)	147430
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9364619
Full postal address of the school	St Peter's Catholic School, Horseshoe Lane East, Merrow, Guildford, GU1 2TN
School phone number	01483 534654
Headteacher	Toby Miller
Co-Chairs of governors	Dr Y Gao Héliot and Mrs K Light
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-petersschool.co.uk">www.st-petersschool.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Xavier Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Andrew Bull	Lead
Bridget Durrant	Team
James Kilmartin	Team
Michael Ferry	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