

St Philip Howard Catholic High School

Elm Grove South, Barnham, Bognor Regis PO22 0EN

Inspection dates 19–20 April 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management Outstanding

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Outstanding

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Outstanding

Outcomes for pupils Outstanding

16 to 19 study programmes Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's inspirational leadership has improved all aspects of the school since the last inspection. Governors and the senior leadership team are highly effective. Together they have created a culture where staff and pupils thrive.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have systematically developed staff expertise. Consequently, teachers are highly skilled and standards are high.
- Governors make a valuable contribution to the school's success. They meticulously monitor all aspects of the school's work and challenge leaders, and themselves, to do better where necessary.
- Outcomes are outstanding. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, together with highly effective systems for tracking pupils' progress, ensure that all groups of pupils achieve very well.
- Achievement at GCSE has been well above the national average for the past three years. High-quality teaching, learning and assessment ensures that pupils make above-average progress in all subject areas.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is above average and rising.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils hold a strong work ethic, high aspirations and a genuine desire to excel.
- The school offers a caring and inclusive community where pupils flourish. Regular opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are woven throughout lessons and the life of the school. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern, diverse Britain.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are very well supported and make better progress than other pupils make nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are extremely well supported and make exceptional progress.
- The curriculum across the school, including the 16 to 19 provision, is effective. It provides excellent opportunities for pupils' personal and academic development.
- Pupils are happy at St Philip Howard Catholic High School and staff keep them safe. Parents are enthusiastic in their support for the school and believe that it serves their children extremely well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by:
 - supporting teachers to meet the requirements of new courses in the sixth form so that Year 12 pupils achieve as well as Year 13
 - ensuring that all teaching is as highly effective as that found in the best practice in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's excellent leadership has led to significant improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Working with governors and senior leaders, he has forged a dedicated and professional team who are all highly committed to achieving the very best education possible for every child. This culture of excellence means that all groups of pupils succeed because they receive highly effective teaching, challenge and support. As one parent commented, 'This is an amazing school. The pastoral care is exceptional and the teaching staff and headteacher are inspiring, motivational and caring. They go above and beyond. We couldn't ask for anything more for our child and highly recommend the school to anyone.'
- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have a shared drive for achieving excellence. They welcome new ideas to support school development further. Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are sharply focused. Leaders take appropriate action making any necessary adjustments. Consequently, the school is continually improving.
- Leaders focus tirelessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning to be the very best it can be. They lead by example and provide highly effective support and challenge for teachers as well as access to a wide-ranging package of relevant training. All the areas for improvement in teaching identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed. Consequently, achievement at GCSE and A level has been well above average for the past three years and current progress across all key stages is outstanding.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and highly committed, continually improving standards in their subject areas. A culture of collaborative learning, coaching and professional dialogue has led to improved teaching and learning across the school. For example, the most able pupils are routinely stretched and challenged because teachers have shared successful and engaging strategies to promote deeper thinking and analytical debate in class.
- The local authority recognises the strength of the school's leadership and values how the headteacher and leaders have been able to support other local schools effectively. Involvement in partnerships and close working relationships with other schools have led to better teaching and leadership in a range of subjects.
- Senior leaders have developed an inclusive ethos where adults care for each pupil. Staff do not just ensure that all pupils make rapid progress academically, they also develop pupils' love of learning and make sure that they are well looked after. As one pupil remarked: 'We all support each other no matter what our background or year group', while another added, 'Teachers bring us together as a community.'
- Middle leaders have responded well to the demands of the new national curriculum and have developed new and engaging schemes of work and assessment opportunities. Approaches that worked well last year have been adapted effectively to work with the new way of assessing pupils' progress from their different starting points.
- The deputy headteacher maintains an accurate overview of the quality of assessments used in each subject and the progress that pupils make. As a result, leaders accurately monitor all groups of pupils in each year group and are able to target support and interventions appropriately.
- Staff surveys and feedback indicate that teachers feel valued and staff morale is very high. One teacher commented, 'I feel this school supports me as a teacher to inspire and teach the students in creative and original ways.'
- The leadership of the inclusion department is exceptional and a particular strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator and the school's dedicated team of teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs or disability receive highly effective, bespoke support packages that ensure they make rapid progress. In addition, innovative coaching and support for vulnerable pupils have led to a significant improvement in behaviour and a corresponding reduction in exclusions.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils particularly well and leaders ensure that a wide range of subjects are available for study at sixth form. Staff share a clear understanding of how the well-taught curriculum, regular opportunities for learning outside the school day and a range of opportunities to undertake leadership roles underpin pupils' achievements. As a result, the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is first-class and personal development and welfare are outstanding.

