



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

School: Woldingham School

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School Unique Reference Number: 125369

<b>Headmistress:</b>	Alex Hutchinson
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Robert Parkinson
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Angela O'Hara
<b>Associate Inspector:</b>	Stephen Horsman
<b>Inspection date:</b>	27-28 February 2020

<b>Overall Effectiveness:</b>	1
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<b>Catholic Life:</b>	1
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<b>Religious Education:</b>	1
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<b>Collective Worship:</b>	1
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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Woldingham School is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The School's Sacred Heart heritage is known and respected by all members of the school community. The five values of the Religious Order are lived out and drive all aspects of school life.</li><li>▪ Students and staff are proud of the school and relationships across the school are excellent.</li><li>▪ The governors are fully committed to ensuring that the school's Catholic character and Sacred Heart foundation is protected and promoted. They know the school well and are keen to further support through increased school visits.</li><li>▪ The school offers students a wide ranging and rich curriculum and students are encouraged and supported in a variety of extracurricular and enrichment activities.</li><li>▪ The school environment reflects the importance placed upon student achievement, along with a clear emphasis on excellence. The school is an inclusive community where all are able to flourish.</li><li>▪ Impressive displays around the school celebrate students' work. Students are given numerous opportunities to engage with the big issues in life through debate and involvement in the school publication, <i>Re-Think</i> which focuses on theological and philosophical questions.</li><li>▪ Students are articulate, open and confident and feel that they are well equipped for life beyond their school career.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Students and staff are involved in a range of worship opportunities which follow the pattern of the liturgical year.</li><li>▪ The variety of worship experiences are a strength of the school. These are planned carefully so that students are able to engage at whole school, year group and tutor level.</li><li>▪ School worship and opportunities for reflection and prayer are carefully planned across the whole school year.</li><li>▪ The presence of the school's resident priest enables all members of the school community to have regular access to worship and the Sacraments. He also provides a crucial and highly valued Chaplaincy role in the school.</li><li>▪ The school chapel is exceptionally well resourced and provides a powerful sign of the school's central Catholic character.</li><li>▪ Student involvement in collective worship, including leading and planning, is increasing. Students are keen to be active in this area, especially those in the Chaplaincy team and the Sacred Heart representatives. Both groups meet regularly and are guided by the Chaplain. Along with The Ribbons (prefects), they are powerful role models in the school.</li></ul> |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pastoral care in the school is exceptional and is recognised as everyone’s responsibility, although key staff show strong leadership in this area.</li> <li>▪ The professional training of staff is well planned and carefully matched to the school’s development aims. This includes excellent induction for new staff based around the school’s distinctive Catholic character.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Catholic life of the school centres on living out the Sacred Heart values of the school.</li> <li>▪ Students engage in a wide range of community projects, local, national and international to support those in need, or the most vulnerable in society. Under the guidance of the Chaplain, a number of students are involved in working in the local parishes, as well as supporting in the local Catholic schools.</li> <li>▪ The commitment of service to others is driven by the school leadership. The senior staff, Chaplain and Theology Department work together effectively to ensure students recognise the meaning of service.</li> <li>▪ Behaviour around school and in lessons is exemplary and students and staff show respect and support for each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards in religious education are high and students across all year groups demonstrate an excellent level of subject knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Students enjoy religious education lessons and appreciate the opportunities that are created for active learning and involvement, discussion and debate.</li> <li>▪ Teaching in religious education is generally outstanding, and lessons are creative and lively.</li> <li>▪ Teachers’ subject knowledge is excellent, planning is thorough and based upon comprehensive guidance from the head of department.</li> </ul>

# FULL REPORT

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woldingham School is an 11-18 all-girls Independent Catholic school which welcomes students of all denominations and those with no faith at all. The school is selective with a relatively broad intake range.

Woldingham School was set up by the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1842. It moved to its current site in 1946. The first lay Headmistress took up her appointment in 1985. The school incorporated in November 2009, so there are no longer any Religious from the Society of the Sacred Heart on the Governing Body.

The school community is committed to living out its faith through the words of St Madeleine Sophie Barat: *"Your example even more than your words will be an eloquent lesson to the world"*.

