

# Oaklands Catholic Secondary School and Sixth Form College

URN: 137345

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

13–14 November 2024

## 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 of the Bishops' Conference,
- The school has addressed all areas identified for improvement in the previous report.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.

## What the school does well

- This school offers students, staff and parents a deeply caring and fully authentic Catholic education, where students see their school experience akin to that of a family.
- Religious education is a major strength in the school and students relish opportunities for high-level discourse.

- Prayer and liturgy is co-constructed and driven by students, with a deep recognition for the relationship between faith and justice.
- This school is superbly led; servant leadership is modelled by the headteacher and his energetic team, supported by governors and directors who are fully invested in the Catholic identity of this school.
- Students are proud of their school and evangelical in its promotion as the best school in the area. From the outset they are encouraged to have a voice in an environment where dignity is to the fore.

### What the school needs to improve

- Students' evaluation of prayer and liturgy needs to become the norm, to ensure consistency of delivery.
- Ensure greater consistency in high level questioning in religious education to increase depth.

## 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**

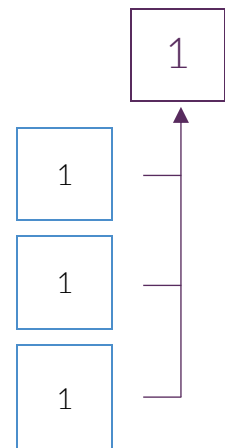
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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 flourish in this safe, happy and authentic Catholic school and are proud of, and knowledgeable about, what makes it distinctive. Their contribution to service, volunteering and going the extra mile is exemplary. 'I love this school - it is like a family. The teachers are nice to you, and you can ask for help at any time,' said one student. For a parent, 'My child is not just a number, he has grown in confidence. Another said, 'The opportunities for children to grow are amazing.' Students are aware of their history, and the impact of the founding Sisters of Christ. Pastoral care, together with special educational needs and disability support is both a matter of pride to the school and is excellent. Students can accurately articulate the nature and importance of Catholic social teaching, which they really value. 'I am not a Catholic but I really believe in things like care, dignity and solidarity', said one. Chaplaincy provision is greatly appreciated by students, who feel welcomed by well-trained and deeply empathic staff, as well as an impressive group of trained students, 'S4OS', who look out for other children and ensure no one is left behind. The school's investment in a chaplaincy team is ensuring wider access to students in danger of being left behind, as well as offering different voices to students with different needs. This culture of looking out for one another pervades the school.

The repeated message that Christ is at the heart of the school permeates responses from staff and students alike. One member of support staff said, 'The headteacher is so approachable, and he really wants to help.' For a member of the kitchen staff, 'all the ladies love the fact that we are invited to Christmas liturgy; it means so much and is the start of our Christmas.' The staff survey responses reflect an overwhelming support for the school's approach and the leadership that underpins it. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) meets all statutory requirements and is firmly rooted in Church teaching. The school witnesses to its proud Catholic

identity through the many artefacts including powerfully moving memorials to former colleagues and students. The chapel, too, is well used, and the overall cleanliness of the site reflects the respect shown to all members of the school community,

Leaders, including governors, are energised, joyful and determined in their duty as guardians of the Catholic life of the school. The outstanding headteacher, also chief executive of the Edith Stein multi-academy trust, demonstrates a real love for his school, which he leads within a framework of servant leadership, reinforcing the school's belief in Christ at the centre. The school's 'Romero Award', allowing other schools to evaluate and recognise their commitment to Catholic social teaching, has now reached 22 dioceses and represents a major contribution to the Church, of which leaders are rightly proud. Local clergy speak warmly not only about visiting the school on a regular basis but also about how the school is trying to work with their parish for the common good. 'It is just an absolute pleasure to come in, whether to say Mass, sit at the back of a class or take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.' said one member of the clergy. Parents and carers feel welcome and are grateful for the quality of communication they receive from the school. Individual departments can confidently articulate a Catholic worldview and celebrate how their subject contributes to the common good. 'Catholic social teaching is so inclusive', said one head of department, 'I really feel part of a shared mission and not on the periphery.' Staff are confident that senior leaders value and protect their dignity and are proud to work at this school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

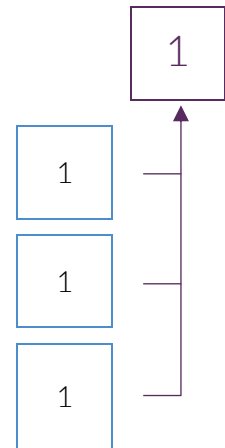
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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



Religious education in this school is outstanding. Students report that they enjoy this subject; they particularly appreciate the discussions and make consistently good progress. They can articulate a range of concepts with appropriate terminology and understanding. Students express a high degree of confidence in their teachers. One girl said, 'I really like the subject and discussing things even though some of the words are difficult to spell.' Another said, 'I don't particularly like religious education, but actually I am doing well in it.' Students can effectively use terms such as 'magisterium', 'incarnation' and 'grace', and can apply this knowledge in extended answers. One Year 13 boy could draw a clear line of understanding between the psychology of religion and his own lived experience. One Year 7 girl linked the religious concept of tradition to her own family traditions. Students involved in service and volunteering recognise how this derives from faith, including scripture and the teachings of the Church, and could express this competently. Their relationship with staff is courteous and unstrained, reflecting this as the norm, and allowing for a high challenge, low stress environment for learning. Students are engaged and reflective in lessons and can articulate links between previous and new learning. Their attainment in this subject is above national average and has continued to improve. It compares favourably with other core subjects and religious education outcomes are among the best in the school.

