

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Catherine's College, Eastbourne	
Address	Priory Road, Eastbourne, BN23 7BL

School vision

We are St Catherine's College.
Preparing students to stand shoulder to shoulder with their peers: locally, nationally and globally.
To achieve their God-given potential, learners in our care are inspired and supported to be:
Ambitious, Hard-working, Resilient, Responsible

"I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full" John 10:v10b

School strengths

- The Christian vision is understood and lived out throughout the college. As a result, pupils and adults thrive in this caring community that celebrates love at its core.
- Relationships across the college are excellent because of the impact of servant leadership modelled by senior leaders. Students feel supported to become the best possible versions of themselves.
- Collective worship, grounded in the Christian vision, is central to college life and the spiritual development of adults and students. It forms the strong foundation of a tangible sense of belonging, consistency and safety that is evident across the college.
- Leaders are relentless in their approach to the evaluation of the college. Excellent use is made of rigorous external and internal review processes. This ensures a rich curriculum and the flourishing of all groups of students.
- Highly effective leadership of religious education (RE) provides an engaging curriculum that ensures students value RE lessons and make good progress.

Areas for development

- Embed the recently developed approach to ensuring spiritual development across the college. Establish a robust system for leaders, including governors, to monitor its effectiveness.
- Expand the exploration of Christianity as a world faith across the RE programme of study. This will ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced.

Inspection findings

St Catherine's College is a thriving, popular and successful Church school. This is due to the determination of its leadership to live up to the biblically based Christian vision that sets high expectations. Staff recognise the lifelong impact that is possible if students become ambitious, hard-working, resilient and responsible. They work tirelessly to provide opportunities for the development of these foundational qualities. Students are proud of their college. One student encapsulated the feelings of many saying 'the school gives me opportunities that last a lifetime'. Staff are well supported and feel valued. This is because of the servant leadership of senior leaders.

They are determined that all decisions made are rooted in the vision of the college and in doing so demonstrate love in action. There is an excellent relationship between the college and the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT). The vision and values of the trust and college are well aligned. The Governing Body knows the college well and takes an active part in its life. They ensure that the strategic direction of the college is entirely grounded in its vision.

The curriculum is firmly rooted in the college's vision. Leaders ensure that the needs of students, in the context of their community, are met. As a result of the well-developed pastoral system, every student is known well. Vulnerable students are given a wide variety of support. Provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is planned in partnership with parents. These parents note how the college has enabled their children to flourish. Leaders are rigorous in their approach to self-evaluation. Excellent use is made of internal and external reviews. Findings are rapidly acted upon, and improvements made as necessary. This ensures that staff and students are enabled to experience 'life in all its fullness'. Students are 'prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with their peers'. The college recently established a common approach to promoting spirituality. Leaders now systematically plan opportunities for spiritual flourishing across the curriculum. However, there is not a system in place for leaders, including governors, to monitor the effectiveness of this particular provision,

Collective worship is valued by students and staff. The college chaplain ensures that collective worship is well planned and highly creative. This ensures that a range of worship styles enhances spiritual development. Students of all faiths and no faith feel welcomed and included. They enjoy the sense of community that collective worship provides and recognise how the college's values are embedded within worship. Worship always includes time for reflection and prayer. This provides an important daily spiritual opportunity. Students evaluate worship both formally and informally. Their feedback shapes future provision. Students plan and take part in leading worship. A termly Eucharist is offered to the school and wider community. Staff can also attend Eucharist each in-service training (INSET) day. This sets the school firmly within its worshipping community. There are good partnerships with local clergy who visit the college to lead worship.

As a result of the rigorous routines used across the college, students are ready to learn and swiftly engage in lessons. This ensures that the atmosphere throughout the college in lessons and social time is calm, purposeful, warm and inclusive. The behaviour policy provides clear boundaries to students and effective rewards. Students know what is expected of them and generally respond well. When sanctions are used, they are always in a context of 'tough love'. A well developed and creative 'Life Skills' programme is appreciated by students. Topics including mental health and well-being are addressed here. Support for individual students is provided in a wide range of ways including the use of external agencies. The impact of support is monitored carefully by the college's pastoral team. There are clear systems for promoting, tracking and supporting attendance. As a result, attendance levels are improving across year groups. Students, staff and parents are clear that incidents of bullying in the school are rare. When they do occur, they are swiftly and effectively resolved.

Students at St Catherine's are enabled to develop a clear sense of the balance between rights and responsibilities. Across college life they are encouraged to consider making ethical choices and act on their responsibility towards others. Parents recognise that the school ensures students are 'aware of the bigger picture'. One parent noted how her child was inspired by a cross-curricular project to establish a local beach cleaning programme. Students from the college have recently had the opportunity to work with members of the House of Lords in influencing government policy on the environment. A clear example of the outworking of the school's vision at a national level. Leaders listen carefully to the voice of students and empower them to make decisions. The recent establishment of a peer mentoring programme is a result of the suggestion of a student leader.

RE is very well led. Governors take an active role in monitoring RE. They ensure that it is given priority within the college and is largely taught by specialist teachers. Non-specialists are well supported by a comprehensive scheme of work and ready access to advice and guidance from the RE team. As a result, RE teaching is of a consistently high quality. Lessons are lively and engaging. The curriculum allows the exploration of a range of world faiths and perspectives. Effective use of discussion provides the opportunity for students to listen to the opinions of others in a safe environment. This enables them to broaden their understanding. The Head of Department works effectively with the Diocese of Chichester and RE leads across the trust. However, the exploration of Christianity as a world faith is under-represented in the scheme of work. This means that not all students currently get the opportunity to explore Christianity outside the Eurocentric context.

Progress across RE is very good. During lessons students develop their thinking and ability to consider key issues. The programme of study enables them to address more complex concepts as their maturity increases. The Head of Department is careful to review the syllabus and actively adjusts it as necessary. As a result, students achieve well at GCSE.

The inspection findings indicate that St Catherine's College is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	21 November 2023 - 22 November 2023	URN	143035
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	1079
Diocese	Chichester		
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Solomon Berhane		
Chair	Archdeacon Luke Irvine-Capel		
Inspector	Nicki Edwards	No.	2207