

St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School

URN: 401803

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

04 March 2026 – 05 March 2026

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 RE

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

2

2

2

1

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School is a welcoming and inclusive community where relationships are a strength.
- The school's leadership has a clear vision for Catholic life and mission, and its members are exemplary role models for staff and students alike.
- The school's lay chaplain has a marked impact on the spiritual life of the school.
- Religious education (RE) is placed at the heart of the curriculum, with dedicated and committed teachers who are positive role models and who understand the impact of the subject on the wider school community.
- Collective worship is a significant strength with a wide variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities provided across the breadth of the Catholic tradition.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide more opportunities for student leadership in the evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Ensure rigorous quality assurance, monitoring, and analysis of progress and teaching and learning in the religious studies department, to secure attainment for students at all levels, particularly free school meal students at Key Stage 4.
- Increase the frequency of opportunities for all students to plan and lead collective 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

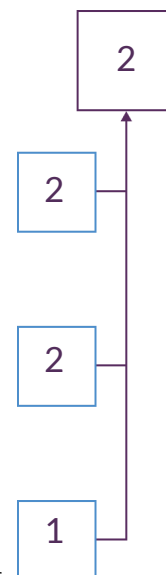
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 speak fondly of the school and are proud to be part of the school community where they feel supported and safe. They are able to articulate its distinctive nature, highlighting the faith as a core part of all the school does. The school's mission statement 'Success, Resilience, Gospel Values' is understood by students, and they can make the link between the statement and their actions, however, the evaluation of this is underdeveloped. Student behaviour across the school is good, with student and staff relationships being a particular strength underpinning that. The student council is very active and provides students with a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The sub-committees of 'development', 'ethos', and 'active in learning' enrich the students' education and fully engage them with the wider community, focusing on key issues including poverty and homelessness. The ethos committee proudly organises the school's cultural appreciation day, highlighting that it reflects the inclusive nature of the school and that 'all communities are celebrated.' The Chaplaincy group is well established and effective, with over 60 students who are confident in planning and leading acts of collective worship across the schools. The Catholic Pupil Profile is prominently displayed across the school, is embedded in daily collective worship, and forms part of the 'Go Forth' element of assemblies.

The staff survey responses overwhelmingly recognise that Christ is at the centre of the school and highlights that the mission statement is a lived-out reality. Staff readily recognise the role that they play in promoting and supporting that mission, highlighting the head teacher, subject leader for religious studies, and the chaplain for the role they play in ensuring the faith remains at the core of all. The relationships between staff are strong and supportive. The

school is a welcoming and friendly community, and students speak openly about the strong pastoral support they receive, stating that 'everyone has someone they can speak to'. Parents think highly of the school, with nearly all stating that they understand the mission of the school and that they are supportive of it. Individual responses to the parent questionnaire are supportive of the school, including comments describing it as a 'wonderfully inclusive community'.

The Catholic life and mission of the school is considered a core responsibility by leaders and governors who view themselves as the 'guardians of the faith'. Governors and leaders have a clear and strategic vision for school growth whilst protecting and promoting the Catholic faith and ethos. The head teacher emphasises his duty to ensure all students have a holistic education rooted in the faith. The chair of governors clarifies his role as bridging the gap between the strategic and the operational, and that they are to be 'models of the faith' both in school and in the community. Governors are encouraged to serve in support of the diocese, such as being members of subcommittees. Leaders are aware of their duty to the most vulnerable in society and this is evident in both the way Catholic social teaching is delivered across the curriculum, and the commitment to charities. The impact of the lay chaplain is significant. Highly regarded by staff, students, and governors, she provides an exemplary model of servant leadership and plays a central role in supporting the whole school community in living out its Catholic mission. The ethos committee meets termly with standing agenda items of Catholic life and mission, religious studies, and collective worship, with governors providing clear challenge and support.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

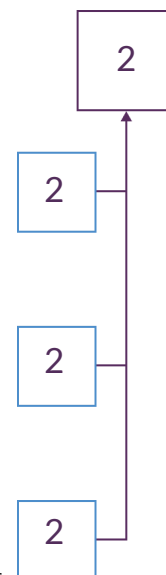
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Standards and outcomes in religious education (RE) have improved significantly since the previous inspection, with outcomes in religious studies (RS) rising by over 10% and are comparable to other core subjects. A gap in the attainment of students eligible for free school meals remains, however strategies have already been implemented to address this. The most able students make significant progress, with a third achieving the highest grades at GCSE. Relationships between staff and students are positive and most students feel confident in engaging in lessons and responding to staff. Teaching and learning within RE is good, with most students able to articulate their next steps in learning. The use of discussion and talk strategies allows students to develop their oral responses, clarifying their knowledge and understanding before committing to writing. Literacy is well planned for, and staff utilise a range of strategies that help develop student skills, with a particular emphasis on subject terminology. Marking and feedback adheres to the policy, and the introduction of 'amser meddwl' is starting to have an impact, whilst still in its infancy.

