

Farleigh School

URN: 116542

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

26–27 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

N/A

Compliance statement

- Farleigh School is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The diocesan bishop has not published any additional requirements.
- There was not a previous inspection within the relevant period.

What the school does well

- Farleigh School has a strong sense of identity. Led by the inspirational headmaster, the warm Catholic ethos of Farleigh School permeates every area of school life, firmly placing Christ at its heart.
- The ethos of inclusivity is woven into all areas of school life. This opens pupils' eyes to the world beyond the school gates; it leads to a strong moral compass in its pupils and this is demonstrated through regular and thoughtful charitable giving and the kindness that the community show towards each other.
- Pupils work very well together in religious studies lessons, they are articulate and their religious vocabulary is highly advanced. Both oral and written work demonstrate an enjoyment of the subject matter and a commitment to learning.
- Under the excellent leadership of the head of religious studies, the religious studies leaders communicate effectively to produce an ambitious curriculum which tethers the depth of theological and philosophical knowledge and the consequential critical thinking skills, while weaving through the new *Religious Education Directory*. This results in a pupil body who are confident and articulate in their knowledge of scripture and the life of Jesus.
- Staff are skilled in enabling pupils to develop their relationship with God through the prayer and liturgical life of the school which not only facilitates regular school prayer and worship but, importantly, spontaneous prayer chosen and initiated by the pupil. It is clear that prayer and worship are a natural and regular part of school life.

What the school needs to improve

- Religious studies books do not always show the high level of academic standard that pupils demonstrate in class discussions. Pupils need more opportunities to develop their depth of written response.

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They respect and listen to each other and are demonstrably kind to each other. The school mission 'Serving Christ in all we do' is understood, embraced and lived out through the actions of the pupils. Through initiatives such as Care Home Buddies and supporting the Andover foodbank, the ethos of compassion and service reaches beyond the school boundary. Pupils can clearly express that they are valued as individuals; they are happy and confident of their place in Farleigh School. One pupil commented that when she first started boarding the older girls looked after her and now she is able to do the same for younger girls in her boarding house. Parents spoke of the warmth and ethos of Farleigh, one commented, 'The boarding component has been a wonderful experience for our daughter. The care, compassion and personal support has been amazing. The boarding team have much to be proud of.' Pupils feel that staff empower them to have a positive impact on the world, whether this is through the ethos of inclusivity and ensuring that no-one is left behind or through the well-planned curriculum of enrichment where they are always invited to express their thoughts in a safe environment.

The provision provided by the school helps all pupils to see Jesus as teacher and the beautiful Chapel as the beating heart of school life. The physical environment around the school clearly demonstrates the strong Catholic identity of the school. Farleigh School is an inclusive school which welcomes all faiths and none, as one parent said, 'We are not Catholic but... I would choose the Catholic school life at Farleigh again and again for my girls. They are filled with respect, honesty and kindness and together with the school we are raising children who I believe will continue in this way of life into adulthood. They each have a strong moral compass and are not afraid to ask questions about the world around them. I am so happy with this spiritual

development from Reception and now into Year 8.' Golden values are clearly in evidence in the Kindergarten and in their golden books, highlighting a school which has a focus on pastoral care and demonstrable Catholic values. Pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 eagerly elaborated on the Ambassador Programme which celebrates and rewards pupils for demonstrating skills like leadership and service. A member of staff said, 'Farleigh lives out the Catholic social teaching; they put things into action'. Another member of staff said, 'by the time pupils are in Year 8 they don't need to be directed in those actions, they just do them'.

At every level, school leaders and governors embody the mission and values of the school and Catholic social teaching. The school is child centred as seen in the curriculum policy where it is clearly stated, 'Every child is a gift and is valued as a child from God', highlighting the child centred approach to strategy and decision making. Leaders, including governors, are thorough and accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Every member of the community felt that the school is proudly Catholic, and they extend that warm welcome to all faiths and none, this direction comes from the headmaster and governors, and trickles down through every area of school life. Parents commented that the school has a strong community with opportunities for parents to meet at weekly sport or Sunday Mass. Past pupils will often return during their holidays; 'they miss Chapel' commented one parent. The headmaster collaborates with the parish and also offers Sunday Mass for the local community; he also live streams Mass for those who are housebound in the parish. Strategic decisions reflect a commitment to promoting the greater good and supporting those who need it most. The school regularly invites in other schools, including a special needs school. As part of the induction process, new teachers commented on how both the head of religious studies and the headmaster lead the induction into the Catholic life of the school, usually starting in the Chapel.

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

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

1

1

Farleigh pupils work diligently and independently, thinking critically, and express their learning creatively. Pupils display a natural curiosity, asking insightful questions and utilising previous learning in their responses. They demonstrate outstanding knowledge and understanding, and make consistently strong progress, deepening their knowledge, retaining information effectively, and applying their learning with confidence. Their religious literacy is exemplary, as they use precise terminology and actively engage in theological discussions, including ethical debates. This effective use of vocabulary is a strength across the school, as illustrated in one pre-prep class where children were confidently using technical vocabulary such as *covenant*, *chalice*, *ciborium*, and *corporal*. They were so confident with these terms that they were incidental in their responses, highlighting how secure they were in their previous learning. There is consistency in the atmosphere created in all classes which encourages discussion and exploration of religious subjects. Pupils are confident to check their learning, ask questions, and are eager to learn more. In one Year Five class, the depth of the significance of the Last Supper was explored very effectively. The learning was linked to pupils' experience of the Eucharist and that they will one day have eternal life. However, in some classes, their verbal responses often surpass the quality of their written work.

