

Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust Annual Report For Stakeholders 2023-2024



**Edith
Stein**
Catholic
Academy
Trust

Our Mission

ESCAT is committed to providing the highest quality Catholic education; embracing all within our community and bringing them closer to, and living their lives like, Jesus Christ, while enabling everyone to fulfil their potential.

Our Vision

Inspired by the example of Edith Stein, we are a family of Catholic schools loving, learning and living together for the common good of our children, families and communities. Our schools embody the mission of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and have the wellbeing of our children and staff at the heart of all we do.

We are equal partners with a shared calling to ensure our children grow through a Christ-centred education in a safe and nurturing environment, providing them with the knowledge, skills and spiritual development to fulfil their potential and become disciples who make a positive contribution to their world.

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Welcome from the CEO and Chair of the Trust

It is with great pride that I present to you the third Annual Report for ESCAT for the 2023-24 academic year. There are also a few spoilers in this document for next year!

This document not only contains summary information related to our financial activities, but is a comprehensive narrative detailing the work of the Trust, the obstacles we have faced, and the collective accomplishments we have achieved within an educational landscape that presents both challenges and opportunities in equal measure.

The past year has been marked by numerous shared successes and individual achievements. In the face of a constantly evolving educational environment, our unwavering dedication to delivering outstanding learning experiences and promoting the holistic development of our students has remained resolute.

In May 2024, Corpus Christi was inspected by Ofsted and received a Good judgement with Behaviour and Attitudes rated as Outstanding.

The extra curricular life of our schools continues to ensure our students flourish. The involvement of Corpus Christi students in the D-Day 80 Celebrations in June 2024 was one such highlight.



The resilience and commitment demonstrated by our staff, students, and the broader school community have been truly inspiring. From a financial perspective, we have sustained a robust and stable position, although it is clear that there are a number of significant challenges that lie ahead of all schools, academies or not. Nationally, funding for SEND students is under particular strain, this is acutely felt within our schools.

Our careful financial stewardship, along with the support from our school leaders, has allowed us to continue investing in high-quality educational resources, enhancing our school facilities and infrastructure, and prioritising the overall wellbeing of our students. At Oaklands over £2m has been invested in upgrading the antiquated school heating system; some of the pipework in the White House dated back to 1900. While progress is gradual, the rebuilding project for Corpus Christi remains a key focus.

It is pleasing that Local Governing Bodies have prioritised teacher workload and wellbeing, with a number of innovative approaches being employed across schools. Work has started to consider how schools will respond to the Employment Rights Bill, the spirit of which has been clearly articulated by the current government.

The impact of the pandemic still continues as a thread through the educational system; primary schools talk of students in Early Years and Year 1 not being toilet-trained. Students in secondary schools taking their exams in the summer of 2024 had the important formative years of Year 7 and Year 8 significantly disrupted.

Despite some varied national statistics, our schools have performed very well with above average outcomes and attendance rates, this is a testament to the systems schools have in place and the pastoral support extended to students and families.

As we look to the future, we are determined to further enrich our educational offering, strengthening our external partnerships, and building upon our achievements. Our emphasis will continue to be on ensuring that success is a collective Catholic experience, shared by all our students and colleagues across both schools.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the teachers, support staff, students, parents and governors. Your steadfast support and dedication to our vision have been fundamental to our success.



Matthew Quinn
CEO



Marc Evans
Chair of the Trust

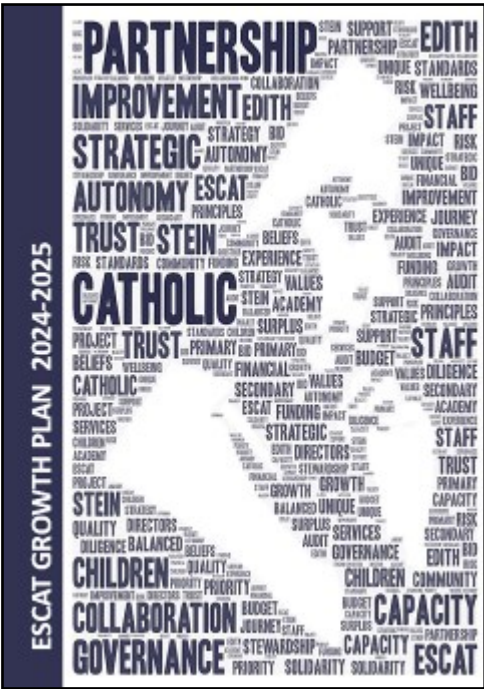


Trust Expansion

In the previous year's report, we highlighted the Diocesan initiative aimed at transforming all its schools into academies, with Edith Stein set to play a crucial role in this endeavour. From February to August 2024, the Executive Team dedicated significant effort to collaborate with schools and governing bodies throughout the south of the Diocese to advance this goal. In a spirit of good faith, ESCAT also enlisted the services of EPM Educational Support, a company with prior experience working alongside the Diocese and currently engaged with Trusts in the north of the Diocese.

“Directors have a legal obligation to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence.”