Teachers within the department are passionate about the subject and can confidently express the relationship between the subject and its impact on the faith of the school. In the best examples, the curriculum will feed directly into an act of worship, such as the studying of the Passion leading into the Stations of the Cross. Teachers have high expectations of all students and consistent use of praise helps to communicate that effectively. Questioning is a particular strength of the department and in the best lessons was used effectively to drive understanding and progress. A variety of teaching strategies and resources provide numerous

opportunities for students to present their work, with students commenting that they like the creative assessments and the ability to have control over how they present. Lessons start with 'do its' tasks that focus on building prior knowledge and recall, however, in a few lessons the pace meant that opportunities were missed to move the learning on. The curriculum is well planned and resourced utilising the Source to Summit scheme, ensuring fidelity to the Religious Education Directory.

Leadership within the RE department is a strength. The subject leader has a clear vision and, through robust quality assurance and line management processes, has a clear understanding of where the strengths and the areas of development lie. Line management meetings often start with learning walks, ensuring that teaching, learning, and standards are the focus. The 'focus fortnights' have enhanced the accountability of all departments across the school, and the subject leader for religious studies has embraced the opportunity to forensically analyse the department's progress and areas for development. The department fully engages with a wide range of professional learning, both internally through monitoring exercises and externally, including diocesan training and the association of teachers of Catholic education (ATCRE). The school is fully compliant with 10% curriculum time for religious education in all year groups; it is deemed as a core subject and thus has parity with other core subjects. The subject leader presents termly to the ethos subcommittee, the content of which is then shared at full governing body meetings.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

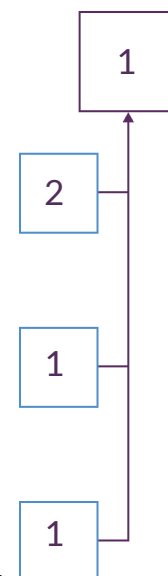
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Most students engage reverently in a wide range of ways of praying, supported by established routines, scripture-centred celebrations, and thoughtfully prepared prayer spaces. Staff model worship effectively, and leaders prioritise key liturgical celebrations, including holy days of obligation and sacramental opportunities. There is clear progression in student participation, with confident leadership evident when responsibility is given. Liturgical ministries are carried out with confidence, demonstrating that students are well supported in fulfilling their roles and making a meaningful contribution to worship. Collective worship is further enriched through strong curriculum links, particularly with music. The choir enhances the quality of liturgical celebrations, with rehearsals preparing students to lead and support worship confidently. Collaboration in planning and rehearsing for joint Lenten Masses with the local parish and primary schools further strengthens students' sense of belonging to the wider Church community and enriches their liturgical experience. Students are encouraged to share their gifts through singing solos, reading, and using ICT and creative skills within liturgical celebrations. These talents are shared with the wider community, by means such as a student-created guide to the Mass for parents and non-Catholic pupils, published on the school website. Such initiatives support understanding and encourage the respectful and inclusive participation of non-Catholic students in collective worship.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, with Mass at its heart. One student shared, 'receiving the Eucharist during the week helps me get through'. The breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition are clearly evident in the wide range of prayer experiences offered through form time, assemblies, the curriculum, and shared liturgies. Chaplaincy team

students work collaboratively across key stages and with the lay chaplain to plan, lead, and evaluate prayer and liturgy, helping them develop leadership skills and deepen their faith. During Lent, Key Stage 3 and 4 students are paired to lead the Stations of the Cross. Students recognise the significant impact that chaplaincy has on their personal and spiritual development. One student shared that it has “had a huge impact on my life.” Another commented, “If you told me in Year 7 that I would be leading prayer in Year 10, I wouldn’t have believed you.

Staff, including senior leaders, are inspiring role models of exemplary practice for both colleagues and students through their active engagement in prayer and liturgy. Staff morning prayer is shared by all staff, who plan and prepare it collaboratively, fostering a strong sense of belonging and community. Staff are also confident in leading year group assemblies, often incorporating cross-curricular themes into their delivery and promoting the Welsh language through the inclusion of Welsh hymns. Families are invited to seasonal celebrations in Advent and Lent, and the school works hard to maintain a flourishing partnership with local parishes and primary schools. Weekly chaplaincy meetings provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on and evaluate prayer services and chaplaincy events. Pupils discuss what went well and identify areas for improvement, helping to ensure that future liturgies and events remain meaningful and engaging for the whole school community. This process of evaluation is further embedded within the school’s self-review cycle through the inclusion of student voice and comprehensive quality assurance documentation. Leaders, including governors, ensure that provision for prayer and liturgy is prioritised, and staff benefit from the support of the lay chaplain and one another, particularly newly qualified teachers, in developing consistently high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	401803
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6734612
Full postal address of the school	Argae Lane, Barry, CF63 1BL
School phone number	01446 729250
Chair of Governors	
School Website	www.strichardgwyn.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	0 - 0
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Rebecca Moore

Lead

Kathleen Cummins

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