- Governors and leaders ensure that pupil premium funding (additional government funds) is used very well. Leaders and teachers have implemented a raft of support to ensure that this group of pupils make accelerated progress and attain GCSE results that exceed overall other pupils nationally.
- Leaders make sure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to very good effect to raise standards in literacy and numeracy for those pupils arriving at the school with lower than average attainment in English, mathematics or both subjects.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils are provided with high-quality relevant careers advice and guidance. Pupils in key stage 4 feel well informed about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of college courses, different institutions and the qualifications required to support their aspirations. Students in the sixth form are given an effective programme of support, guidance and work experience that equips them with the skills required to progress to their chosen universities or apprenticeships.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Very nearly all who contributed to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. The vast majority who responded agree that the school is well led and managed, and that their child is safe and happy at the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are passionate and enthusiastic about the school and they manage the performance of the headteacher well. Members of the governing body have a range of skills and educational experience that they use generously to support and challenge leaders at all levels. Governors ensure the fair and consistent application of policies and that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
 - The governing body has successfully challenged leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning, holding them to account effectively for further improvements. Regular meetings and visits enable governors to evaluate aspects of the school such as safeguarding, the provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability and the impact of the pupil premium funding.
 - Governors scrutinise performance information, alongside externally produced reports, in order to assess the success of the school against its own targets, and the standards achieved by similar schools. Recognising the improvements the school had made in the past, and in a drive to achieve even higher standards, governors recently appointed a new school improvement adviser to provide an even higher level of challenge to the headteacher and staff. Regular monitoring and review visits take place to affirm both the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and the quality of their improvement work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Systems are managed methodically and an effective team approach involving governors, leaders and office staff ensure that all pupils are kept safe. For example, regular high-quality training for all staff is provided by the school on safeguarding matters and careful records are maintained. Consequently, staff understand and carry out the school's policy and procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The vast majority of teaching is highly effective. It leads to pupils making strong learning gains so that their attainment is well above West Sussex and national averages. Pupils and their parents praised the quality of teaching.
- Teaching, learning and assessment across the school is of very high quality. Much is outstanding, including in the sixth form. This is because a shared drive to improve teaching is placed at the heart of the school's work. Leaders and teachers see themselves as professional learners and seek to improve their practice continually.
- Teachers use their specialist subject and assessment knowledge to design and deliver thought-provoking and engaging lessons. Inspectors witnessed teachers using accurate and detailed information about pupils' achievement to provide them with additional support and challenge within and outside lessons. As a result, pupils of all abilities make strong progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and hold very high expectations. Consequently, there is mutual respect between staff and pupils, and a very studious and focused learning atmosphere. Pupils are rightly proud of the high-quality and neatly presented work in their books and on display around the school.