Teachers demonstrate exceptional subject knowledge and expertise, confidently addressing challenging questions and maintaining high standards of teaching and learning. Schemes of work have been skilfully woven so that the core objectives of the *Religious Education Directory* are met, whilst also ensuring that students are prepared to be successful in their Common Entrance exams. The result of this synthesis is that students can think philosophically with a theological approach to their responses. Learning is undertaken in a variety of ways leading to high pupil engagement and good or outstanding progress being made in all lessons.

Misconceptions are corrected and gaps in pupils' knowledge, where they have previously not been in the school, are swiftly filled. Resources are appropriate and support learning effectively. They scaffold pupils' learning well without providing too much information, thus allowing them to challenge themselves. Feedback is provided on both effort and understanding and pupils are keen to excel in both. Verbal feedback is relevant and specific, although feedback in books serves less of a purpose. Comments are made to reflect what the child has achieved, but not how they can improve. Next steps are not always followed up on, and at times, pupils are not given the opportunity to demonstrate their progress in their target area.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school's religious studies curriculum remains a faithful reflection of the *Religious Education Directory* whilst fulfilling the needs of the Common Entrance syllabus. Leaders have already made good progress to ensure that the new *Directory* is used as the basis of the curriculum. The school has a clear scheme of work which identifies where the two syllabi can be linked, and where bespoke teaching has to be undertaken, maintaining integrity to both, and utilising the best points of each to provide students with exactly what they need. Leaders have meticulously designed a structured and sequential curriculum that systematically introduces subject content, increasing in complexity as pupils advance through their learning journey. The headmaster and head of religious studies have been instrumental in ensuring that there is a Catholic element to the Common Entrance syllabus. The subject leaders for religious studies work cohesively, utilising each other's strengths to ensure the best possible provision for students. They have an inspiring vision for outstanding teaching and learning, which is backed by a high level of expertise to realise this vision. Governors take a keen interest in the development of the subject and their visits to the school include activities to view evidence identified by leaders first hand.

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

Pupils fully and enthusiastically engage in acts of prayer and liturgy, showing reverence, sharing thoughts and singing joyfully. Pupils leading the Year 5 celebration of the word worked collaboratively to interpret Matthew's Gospel and demonstrated a detailed understanding of the scripture. They were comfortable and confident to undertake various ministries and understood why they were doing so. They spoke of how they enjoy choosing the Gospel and writing the prayers; they have a guide to ensure they remember to do everything through 'Gather, Listen, Response'. They felt they are trusted to lead the celebration of the word, light the candle 'to show God's presence', and then reflect on their actions afterwards. In Mass, the singing and prayer are joyful and reverent, pupils fully engage with responses. The children chosen to read in Mass said that they feel very proud to read in front of the whole school. The headmaster's liturgies are thoughtful and relevant to the lives of the pupils; this is something that was commented upon by parents, pupils and staff. Prayer life continues into boarding where one member of staff said, 'you can tell they really care about it'.

Worship is regular, varied and always well planned. In a Year 1 class celebration of the word, there was full, active and conscious participation in the reflection and response. As with all worship seen during our visit, it is clear that these are regular and natural activities and, on all occasions, allow for spontaneous prayer. Intrinsic links between the scripture and worship provide pupils with a deeper understanding of the scripture and this was seen at every age. It also complements the learning in the classroom; there is a deep understanding of scripture and the liturgical calendar throughout the school. Pupils understood that it is Lent and a time of preparation which they would then link to their own lives. They knew why there was a purple cloth on the prayer tables. The liturgical calendar is interspersed with important moments in school and home life, which are also celebrated through prayer, as in Pre-Prep's Mother's Day

assembly. Prayer bags also help to foster a love of prayer at home. Parents commented that the strong links to Chapel on Sunday stays with children way beyond the time they have left school, thereby creating a lifelong love for prayer.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated. Governors support leaders by overseeing prayer and liturgy in school and the chair of governors will often attend Mass or daily worship. New staff, including early career teachers, commented that there is always someone to help them in the format of daily prayers and in the more formal Collective Worship. Each religious studies teacher is assigned a year group to whom they provide support in the delivery and resourcing of effective prayer and liturgy. The headteacher models good practice; he ensures liturgies are relevant and interesting with a clear message for pupils to take away. It reflects the inclusive nature of this school. One non-Catholic parent commented that even when they cannot get to Chapel on a Sunday, they live stream the Mass in order to listen to the headmaster's liturgy. He also live streams Mass for those that are housebound and beyond, including overseas, which is greatly appreciated by extended families. The Prayer and Liturgy Planner is a significant document and it is clear that a lot of thought has gone into providing a rich and rewarding plan to celebrate the life of the school community through scripture and prayer.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Farleigh School
School unique reference number (URN)	116542
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8506015
Full postal address of the school	Farleigh School, Red Rice, Andover, SP11 7PW
School phone number	001264710766
Headteacher	Father Simon Everson
Chair of governors	Jane Vyvyan
School Website	https://www.farleighschool.com
Trusteeship	Independent
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	N/A
Previous denominational inspection grade	N/A

The inspection team

Jo Smith

Jeff Sendall

Lead

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