The school caters for both boarding and day students. It has around 580 girls with approximately 50% boarders and 50% day girls. A proportion of the boarders across all years are flexi-boarders, who stay for 1 or 2 nights per week. Approximately 25% of the students are international with a wide variety of nationalities. Day girls come from locations locally in Surrey, further afield in Kent and from South West London. The school is located on a 700-acre site in an area of outstanding beauty in the Surrey Downs.

Catholic students at the school are 30%, with 42% identified as from other Christian faiths and the remainder being from other faiths or none.

Approximately 19% of students have Special Educational Needs.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to look to secure an increase in the curriculum time for Religious Education in Key Stage 3 as directed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Complete the ongoing curriculum review to establish a comprehensive programme of General Religious Education in the 6<sup>th</sup> form that meets the Bishops' requirements.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which students contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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### **The extent to which students contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- Students of the school demonstrate a genuine sense of belonging to the Catholic community. They identify with and are proud of the five goals of the Sacred Heart: Faith, Community, Intellect, Social Awareness and Personal Growth. They actively share in developing and celebrating the mission of the school through student voice, Sacred Heart Representatives and committees such as the Eco Committee. The Ribbons team act as ambassadors of service as well as leading and supporting the liturgical life of the school.
- Students enthusiastically talk about the school's Catholic character and show that they recognise the school's Sacred Heart heritage and what this means to them in their daily living. They are proud of their school. One student commented that the school gives students *"morals and roots. There is an innate Catholic awareness that spreads into your values."*
- Behaviour at the school is exemplary and students show through their daily actions that they are living out the school's values. Students are kind and considerate to each other and enthusiastically take part in the school's student support systems such as peer mentoring and the buddy system which was set up by the 6<sup>th</sup> form to support students in Years 7 and 8.
- The students of the school recognise the importance of service to others and this is demonstrated through the wide range of activities at local, national and international level. As well as involving themselves in many fundraising activities such as supporting the Lanai Saba school in Kenya, students also give freely of their time in the local community. The 6<sup>th</sup> form are involved in supporting and assisting in local primary schools, nursing homes and charity shops. Some students felt that even more could be done in this area.

- Relationships between staff, parents and students are very strong and parents are regularly invited to school events. They told inspectors that they were made to feel welcome and that the school was ready to respond to any concerns.
- The support of the school's mission from the parents is overwhelmingly positive and parent feedback highlights that the vast majority of parents feel their daughters receive strong moral teaching and instilled Christian values that will serve them well in life.
- Students are confident and courteous and speak proudly of their school, citing the very many opportunities that are available to them. The wide range of extracurricular activities is a strength and students are encouraged to develop their experiences beyond the academic. Students welcome the opportunities to explore and debate the big issues. Some students spoke of the way that the school's values have shaped their thinking and, in some cases, guided possible career choices.
- Students demonstrate that they are keen to celebrate each other's successes and recognise the very many strengths that each has to offer. They listen to each other willingly and respect the views of others that may differ from their own.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- The school's distinctive character is clear to all through the visible signs which celebrate the school's unique religious heritage as a Sacred Heart school and through displays which reinforce the school's commitment to the values of the Sacred Heart community.
- The House system is built upon the four founders/patrons of the Community: Barat, Digby, Stuart and Duchesne. Students are very aware of the history and background of these key religious women. A visible display is prominent in one of the main corridors, as is the Sacred Heart school prayer, which is displayed in all classrooms. Students know about the legacy of their Saint. Fundraising for specific charities is an important aspect of each House's activities.
- Wider opportunities to live out the school's values and Catholic mission are promoted and supported by all staff members and led by key senior staff and especially the Chaplain. Students are encouraged to give of their time to support the wider community, including parishes and especially the more vulnerable or those in need, such as the Cardinal Hume Centre for the homeless, local food banks and working with students at the Orpheus Centre.
- The school's ethos is palpable. Students speak of the kindness and support that is afforded to all and know that members of the school community are expected to demonstrate this through their daily lives. Relationships across the school are excellent. This is modelled by staff and recognised by students. The school's *Thrive* programme reinforces this.