- Teachers check pupils' learning regularly in lessons. They use questioning skilfully to probe understanding, and ensure that all are making progress and that no mistakes are being made as the lesson develops. Particularly effective examples of this were seen in English and science where teachers enabled clear gains in pupils' levels of understanding.
- Teaching in mathematics is very strong and in English is exemplary, and this enables pupils to make very good progress in all key stages. In mathematics, teachers model mathematical techniques well and challenge pupils to think deeply by spotting relationships and solving problems. In English, teachers expertly use probing questioning and pupils are challenged to analyse texts creatively and use extended writing to develop deeper thinking.
- All teachers have very high expectations and set work that is appropriately demanding and challenging so that learning never stays too easy for too long. Teachers ensure that the most able pupils are regularly challenged through extension tasks that promote deep thinking, evaluation and link different topics. This gives the most able pupils the confidence to engage with, and successfully complete, high-level test questions. As a result, confidence and self-belief are nurtured and these pupils develop very high aspirations together with the knowledge and skills to achieve them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together as a highly effective team to support pupils with special educational needs or disability and those for whom English is an additional language. Several sixth-form students have received the same training and induction package to become teaching assistants as adults do when they start working at the school. This means that these students offer valuable learning support to key stage 3 pupils. Their input and support are particularly valued by the younger pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the 16 to 19 study programmes is particularly strong. Teachers know their students very well and set regular tests using examination questions from previous years. They model good answers and provide highly detailed feedback to demonstrate how sixth formers can improve on their performance in future tests. Teachers modify their teaching in response to any misconceptions highlighted by students' answers to test questions.
- The school's work to develop reading skills and a love of reading is very effective. Reading for pleasure is promoted during tutor times. The library is well used and pupils who need extra support make impressive gains in their reading skills because of a well-planned series of interventions.
- All subjects are promoting improvements in literacy through a strong focus on developing discussion and debate, and the accurate use of subject-specific vocabulary. Embedded routines enable pupils to debate contrasting ideas within an atmosphere of mutual respect and so learn from each other: for example, in history where pupils debated whether Cromwell was a saint or a sinner, or in science where they were contrasting strengths and weaknesses of different light ray diagrams. Many pupils find these discussions helpful to clarify and sequence their thoughts before committing to writing.
- Nearly all teachers give highly effective feedback to pupils in line with the school's expectations. Where this happens, pupils clearly understand what they have to do to improve and act on this feedback. Consequently, pupils make very good progress in lessons and over time. Inspectors identified that in a small minority of areas, including in key stage 3 science and modern foreign languages, the quality of teachers' feedback does not always identify and address misconceptions that some pupils have.
- In a very small minority of lessons, including in Year 7 mathematics, insufficient challenge by teachers means that the pace of learning is slower than is found elsewhere. Leaders have already identified this as an issue and teachers are planning to rewrite their schemes of work to increase the level of challenge.
- Homework is set in line with the school policy and is used well to extend learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. There is a particularly caring and nurturing ethos in the school. Pupils gain a sense of security, community and pride in their time at St Philip Howard Catholic High School. This gives them great confidence and maturity.
- Pupils feel safe. Leaders are clear that pupils' welfare is paramount and good systems are in place to offer help and support, involving external agencies when appropriate. Parents report that their children are very well looked after and feel happy at school.

- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and adults. They take a pride in the fact that they look after each other. For example, one Year 11 told inspectors, 'Adults and we [the pupils] notice when someone is unhappy or not fitting in and we offer help before they need to ask for it.' The inclusion department, chaplain and heads of year all work together to ensure that any pupils facing personal challenges are provided with great care and support which reduces any negative impact on learning.
- The school interprets its Christian ethos broadly to teach respect for all faiths, cultures and backgrounds and for those with no faith. Pupils feel that the school is an inclusive community, stating that: 'The sense of community is amazing in this school', and that, 'Everyone works together.' In addition, the school offers a wide range of opportunities to learn about the democratic process, including as elected members to the UK and West Sussex youth parliaments, a junior leadership team and a small group who work with the children's commissioner in London. This culture of celebrating diversity, promoting equality and valuing democracy ensures that all pupils receive an excellent preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to get involved in the life of the school. They enthusiastically embrace, and recognise how they benefit from, getting involved in a huge range of out-of-lesson learning and enrichment activities that their school offers. These include a range of sporting clubs; a successful debating club that participates in competitions; school music and drama productions; various subject-linked clubs; and participation in Duke of Edinburgh awards. The school also holds the International School Award, recognising achievement through good relationships with international partner schools and the study of global themes.
- Tutor time is used well to explore moral and ethical issues and to reflect on current affairs. Pupils are encouraged to support local and national charities as well as get involved in a wide range of competitions and events. As a result, pupils are self-confident, articulate and very well prepared for the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- Careers advice and guidance are well organised and effective. Pupils in key stage 4 speak with confidence about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of courses, different institutions and qualifications needed to support their aspirations. Similarly, students in the sixth form are very well informed and prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.
- The very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision at Chichester College for part of the week are very well cared for. Good relationships and regular communication between the school and college ensure that the welfare needs of these pupils are met. In addition, regular reviews of the progress pupils are making on their vocational courses support them to do well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Pupils are keen to learn, polite and friendly towards each other, staff and visitors. They are rightly very proud of their school and look after it well.
- Behaviour in most lessons is exemplary. Pupils are punctual and come to lessons well equipped and ready to learn. The vast majority of pupils are keen, attentive and thoughtful in class.
- Attendance is currently above national average figures and was last year too. Disadvantaged pupils have contributed disproportionately to absence levels in the past but this is no longer the case. Leaders have implemented systems that are addressing this disparity effectively. Consequently, attendance for this group has improved.
- Parents, staff and pupils all agree that behaviour is managed very well at school. Incidents of poor behaviour are exceptionally rare. When they do occur, the highly effective inclusion activities ensure that issues are quickly resolved and so there have only been a tiny number of exclusions this year.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- For the past three years, outcomes have been significantly above national averages. Current progress in Year 11 indicates that these very high standards have been maintained. Typically, pupils start Year 7 with attainment in line with national averages. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is well above the national average.
- Outcomes are consistently good in all subject areas. Teachers accurately monitor pupils' learning and ensure that a comprehensive range of focused support and guidance is offered for those who lag behind. Many pupils willingly attend extra study sessions after school. Pupils make significantly better than average progress in English, mathematics and across all subjects.

