



St Dominic's Sixth Form College

URN: 130443

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

05–06 February 2026

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 college is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The college is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The college has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Chaplaincy is at the heart of the college, fully resourced and exceptionally well led by the lay chaplain, with students encouraged to take a variety of leadership roles in both charitable fundraising and prayer and liturgy.
- The college is an inclusive community of kindness and welcome, with excellent pastoral care that is authentic to the Catholic mission.
- Students demonstrate high levels of engagement in lessons and excellent religious literacy, enabling them to question and reflect on the big ideas, which in turn helps them understand themselves, their relationship with God and with others.
- Extensive, varied and well planned liturgies encourage the students to grow in their faith and are an inspiring example of witness to the wider college community.
- The college is a beacon of faith in the local area.

What the school needs to improve

- Revisit and review with all stakeholders the college mission statement to ensure that all members of the community are clear about how it drives the work of the college.
- Develop specific and meaningful feedback tools for A level religious studies to help students make further progress.
- Systemize the monitoring cycle for prayer and liturgy so staff, students and governors have regular opportunities to evaluate the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy.

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 love attending St Dominic's because it is like being part of 'a family', where everyone is valued, heard and able to flourish, whatever their faith position or background. Students value the exemplary chaplaincy provision, enthusiastically taking leadership roles, seeing it as their 'duty to help others'. The lay chaplain consults the students, asking, 'what can we do?', resulting in a range of charitable initiatives, including Mary's Meals, Cafod, Bakhita House and care for the environment through the eco club. There are also a wide range of volunteering opportunities through the Veritas Programme, where students practise servant leadership by mentoring students at a local high school or supporting a local primary school's after-school programme. One staff member called it a place that genuinely practises 'loving thy neighbour'.

Staff are clear and enthusiastic in living the shared vision for the college and go above and beyond to ensure that the mission is lived. Outstanding care is provided for the students who state that they feel known and loved by teachers who never say 'no' when help is requested. However, the mission statement is not widely known, and although it has been reviewed by leaders, not all members of the college community are clear about how it drives the work of the college. The chaplaincy is at the heart of the college, providing a well-planned programme of extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of both staff and students, with a sizeable number taking an active part in its work. As a result, it is seen as a 'beacon' of Catholic education, supporting diocesan initiatives such as the Lourdes pilgrimage, with ninety-three students set to go this year. In addition, twenty-two students were confirmed at the college in 2025, with another 20 in preparation for 2026. In a commitment to the vulnerable, resources are provided to ensure disadvantaged students are not excluded from these opportunities. The culture of welcome is palpable; students and staff of other faiths say that they have grown in

their own faith by attending the college because of the witness and generous hospitality of the lay chaplain who goes the extra mile to ensure that all are supported. As such, it is a joyous and supportive community, 'where everyone smiles at each other'.

The principal is a role model, ensuring that the Catholic faith is at the centre of college life and undertakes liturgical ministry by playing the organ in the weekly Mass. Staff report high levels of pastoral care, receiving exceptional support whether an early career teacher or an established member of staff. They speak about a culture that embodies 'how can we support' as its underlying principle. Wellbeing both spiritually and practically is nourished in the annual 'Dominican Day' where the staff body come together at the local Dominican priory. They feel looked after and well respected. All policies and procedures clearly reflect the Catholic mission of the college, rooted in the word of God and the Catholic understanding of reality. This is developed by regular professional development sessions for the staff including a well-planned induction programme where the mission of the college is promoted. The college has extremely positive relationships with parents through its 'keeping in touch' days and regular communication by email and newsletters. Relationships with the local parish and the wider Catholic community are excellent, as the lay chaplain encourages students to take part in parish life, not least by training some to be Eucharistic ministers to serve in their parishes.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

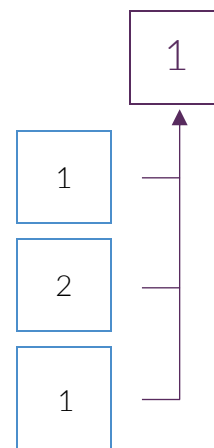
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students demonstrate high levels of student engagement in lessons in core religious education because they are provided with ample opportunities for spiritual, moral and theological reflection. They display significant theological literacy, allowing them to question and reflect, which helps them understand themselves and their relationship with God as well as with others. In a Year 1 lesson on 'Love', students were introduced to different concepts of love and examined how love is reflected in both scripture and Catholic teaching. They were then able to respond with confidence to questions such as 'what is love' and 'why do humans love?' Work in their booklets is of high quality, showing a clear understanding of their learning. They enjoy the subject, one student stating that core religious education was one reason he would recommend St Dominic's to prospective students. Similarly, in A level religious studies, students are highly engaged and enthusiastic and are able to speak with assurance about what they are learning. Achievement in terms of pass rate is 100%, which is above the national average at A level for over three years.