- Staff report that they are proud of the way the Catholic Life is lived out at the school, the way that the Sacred Heart values are made so explicit and the way that all are valued. The school chaplain is a strength of the school and staff report that he is always available to provide pastoral and spiritual support and guidance to students and staff. He is a highly valued and respected member of the staff team.
- The school is a calm and joyful place and the strong sense of community is something that students recognise and feel. Most noticeable is the way that the girls speak with such openness and confidence about their school, highlighting aspects of school life that they cherish, “our values, our community and our inclusiveness” and suggesting ways for further developments. The *Student Voice* group were able to give examples of how they can share the views of their peers and contribute to the ongoing mission and development of the school.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school and students know that there are a range of key personnel that they can turn to if they require support and guidance. This includes scheduled one-to-one personal tutor support for students from Year 10 onwards. Students told the inspectors that they feel well prepared for life beyond their school career. They also told inspectors that students at the school were kind to each other.
- Students spoke about the wide range of student support systems that exist to ensure that no one is left out and that newcomers to the school are made to feel welcome. The word ‘inclusive’ was used by several students to describe the school. For example, all Year 7 students are assigned a ‘big sister’ from the 6<sup>th</sup> form to help them settle into their new school.
- The governors of the school are also aware of the importance of ensuring that staff are supported and that their wellbeing is a priority. Governors are working to become a more visible presence in the school and staff welcome this.
- Policies surrounding student behaviour are set within the context of the school’s Catholic character and sanctions and rewards are based upon the example of St Madeleine Sophie Barat, the school’s patron. It is clear from student interviews that they recognise the way that school policy and practice reflect the school’s values in this area. One Sacred Heart Representative student remarked that she could see that this, “*helps us improve to become the best that we can be*”.
- A comprehensive programme to deliver personal, social, citizenship and health education is in place and relationship and sex education is delivered with appropriate regard to Catholic Church teaching. The school also offers a varied and growing programme for careers much of which is delivered through the school’s own *Thrive* scheme.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- The strong and determined leadership modelled by the Headmistress, supported by her senior team, ensures that the school's distinct Catholic character is made explicit, celebrated and reinforced at every opportunity.
- The leadership team recognise their key responsibilities in this area and the Headmistress is inspirational in the way that she has established a vibrant school based on Catholic Christian values, which celebrates a holistic vision of education and offers breadth and depth, enabling all to flourish. She is a powerful role model. In student interviews the girls spoke of the way that the Headmistress has driven new initiatives, especially those which relate to expanding the wider opportunities at the school.
- Through active involvement, which includes focused school visits and regular reporting, the Governors know their school well and have a deep understanding of their role in protecting the school's Catholic character and ensuring the school's continued success. They are passionate about the school and play an active role in helping to shape the school's mission and future direction. They rightly hold the leadership to account and provide challenge as well as support.
- The leadership of the school is a real strength and, because members of the team have an accurate picture of the school's successes and development needs, long term strategic planning is focused. The school strategic plan sets out the broad vision for the school and this is expanded in departmental plans. Departments also set out how each subject will reflect and promote the five Sacred Heart school values.
- Careful monitoring of the school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme, content and delivery is carried out by senior leaders through class visits and regular drop-ins. Students are encouraged to offer online feedback on the school's *Thrive* programme.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- How well students achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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### **How well students achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- Students are enthusiastic about their religious education lessons. They respond positively to the active learning opportunities presented to them within their lessons which ensures they are varied and stimulating.
- Student workbooks and folders show that they value the subject, and this was confirmed when various student groups spoke to inspectors. Students recognise that religious education is an important subject in the school.
- In lessons students demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and can build upon previous learning to make connections with new topics. Their use of subject specific vocabulary is of a high order and when challenged to extend their thinking by teachers they keenly respond. Lessons are lively and learning is clearly enjoyed by most students.
- In almost every lesson observed by inspectors, students were fully engaged and interested in their learning. Students are keen to ask questions and they listen with interest to both their teachers and to each other. Learning behaviours are excellent in the school.
- Students appreciate the way that their lessons encourage them to think deeply and one student remarked that in many ways religious education is a more academically challenging subject than maths or the sciences since it is open ended, *“it pushes outwards, and it is varied and challenging”*
- Evidence in lessons and from the work in students’ books shows that students are making rapid and sustained progress.
- During observations of lessons and scrutiny of books, it was evident that the standards of students’ work and religious literacy across the school are at least in line with diocesan and national expectations and in Key Stage 4 and 5 are significantly higher than national.
- There is positive uptake of Theology at A Level and students spoke enthusiastically about their lessons with some planning to go on to read Theology at University, including Oxbridge.

