



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Philip Howard High School**

Elm Grove South, Barnham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 0EN

Telephone: 01243 552055

e-mail address: office@st-philphoward.w-sussex.sch.uk

DfES Number: 126102

Headteacher: Mr David Todd

Chair of Governors: Mrs Elizabeth Bedford

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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: 18-19 October 2011

Date of previous inspection: 22-23 January 2007

Lead Inspector: Mr Michael Sheridan

Associate Inspector: Mr Joe Carvill

## **Description of School**

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Cathedral deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by West Sussex LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are the Cathedral, Our Lady of Sorrows, St Richard's, Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Catherine's. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 65.7%, which represents an increase since the last inspection. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 8.5% in Key Stage 3, 8.5% in Key Stage 4 and 3.5% in the Sixth Form.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 19 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 899 of which there are 147 in the sixth form. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 30.6% (275) of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below average. The vast majority of pupils are white British. The percentage of Catholics on the teaching staff is 36%.

The school achieved the full International Schools Award in 2009, Healthy Schools status in 2010 and the West Sussex Dyslexia Friendly Award in 2011.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

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

St Philip Howard is a good school with many outstanding features and an extremely strong Catholic ethos. Underpinned by gospel values, relationships are extremely good throughout the school. The headteacher gives strong leadership and shares his vision of the Catholic life of the school with both staff and governors to great effect. The governors are very supportive of and committed to the school. They assume a very active role in monitoring the Catholic life of the school and achievement and standards in Religious Education. Chaplaincy in the school is outstanding and the lay chaplain is a strength of the school. There are very strong links with local clergy, who act as chaplains to year groups, who visit the school regularly and celebrate Masses and sacramental liturgies. The quality of assemblies and the form tutor prayer time is very good and provides pupils with many opportunities for reflection. The school very successfully promotes community cohesion internally, in the locality and abroad. Standards in Religious Education are good at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Religious Education provision in the school promotes good pupil awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and of the interdependent nature of communities worldwide. Recent innovations in the curriculum are driving up standards and Religious Education makes a significant contribution to this aim.

**Grade 2**

## **Improvement since the last inspection**

- The school has successfully addressed all the issues raised in the last inspection. Senior leaders, heads of year and governors regularly monitor the delivery in the daily act of worship and this is fed back to the staff. As a result, inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that its quality and consistency is very good.
- Following the review of the Key Stage 3 Religious Education curriculum the revised scheme of work is firmly established. It now includes many interactive styles of teaching at all key stages. Standards of achievement in the department have improved across the board since the last inspection.

**Grade 1**

## **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The school's self-evaluation of the Catholic life and Religious Education provision in the school is comprehensive and accurately highlights what is required to raise standards even further. The school has developed a high quality school improvement plan, informed by canvassing views from all stakeholders and by departmental reviews. With the spiritual life of the school featuring prominently in its evaluation and planning processes, the inspectors believe that the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

**Grade 1**

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

- Further embed assessment for learning in Religious Education ensuring that diagnostic marking is consistently applied across the department
- Expand the successful days of reflection and residential retreats so that pupils in every year group have the opportunity to attend, extending this opportunity to all members of staff
- Explore ways in which to increase curriculum time allocated to the subject at each key stage in the school's forthcoming curriculum review
- Re-establish the Religious Education link governor role to further facilitate the governors' monitoring and evaluation remit

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

### **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher and governors give outstanding leadership to the Catholic life of the school and have firmly established its Catholic character. They place a high priority on spirituality throughout the school, as demonstrated by the importance placed on this area in the school improvement plan and the governing body's Spiritual Life, Staff and Student Committee. The headteacher has a very clear vision for Catholic education, leads by example and has a strong presence. He provides expert and well-articulated leadership. Consequently, leaders at all levels feel empowered to promote the Catholic ethos and build upon the strong traditions of the school. His vision is very well supported by the governing body and senior leadership team, who all make significant contributions to the Catholic life of the school. The senior leadership team and governors attend and monitor the delivery of corporate acts of worship, and give

strategic direction on ways in which to produce continued improvement. The mission statement is lived out in nurturing 'individual talent and respect for others...', whilst individuals within the school community 'learn grow and achieve...' through their 'faith in Jesus'. For example, pupils are well behaved, courteous towards their peers and greatly appreciate the way in which staff 'go the extra mile' to support them. One sixth form student said, 'With UCAS preparation, it's almost as if teachers can't give you enough help.... They go out of their way by giving up their break and lunch times.' The pastoral care in the school is excellent and promotes very good personal development and behaviour. Links with the local and neighbouring parishes are very good. The lay chaplain works with a number of priests from the parishes in planning celebrations of the Eucharist and liturgies to mark prominent seasons of the liturgical calendar. All year groups have a priest chaplain, although one priest may care for the spiritual needs of more than one age group, as is the case, for example, in the sixth form. The chaplain is a member of the pastoral care team and regularly attends and contributes to team meetings. There is a high quality induction programme for staff new to the school or to Catholic education to which she makes a strong contribution. During the inspection, recently appointed staff expressed how well supported they felt.