The subject knowledge of the religious education team is excellent. Their subject-specific language is sophisticated, and students therefore feel confident in using this vocabulary themselves. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher skilfully unpacked the word 'Apostle' by making connections with the idea of 'post' and 'sending'. In a Year 9 lesson, etymology was effectively taught, reflecting the high expectations of the teacher. In a small number of lessons, further opportunities existed for higher level questioning. This needs to be applied more

consistently across the school. An excellent lower school lesson allowed students to reflect on moral absolutes, with the teacher expertly drawing the students to tackle increasingly challenging questions. There is real ambition in the department for depth and complexity, ideally suited to make the very best of the new *Religious Education Directory*. The director of sixth form was enthusiastic about the impact of core religious education on the development of older teenagers, who relish this aspect. Assessment is appropriate and linked to age-related expectations as well as those of the *Religious Education Directory*. Celebration of effort through the employment of the school reward system leads to a high degree of enthusiasm and participation.

Religious education has a high status in the school, supported by the headteacher and his team. The head of religious education has a clear vision and enjoys the confidence of her team, demonstrating clear and effective leadership. Yet further progress can be secured through ensuring more opportunities for independence and challenge in some religious education lessons, thereby increasing their curiosity. The school is implementing the *Religious Education Directory* in Years 7 and 8 and is prepared for phasing it in fully for 2025. Non-specialist staff are supported to enhance their subject knowledge and department leaders regularly attend professional development training, which strengthens the delivery and leadership of this subject. One learning support assistant said 'The religious education department is brilliant. I know what I need to do to support the students, and I can ask for help at any time.' The subject leader ensures that there is a shared, consistent approach to teaching. One member of the team said that the department is collaborative, reflecting the subject leader's vision for continuous improvement. The dynamic governing body take an active role in visiting the school. Leaders monitor and track progress in all key stages effectively, leading to strong outcomes in public examinations. Department planning ensures the appropriate assessment of every child and students are aware of their progress and how to improve.

## 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

Prayer and liturgy are of a very high standard and are, therefore, highly valued by the school community. Observed prayer and liturgy showed students and staff skilfully linking prayer with world events, their own life, the school and with Catholic social teaching. Students recognise, and respond to, the various elements of prayer and liturgy including silence, participation, ministry and reflection, with their own accounts confirming this is typical in this school. They are confident and highly skilled in delivering prayer and liturgy which they can plan independently of staff. The outstanding school chaplains ensure a range of prayer and liturgy encounters, complementing the Church's liturgical year, and providing support for staff less familiar with Catholic prayer and liturgy. Prayer is fully normalised in this school and students see it as part of the character of the community. The excellent contributions made by the deeply committed local clergy are greatly appreciated by students, who value their presence greatly. 'I am always really impressed with how the students engage with the Eucharist', said one local priest. Students are aware of, and can articulate traditional Catholic prayers, as well as school-specific prayers, and value these as part of their school identity. 'It is part of what makes us different', said one student.

Outstanding prayer and liturgy are central to this school. Assemblies and tutor periods are characterised by well-thought out periods of prayer and reflection, including the use of silence and communal singing, with a major part for student leadership. In an excellent Year Assembly, the school student president led the prayer and liturgy, which included carefully chosen readings and personal reflections. The site, its artefacts and memorials for former members of the community enrich an atmosphere where prayer is the norm, the joys and the tears of life are appropriately marked, and young people, therefore, develop affectively, emotionally and spiritually. The school proudly celebrates the contribution of the Sisters of Christ as founders and offers current students and staff a sense of being the latest participants in an evolving story.

Prayer focal points and the displaying of scriptural passages ensures students and staff recognise that all life can be consecrated to God, and to service, not least the multi-lingual prayers in the refectory inviting reflection. 'The school provides opportunities for growth, particularly spiritually', said one parent.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy, driven by the school governors with the whole-hearted and inspirational leadership of the headteacher is expertly applied by an outstanding chaplaincy team who know and love the students. The school is proud of its Catholic identity and has a well-planned programme of prayer and liturgy across the Church's liturgical year. The whole staff speak of the quality and efficacy of recent in service training which is supporting their work in this area, with recently joining staff speaking of the induction they have received, combined with the approachability of the chaplaincy team, which is allowing them to engage in this element of school life with confidence and enthusiasm. Students are being developed with respect to their age and maturity, as reflected in the various ministries undertaken, including reading, music and, at the highest level, designing and leading a whole year group assembly. School chaplains engage in diocesan training to ensure alignment with the Bishop's vision, and are an active presence in the school. Work is underway to ensure student evaluation of prayer and liturgy is embedded in the school, and the overall commitment to student leadership in this area is evident.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Oaklands Catholic Secondary School and Sixth Form College
School unique reference number (URN)	137345
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8505411
Full postal address of the school	Oaklands Catholic Secondary School, Stakes Hill Road, Waterlooville, PO7 7BW
School phone number	002392259214
Headteacher	Matthew Quinn
Choose an item.	Dr Elizabeth Cluett
School Website	<a href="http://www.oaklandscatholicsschool.org/">http://www.oaklandscatholicsschool.org/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Edith Stein Catholic Academy 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	March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Simon Uttley	Lead
Jo Smith	Team
David Legrand	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