- Leaders and teachers share very high expectations and set challenging targets, so pupils from all starting points make rapid progress in all subjects. Middle leaders ensure that demanding, intellectually challenging teaching inspires the most able pupils, and that they progress well to achieve the highest grades at GCSE and aspire to study further.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability receive outstanding care, support and challenge. In key stage 3, pupils with special educational needs or disability make exceptional progress and so by the end of key stage 4 they achieve the same very high levels as their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve very well. The progress and attainment that they make at St Philip Howard Catholic High School exceeds that of other pupils nationally. Their attainment is improving towards that of their peers in the school and leaders are relentless in their drive to eliminate any differences between the attainment of this group compared with their peers.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well. This is because the support that they receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and the life of the school.
- Pupils who arrive from primary school needing to catch up in English, mathematics or both are given the right support to help them improve.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form well. They have made significant investments to improve resources and ensure that the sixth form offers a rich and broad curriculum. Leaders have ambitious plans for further improvement of the sixth form and the strategies in place to accomplish them.
- The school provides a suitable range of study pathways with clear routes to further study or employment. Students in the sixth form are ambitious and most progress to university. Others choose to gain access to further education, training or employment in their preferred field through apprenticeships.
- Subject leaders and tutors use effective tracking systems regularly to check students' progress towards their challenging targets. Teachers know their students well and offer targeted support for any who start to fall behind.
- Historically, sixth formers have made progress above that seen nationally. In 2015, the progress made by Year 12 students dipped below the very high levels achieved in previous years. Leaders have analysed the reasons for this and have implemented effective changes, including adapting teaching techniques and ensuring a more detailed focus on exam study skills. This has ensured that current rates of progress in the sixth form have improved. Inspectors witnessed how well teachers are preparing students with the range of skills and in-depth understanding needed to attain the highest grades in their exams.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of the highest quality, particularly in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and drama. Teachers have very high expectations and use their expert subject and assessment knowledge to design learning activities that engage and challenge students. Teachers regularly ask probing questions which demand that students think deeply and make connections between topics. Detailed feedback enables students to work independently to improve the quality of their work. As a result, they learn very well in lessons and over time.
- Disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs or disability are supported particularly well and so make excellent progress enabling them to achieve places at their chosen universities, training or employment.
- All Year 12 students engage in a week of relevant course-related work experience. In addition, tutor time is used well to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and help sixth formers prepare for adult life. Sixth formers told inspectors that they particularly value the extra support and the high-quality careers information and guidance that the school offers. Many students take up leadership roles, for example supporting younger pupils reading, organising charity fundraising events, leading assemblies or participation in school productions. This contributes well to their development as responsible citizens.
- Sixth formers are mature, tolerant and respectful of difference. They have a very good understanding of how to look after themselves and be safe.
- Students take a pride in their school and they appreciate the support teachers give them to reach their very high aspirations. Sixth formers' conduct around the school is exemplary and they provide excellent role models for younger pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	126102
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10005576

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	953
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Grabowski
Headteacher	David Carter
Telephone number	01243 552055
Website	www.sphcs.co.uk
Email address	office@st-philiphoward.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2011

Information about this school

- St Philip Howard Catholic High School is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well below the national average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 4 attend alternative provision at Chichester College to study vocational courses.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 36 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, walks around the school were conducted jointly with members of the school leadership team to observe what the school provides and pupils' learning. Inspectors also attended tutor periods, an assembly, visited the library and observed pupils' conduct around the site at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers and support staff, a representative from the local authority and several groups of pupils. A telephone meeting was held with the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including that relating to policies; records of governors' meetings; strategic planning documents; safety; self-evaluation documents; pupils' achievement; behaviour and attendance information; and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 164 responses to Parent View, 81 staff questionnaires and 132 pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

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