**Grade 1**

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

Planning and provision for personal and collective worship is outstanding. There is a well organised programme for prayer and collective worship which includes Masses, assemblies and a range of other opportunities during the liturgical year. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupil participation in school liturgies and assemblies. For example, in a Year 9 Mass during a 'Deep Learning Day' pupils were actively involved as readers, servers and Eucharistic Ministers, who are trained in the school. The school band, which includes both pupils and staff, facilitated the music ministry. A large group of pupils performed inspiring liturgical dances both from the European and African continents. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available to pupils during Advent and Lent. The new chapel, though relatively small, is open for personal prayer and is used for frequent class Masses. Staff briefings, with prayer as a vital component, are also held in the chapel. A whole school celebration of the Eucharist takes place in the open air in the Summer term. This summer the Bishop came to open and bless the new sports hall and celebrated Mass outside. There is a Year 7 induction Mass each autumn which is supported by the attendance of parents and carers.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. There is active pupil participation in year group assemblies, which are often prepared and presented by a tutor group in the same year. During the inspection, two assemblies for Year 9 and Year 10 were observed. In each, the lead group engaged in role-play, they read and led prayer. Pupils watching were respectful, attentive and reflective and readily joined in communal prayer. The Year 9 assembly marked the feast of the school's patron saint with the story of his life and the day's Gospel reading. Each pupil received a card commemorating the day, containing a stained glass image of St Philip Howard and a reading from the book of Wisdom. They were encouraged by their head of year to take time to reflect on the reading during the day. The tutor group presenting the assembly produced a compelling role-play on 'being fortunate to go to school', contrasting the attitudes of young people in Western culture with those in the sub-Saharan region. This was followed by pupils providing statistics on the lot of the children from sub-Saharan Africa, ending with a prayer of support for their African peers. Year 9 pupils informed the inspector that they had gained a great deal from the assembly and that it had given them much food for thought. They added that they enjoyed attending assemblies planned and presented by their peers. There are many displays and artefacts of a high quality around the school, which celebrate the school's Catholic identity. These include a corridor display of work dedicated to themes from 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' Religious Education programme and an attractive collection of religious

objects as you enter the school, including a large, impressive artistic crucifix. Each classroom has a crucifix placed in a prominent place.

Chaplaincy in the school is outstanding. The lay chaplain successfully co-ordinates an effective team of priests from the local and neighbouring parishes, together with staff and pupils to provide high quality liturgies and offer excellent spiritual support for all year groups and staff. Each week she produces a daily prayer booklet for each tutor group, which includes a Gospel reading, a thought for the day and a prayer. During the inspection, Year 11 pupils led an act of worship in an outstanding form period session, during which the tutor facilitated discussion on the group developing and designing a stained glass window using the flyer for the All Saints feast day Mass as a template. One teacher said, 'I feel better able to facilitate prayer during tutor time owing to the support the chaplain gives us.' The chaplain surveyed the opinion of a significant sample of pupils in the school of statutory school age, covering areas such as daily prayer in tutor groups, the chapel as a space for reflection and prayer and drivers for and barriers to attending retreats. The results have given the school a clear mandate to implement plans for improving attendance in the chapel, which is open every day to the school community, and to extend opportunities for residential and day retreats to each year group, with pointers to criteria which will lead to a successful uptake. Currently, all Year 7 and Year 8 pupils participate in a day of recollection at St Peter's in East Wittering and opportunities for residential retreats at the Kintbury Centre are extended to Years 10, 12 and 13. One Sixth form student said, 'I appreciated the opportunity to meet students from other schools and to be able to share our views ... on retreat.' The Spiritual Life Group, comprising the lay chaplain, one other staff member and twelve pupils from across the age range, is a strength of the school. The group meets monthly to discuss items such as tutor group prayers, the format of the reconciliation service and the liturgical life of the school. In conjunction with the school council, members of the group have had an influence on the format of the daily act of worship and reconciliation service. There is a group which sings at Masses and in neighbouring parishes. Hence, this very important committee makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the school.