The core religious education programme is carefully planned, with religious literacy developed in Year 1, which they apply in their Year 2 lecture programme. Themes include: the meaning and purpose of life, different aspects of Catholic social teaching and ethical decision making. Use of scripture is central as is 'learning of the heart', spiritual and moral reflection and critical thinking. In core religious education purposeful reflection is a staple of all lessons, whether verbally or in written work, with the best examples of the latter put on the website. Different speakers, including the principal, a local Dominican sister and Generation2Generation, cover a wide range of different topics such as the Holocaust, religion and art and Fairtrade. Engagement in Year 2 has improved significantly, with students given ample opportunities to discuss, ask questions and write reflections on what they have learned in their lectures. Additionally, they are in the

early stages of developing a podcast to discuss the lecture of the week. Staff in both core religious education and A level are subject specialists who have excellent subject knowledge, as well as, a real enthusiasm for the subject, which fully engages the students in their learning. In both, success is celebrated, in core religious education through praise emails, commendations and comments in their booklets and in A level by live marking and verbal feedback. However, A level students in Year 2 reported that they were unsure of what specific steps they needed to take to improve and felt this impacted their progress.

Leaders and governors ensure that core religious education has parity with other subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The principal leads by example with the first lecture in Year 2, entitled 'Why do Core RE?', emphasising to all that this subject is central to the college. The head of core religious education, along with her staff, reflects on and thoughtfully plans a curriculum that is faithful to the mission of the Church as well as relevant and engaging to all students. The Year 2 speakers programme attracts some notable speakers, such as Baroness Rosa Monkton of 'Team Dominica', that enriches the learning experience of the students and leads to a deeper engagement with the subject. In A level religious studies, leaders have accurately identified the specific areas that need attention and are working with staff to take appropriate action to secure positive outcomes for the students.

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

2

1

The lay chaplain is an exemplary role model - both staff and students value her highly. As a Dominican Associate, she encourages students to explore the college's charism. Students deeply appreciate the various opportunities for prayer and quiet contemplation that she provides, whether through the Divine Office at 7.45 am in the college chapel or 'pause for prayer' at the beginning of lesson 1 every day. This prayer is mostly led by classroom staff with resources provided by the lay chaplain, but students are invited to contribute on a regular basis. Students are respectful and silent during the prayer. Provision is outstanding, one student showed the regular email sent which provides all the opportunities to engage with prayer during the day, including different prayers, Mass times, time of the Divine Office and the reading of the day. As such, students are clear on the pattern of the liturgical year. There is a culture of invitation extended to all, and a significant number of staff and students respond.

The weekly Mass, prepared by a core religious education class, is well attended, with students taking appropriate roles such as altar serving, reading and serving as Eucharistic ministers. The students are trained in these ministries by the lay chaplain, who is skilled at identifying and nurturing the gifts of others, ensuring that they can fulfil their roles confidently. One student who showed an interest was encouraged to lead a Rosary group, another to train as an altar server. Students also work closely with the lay chaplain in contributing to various college liturgies, for example, at Christmas, providing relevant imagery to go with prayers, writing prayers, as well as choosing and playing suitable music. The yearly carol concert is a highlight of the college calendar, with significant numbers of parents and students attending. Mass is provided on all holy days of obligation, and there is a yearly Mass of welcome for all students, staff and parents at the start of the academic year, which is well attended. Student communal singing was exceptionally joyful and enthusiastic at the Friday Mass. The college has fostered excellent

relationships with the local clergy and diocesan bishop. There can be no doubt that students value the prayer experiences on offer, whether in planned liturgies or the opportunity to go to the chapel to pray at any time during the day. They see prayer as active not passive; as one student said, morning prayer gives you a 'goal for the day', an action to consider based on the morning prayer. Students are able to feedback through surveys and informally to the lay chaplain, which helps identify ways to improve.

Prayer and liturgy are prioritised by leaders; for example, the college timetable has been designed specifically to allow all students and staff who wish to attend Mass on Friday lunchtime to do so. In addition, resources have been made available, such as music being commissioned by Sir James Macmillan and a stained-glass window designed for the chapel. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is provided every Friday during Advent and Lent, as well as being available on request. The college's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated; however, there needs to be a more systematic monitoring cycle for prayer and liturgy, so staff, students and governors have regular opportunities to evaluate its quality and impact.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Dominic's Sixth Form College
School unique reference number (URN)	130443
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3108600
Full postal address of the school	Mount Park Avenue, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex, HA1 3HX
School phone number	02084228084
Principal	Andrew Parkin
Chair of governors	David Martin
School Website	http://www.stdoms.ac.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Tertiary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	16-18Dominic's
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Catherine Herring	Lead
Alison Berwick	Team
Andrew Lewis	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