- The *Re-Think* biannual magazine is edited by the 6<sup>th</sup> form and includes contributions from all year groups. It is a positive initiative and a highly valued school publication. Contributions are wide ranging for example, '*The Separation of Church and State: an exploration*' and '*What to expect on a Lourdes Pilgrimage*' and '*Jesus Christ: Superstar?*'

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. Because teachers are passionate about their subject and because they have a high level of specialist subject knowledge, they are confident in their teaching and able to provide stretch and challenge for students.
- Planning is a strength and teachers ensure that all students achieve well in the subject. Teachers are aware of students who require additional support and through careful and skilful questioning ensure that all students achieve success.
- Planning is thorough and systematically builds upon previous learning, which enables students to rapidly acquire new knowledge. Teachers use resources effectively and creatively.
- Teachers use high level vocabulary in their teaching to challenge students and regularly check understanding through targeted questioning. They probe students' responses to extend and deepen thinking. This enables effective ongoing assessment of students' progress.
- Because the intended learning is made clear, students are able to reflect upon their own understanding and assess how well they have met the intended learning of the lesson. In 6<sup>th</sup> form Theology lessons, students use self-assessment and peer review effectively to evaluate their answers to exam questions to help in preparation for public examinations.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage their students. Pace and use of time in lessons is highly effective and teachers set high expectations. Lessons are lively and creative with a range of active learning opportunities to engage students through discussion and debate.
- Students are given high quality resources produced by the department to assist them in their studies and these set out clear guidance for expectations and standards as well as key content.
- The learning environment of the Theology department is stimulating and reflects teachers' high expectations. Students work is displayed along with support materials and questions and quotes to stimulate deeper thinking.
- Marking is used to affirm and in some cases to challenge students and move them on in their learning. This is not consistent across the department however and the Head of Department recognises that this is an area for development.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Good.**

- The Governors, Headmistress and School Leaders are committed to religious education and recognise that it is a core subject in a Catholic school which contributes to the overall formation of students as well as providing academic rigour.
- School leaders systematically evaluate the provision and the quality of religious education through careful monitoring and evaluation of student outcomes and lesson observations. Regular reporting of students' attainment by the Head of Department ensures that the Governors have a good knowledge of the standards in religious education.
- The close working of the Chaplain and the religious education department ensures that religious education contributes to the spiritual life of the school and vice versa. The guidance given to students and staff by the Chaplain is substantial and enables all to deepen an understanding of how a Catholic educating community lives out its mission and the mission of the Church.
- Leadership provides excellent comprehensive guidance on how religious education is to be taught at Woldingham. Detailed handbooks, departmental and for each Key Stage, set out key principles, curricular content and assessment processes.
- Leadership is aware of current national developments in religious education and is in the process of reviewing the provision for the Key Stage 3 curriculum. An excellent scheme of work has been developed by the Head of Department and this enables teachers to deliver the key content effectively and systematically.
- Leadership is aware that there is a need to significantly increase the time allocation of religious education in Key Stage 3 which stands currently at 5% to bring it in line with the Bishops' directive of 10%. Although this features in the department development plan, it should be addressed as a priority going forward.
- The provision for 6<sup>th</sup> form General Religious Education is also under development and although there is a level of religious education in the 6<sup>th</sup> form derived from elements of the *Thrive* programme, planned occasional 'drop down days' and opportunities through *Re-Think*, there is no comprehensive programme that meets the Bishops' requirement of 30 hours across the year (5%). This is a work in progress for the school and although highlighted 'for consideration' in the department plan, requires urgent action.
- Leaders ensure that students have very good sacramental preparation and because the school has a resident priest Chaplain, there are opportunities for students to receive the Sacraments in school. This is a unique and precious aspect of school life.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP/ PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

- How well students respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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### **How well students respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding**