**Grade 1**

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

Community cohesion is an outstanding feature of the school. Inclusion of all is central to the ethos of the school and is strongly reinforced by the Religious Education curriculum. Relationships among all members of the school are extremely good and the school has a warm, purposeful atmosphere. A sixth form student said, 'I've never felt that being Church of England has put me at a disadvantage here. I've always felt included and part of the school family.' The views of all stakeholders are regularly sought and their opinions and suggestions acted upon as appropriate. All year groups appoint members to serve on the school council. The school council gives pupils an active voice within the school to assist senior leaders with their planning. Recent responses to pupils' recommendations have led to the reconciliation service being restructured to enable pupils to visit a priest of their choice. Those pupils who are not Catholic were given opportunities to take part by sharing issues most on their mind with the clergy. This has led to the penitential service being renamed the Service of Healing and Forgiveness. As a result, pupils feel that their voice is heard. Older pupils take responsibility for those who are younger. For example, sixth form students are trained to be peer mediators by Peaceworks, a Christian mediation group and learn how to defuse conflict. They are then assigned to a tutor group in the lower school to act as peer mentors. During the inspection, pupils interviewed spoke of how highly they rated the school and how they felt safe as members of the school community. They added that the number of incidents of bullying at the school is very low. They felt that the few that did arise were dealt with very effectively through the Philip Howard Against Bullying Behaviour (PHABB) support group, comprising pupils from across the age

range, the chaplain and other members of staff. The partnership with parents and carers is good and the Kirkland Rowell survey shows that they have a high regard for the school. The chair of governors and headteacher attend termly meetings with parents at the three principal parishes the school serves to share news and discuss topical issues which impact on school life. For example, a current concern is the removal by the local authority of home to school transport provision for voluntary aided schools. The school publishes a high quality newsletter every half term which is also posted on the website. As a result of these measures, communication between the school, home and parish is greatly enhanced.

The school has strong links with local Catholic primary schools and with local community primary and secondary schools. For example, headteachers from the Catholic sector meet termly to plan and implement ways in which effective partnership between the schools can take place. Some instances of this collaboration are a deanery schools' Advent service at the Cathedral in which each school takes part, joint staff training and a 'critical thinking' day. A very attractive flyer, highlighting the ways in which the four schools work in partnership, was designed by a pupil in Year 10. The school community is actively involved in supporting charities. Fundraising for Chestnut Tree House, a local charity which cares for children who are life limited or terminally ill, sending Christmas gift boxes to children in Romania and supporting CAFOD are some examples of the school's charitable giving. As a result, pupils feel they make a very positive contribution to communities both at home and abroad.

**Grade 1**

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## **Religious Education**

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The school has successfully addressed underperformance at Key stage 3 by focusing attention on strategies which provide more challenge and stretch pupils. The majority of pupils make good progress across all key stages, with a significant upward trend at GCSE in the last four years. The proportion of those attaining grades A\* to C are above the national average. The school is to be commended for entering 97% of the Year 11 cohort. Results at A level are good with a 100% pass rate in the AS and A2 examinations. Since group sizes are relatively small, the school is focusing on increasing the numbers of students studying the subject post-16 by improving GCSE results. Results in General Religious Education and Catechetics are also good, with a pass rate of 100% in both. During the inspection, pupils reported that the subject helped them to lead better lives and to care for the needs of others. A large proportion of pupils viewed Religious Education as enjoyable, although a few found the subject less so.

**Grade 2**

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

The inspectors agree with the school's judgements that teaching and learning is overall good, sometimes outstanding and, on fewer occasions, satisfactory. In most cases, lesson objectives are shared with and understood by the pupils. Pupils' prior knowledge and understanding are assessed before they progress to new material. There is a good variety of interactive activities and pupils generally remain on task. The teachers' expert subject knowledge and commitment to teaching Catholic belief and religious literacy lends confidence to their teaching styles. Where lessons are good or better, they move lessons along at a good pace, setting realistic timescales

and motivating lively learning. This should be applied consistently across the department. They make good use of information collected from previous lessons to ensure each pupil is set work according to ability and interest. In an outstanding Year 10 lesson on global poverty, all pupils made outstanding progress because they were set suitably challenging work and peer assessment activities ensured that pupils were empowered to develop cognitive templates on how to improve their work. In the majority of lessons observed, relationships with staff and between pupils were extremely good. Secure behaviour management strategies were consistently applied to ensure that an effective environment for learning was achieved. Where this was not the case, disruptive behaviour by a few pupils led to a lack of pace and progress. Books are marked regularly and, in most, formative comments assist pupils' progress, with indications of the next steps to take in order to improve being a key factor. As this practice is applied more consistently, pupils will progress more rapidly.