- Under the inspirational influence and guidance of the school Chaplain, collective worship and the school's prayer life lies at the heart of Woldingham school.
- A comprehensive and wide-ranging programme for Eucharistic celebrations at the start of the school year is planned by the Chaplain and students experience whole school, House and year group Mass as well as Mass on Feast days and other special occasions.
- The outstanding support materials, weekly reflections and information booklets produced by the Chaplain enable all members of the community to be fully involved in the liturgical and prayer life. The Chaplain is an excellent role model to staff and students and his presence and input is highly valued by all members of the community. His pastoral role is also recognised by staff as key to maintaining and supporting the school's precious Catholic character and heritage.
- Community Mass which is voluntary at lunchtime once a week is well attended by students and staff and provides a welcome opportunity for quiet reflection and worship in the middle of a busy day.
- The newly refurbished chapel, in a central position on the school site reinforces the centrality of the school's Catholic character. The stunning stained-glass windows depict the five Sacred Heart values which act as a constant reminder of the school's mission. Students spoke with pride about their school chapel.
- Students are keen to be involved in the liturgical life of the school and the chaplaincy group and Ribbons play an active role in supporting collective worship and prayer. The choir and music department contribute to the various liturgies and Masses. The choir also sings at Westminster Cathedral.
- The Sacred Heart representatives, drawn from all year groups, play an important role in promoting the lived faith experience of the school. They are enthusiastic about the projects they are undertaking to promote this year's chosen school value - social awareness. They meet weekly with the Chaplain and are currently working with the Eco student committee to look at reducing plastic waste in response to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*.

- During Mass students are reverent and respectful and a number are active in their support roles. During the Mass attended by inspectors the first reading was powerfully read by a student.
- Students recognise and value the opportunities they are offered to attend the chapel for personal reflection time and prayer, for example lighting a candle for personal prayer intentions, or using the prayer tree during November. For boarders, night prayers are an important part of the evening's rituals. Students recognise and enjoy the value of the annual day of reflection which is organised for every year group.
- Students are proud of the school's Sacred Heart prayer which is recited regularly and known off by heart.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- The range of worship and prayer opportunities is wide, and students and staff are supported to become increasingly involved.
- Year 7 students are introduced to the elements of the Mass by the Head of Year and school Chaplain in a planned induction programme, so that they can understand and engage fully in school worship.
- Worship and prayer life are carefully planned so that these experiences are threaded through the life of the school and throughout the school year. The liturgical year drives the themes of the worship in the school. A detailed plan is prepared by the Chaplain and sets out the timetable for school liturgies, prayer times and days of reflection.
- Students experience a variety of worship and assemblies, many of which are student led. In most cases assemblies and tutor led reflection sessions are based on scripture and the Chaplain provides excellent support in this regard. This practice should be extended to all assemblies to ensure that scripture forms the central tenet of all the worship experience in this Catholic school.
- Students receive a wide range of experiences to help develop and sustain their prayer life and the annual day of reflection is valued by students who spoke enthusiastically about how this helps them develop as individuals.
- Although students are not all able to speak with confidence about the various prayer forms that exist, this is an area that is being developed by the Chaplain. Students recognise that prayer is both personal and communal and the school is working to extend students' personal prayer in the future. An excellent booklet setting out the school's Sacred Heart values and incorporating a range of prayers for everyday living as well as students' own prayers, is to be given out during Lent to support staff and assist in furthering the prayer experiences of the students.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- Leaders and Governors are aware of the central role that collective worship and prayer play in the life of the school and it is given high priority.
- Key staff are aware of the importance and centrality of prayer and worship and ensure that these opportunities are monitored across the school through feedback from various student groups and through observation.
- The school leadership ensures that staff induction includes a focus on the distinctive aspects of a Catholic school and that new staff are aware of the expectation to support the school's ethos and espoused values.
- The Chaplain is a visible presence within the school and knows the school well. His own powerful witness to the Catholic faith and his ability to be able to engage with all levels of School Leadership places him in a unique position to monitor and report on developments in this area of school life. Because of his guidance and support, staff feel increasingly able to promote and lead collective worship and prayer. This is crucial for the future sustainability of the school's all-important Catholic character.
- The Governors attend school worship and school celebrations and recognise their role in monitoring this aspect of school life. The regular reports by the school Chaplain enables them to gain a firm understanding of developments and progress in this area.

## Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

**1**

Catholic Life

**1**

The extent to which students contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

**1**

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

**1**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

**1**

Religious Education

**1**

How well students achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

**1**

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

**1**

How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

**2**

Collective Worship and Prayer Life

**1**

How well students respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**