The school has introduced personalised learning and higher order thinking, cross-curricular opportunities in the form of the Competence Curriculum for Year 7 and, latterly, Deep Learning Days for subsequent year groups. For example, working in small groups Year 7 pupils were given the task of creating a country and were asked to focus on fair trade issues. Each group was directed to the parable of the talents and asked to 'grow' £15 it had been given by producing items to sell. All five classes increased the £450 investment to £1383 and donated the proceeds to CAFOD's 'World Gifts' charity. Pupils enjoy the way in which they can use information technology to assist in research and modelling during these sessions. By integrating pupils' learning through these impressive innovations, Religious Education is very effectively linked to subjects across the curriculum, including personal, social, health, citizenship education (PSHCE) and to social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). When questioned about these curriculum initiatives, pupils responded by saying that they enjoy learning in this way because the activities are stimulating, relevant and challenging. By these means, activities are matched to pupils' abilities and interdependent learning flourishes. The school is tracking pupil progress since the introduction of these creative innovations and early findings indicate that skills pupils acquire from these days are transferring to many areas of the curriculum.

**Grade 2**

## **Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is excellent. The curriculum follows Diocesan guidelines, meets the needs of the pupils and satisfies the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. At Key Stage 3 the department bases the curriculum on 'The Way the Truth and the Life' Religious Education programme, supported with material from the National Project, ICONS. At Key Stage 4 the programme followed is the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) GCSE course, where pupils study Ethics and either Christianity or, for the more able, the Gospel of Luke. In the sixth form, students follow the General Religious Education programme validated by the National Open College Network (NOCN). The school is one of only a few institutions to offer this qualification at level 3. In addition to the AQA A level courses in Year 12 and Year 13 on the Philosophy of Religion and Luke's Gospel, the school offers a course in Catechetics, which is oversubscribed in Year 12. Students on the course, who spend time visiting and working in local placement primary schools or parishes, say that the course helps them to grow in faith. The school, however, does not quite meet the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan curriculum time requirements of 10% at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and of 5% for sixth form general Religious Education. Respectively standing at 8.5% and 3.5% for compulsory school age and post-16 provision, the school should explore ways in which to increase curriculum time allocated to the subject at each key stage in its forthcoming curriculum review. The curriculum makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and they are taught to respect other faiths and cultures. Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is taught throughout the school and is set in the context of the

Church's teaching and values. The policy has been ratified by governors and endorsed by the parents. The school delivers six days of outstanding personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) provision for every pupil through the Competence Curriculum in Year 7 and through Deep Learning Days for the remainder. Since the school introduced an innovative and effective spirituality strand which threads through the others, Religious Education and the Catholic ethos are the bedrock upon which the PLTS taxonomy is built. Sixth form students recounted how they greatly valued visits from guest speakers in General Religious Education and how they found such occasions both interesting and thought provoking. For example, the local Imam visited the sixth form during Inter-faith week and explored the role of women in Islam with the students, using a quiz format to 'explode' some myths and interactive discussions to develop students' knowledge and understanding.

A system for tracking and recording pupils' attainment and also for setting targets is in place and parents are kept informed about their child's progress. At Key Stage 3 pupils know the level at which they are working and those preparing for public examinations know their target grade. A recent survey indicates that religious education is enjoyed by pupils. Likewise, a parents' survey is very supportive of the work that the department undertakes. Moreover, parents feel that religious education makes a positive impact on their children. Overall, Religious Education makes a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils in the school and reflects its distinctive nature as a Catholic learning community.

**Grade 1**

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

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. The headteacher line manages the head of department. Together with the support of the senior leadership team, they ensure that Religious Education has a high profile throughout the school. The school has a well-developed system of monitoring which is having an impact on teaching and learning in the subject. Governors are well informed about Religious Education and are aware of its strengths and areas for development. For example, some governors carry out lesson observations and report their findings to the curriculum sub-committee. The SRE link governor monitors the implementation of the policy throughout the school and assists in its review with the governing body. However, the position of Religious Education link governor is currently vacant and governors should plan to re-introduce this important role to further enhance the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. The improvement plan for Religious Education is fit for purpose. It is very detailed and is a working, interactive document which can be easily accessed and updated by staff and governors via the school's virtual learning environment. It is constantly under review and has a direct effect on raising standards. All four members of the department are well qualified and are committed to teaching Religious Education and supporting the Catholic ethos of the school. Schemes of work are robust and used effectively to heighten pupils learning experiences. They include very good use of information and communication technology. To improve learning even further the department should examine how to extend the use of pupil interaction with the electronic whiteboards during lessons. Regular, well-minuted staff meetings are held to ensure that staff are well equipped to deliver the Religious Education programmes at each key stage. Good contact with local Catholic primary schools in the Deanery allows the head of department and co-ordinators to work together and share good practice. Accommodation and resources are good. There are three dedicated classrooms, all of which have an interactive white board and storage for textbooks. They also have notice boards with good displays of current pupil work. Every pupil has access to a text book and a Bible. Religious Education is viewed by the school's leadership as a core subject and the department is well resourced as a consequence.

**Grade 2**