A key component of our business strategy, articulated in our Growth Plan, involved securing several grants, for which the Trust submitted applications, anticipating a favourable response by 1st August 2024. Regrettably, in the Autumn, all schools and trusts received notification from the Department for Education that the funding intended for trust expansion and school conversion had been withdrawn.



This situation resulted in the cost of any further expansion being met by the two schools in ESCAT, and the conversion costs being borne by individual schools without DfE assistance. Directors have a legal obligation to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence. To continue to pursue academy growth without the assured and necessary resource would be contrary to this obligation.

Sadly, it was necessary for the Directors to instruct the Executive Team to ‘wind-up’ the expansion activities until it was clear how the project will be funded.

“We still believe and hold true to the premise articulated in the Diocesan plan for academisation ‘to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection, and future development of Catholic education within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.’”

ESCAT acted in good faith to realise the Diocesan vision for school organisation and were pleased to do so, and will be happy to continue if the funding permits. The process to date has generated a ‘not insignificant’ cost to the Trust, a point noted in our accounts. The decision was made to notify the Trust members of the action we had taken.

We still believe and hold true to the premise articulated in the Diocesan plan for academisation, *“to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection, and future development of Catholic education within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth so that it is fit for the mission of the Church.”*

The Catholic Schools and Academy Office (CASO) within the Diocese is actively seeking to understand the implications of the recent withdrawal of funding and its potential impact on future educational policies. It has become evident that the current phase of this Government's policy evolution does not yet provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Nevertheless, the Bishop and Trustees continue to uphold their commitment to the full academisation of maintained schools within the Diocese. They are acutely aware of the consequences stemming from the cessation of grant funding and are dedicated to investigating alternative funding avenues to support their objectives.

So for now we will have to pray, watch and wait.

Our Unique Identity

In 1977, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education decided that it was essential to issue a definitive declaration regarding the unique and genuine principles that ought to define Catholic schools. The resulting document, aptly titled *The Catholic School*, serves as both a foundational charter and a universal mission statement for Catholic schools worldwide. In brief, these principles entail a commitment to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, understanding of the Church's spiritual and moral doctrines, and an engagement with Catholic Social Teaching. The essence of Catholic education, in all its manifestations, is rooted in the mission inspired by Jesus. It embodies a higher calling, aimed at nurturing good individuals, responsible citizens, and devout Christians. Ultimately, this mission is centred on the profound transformation of our young people, staff and the wider community.

"This year, Directors have shown a strong interest in evaluating how both schools are adapting to the requirements of the updated CSI framework."

These guiding principles equip Directors with essential frameworks to ensure that the operations within the Trust, which functions as both a charitable entity and a business,



remain aligned with its core mission and do not deviate from its intended purpose. The evaluation of schools by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) primarily assesses their adherence to the standards set forth by the sacred congregation. Corpus Christi underwent its most recent inspection in 2021, while Oaklands was last inspected in 2019. The newly implemented Inspection Framework seeks to enhance the thoroughness, uniformity, impartiality, oversight, and accountability of the inspection process. This year, Directors have shown a strong interest in evaluating how both schools are adapting to the requirements of the updated CSI framework.

Statement from the Board

Consequently, more of this document has been given over to reporting on the unique nature of our schools than in previous iterations. Substantial evidence was presented over 2023-2024 that both schools were aligning their work with the demands of the new CSI framework. Directors anticipate that Oaklands will be subject to inspection during the 2025-2026 academic year. Spoiler alert - although this report does not cover that timeframe, it is noteworthy that Oaklands has achieved Outstanding ratings across all nine categories in Autumn of 2025.

Working with Governors

While the ultimate accountability rests with the Trust Board, the dynamic between school leaders and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) remains exceptionally constructive. The Directors maintain a strong belief in the independence of LGBs, acknowledging their essential role in the governance and leadership of their respective schools. This includes their active participation in various critical areas, such as the spiritual development of the school community, the appraisal and performance management of Headteachers, decisions regarding staff pay progression, curriculum approval, staff wellbeing initiatives, and succession planning, among other responsibilities.

"The Directors appreciate the dedication and effort that Governors, who serve as volunteers, contribute."

Throughout the year, there have been instances where Headteachers and LGBs have needed to consult the Trust Board, particularly concerning policies that affect the entire Trust.

This year, the dedication and efforts of these groups were acknowledged during the Corpus Christi Ofsted inspection, where inspectors highlighted their proficiency in identifying and addressing areas that require improvement within the school.



The Directors actively oversee the LGBs’ capacity to assure the Catholic identity, quality of the curriculum and educational provisions for students, as well as their willingness to embrace external scrutiny. They are diligent in monitoring how LGBs guarantee that all school staff receive the necessary training and resources to perform effectively, which is essential for maintaining a safe and productive learning atmosphere. This commitment ultimately leads to improved student outcomes and overall achievement.

“Members of the executive team participate in Local Governing Body and Sub-Committee meetings to offer assistance as needed.”

In instances where Governing Bodies fail to meet their statutory or regulatory obligations, the Directors are prepared to challenge them. Additionally, members of the executive team participate in Local Governing Body and Sub-Committee meetings to offer assistance as needed. This year both schools have moved to share information through Governor Hub. The platform has a board tools designed to improve collaboration and accountability.

The Directors appreciate the dedication

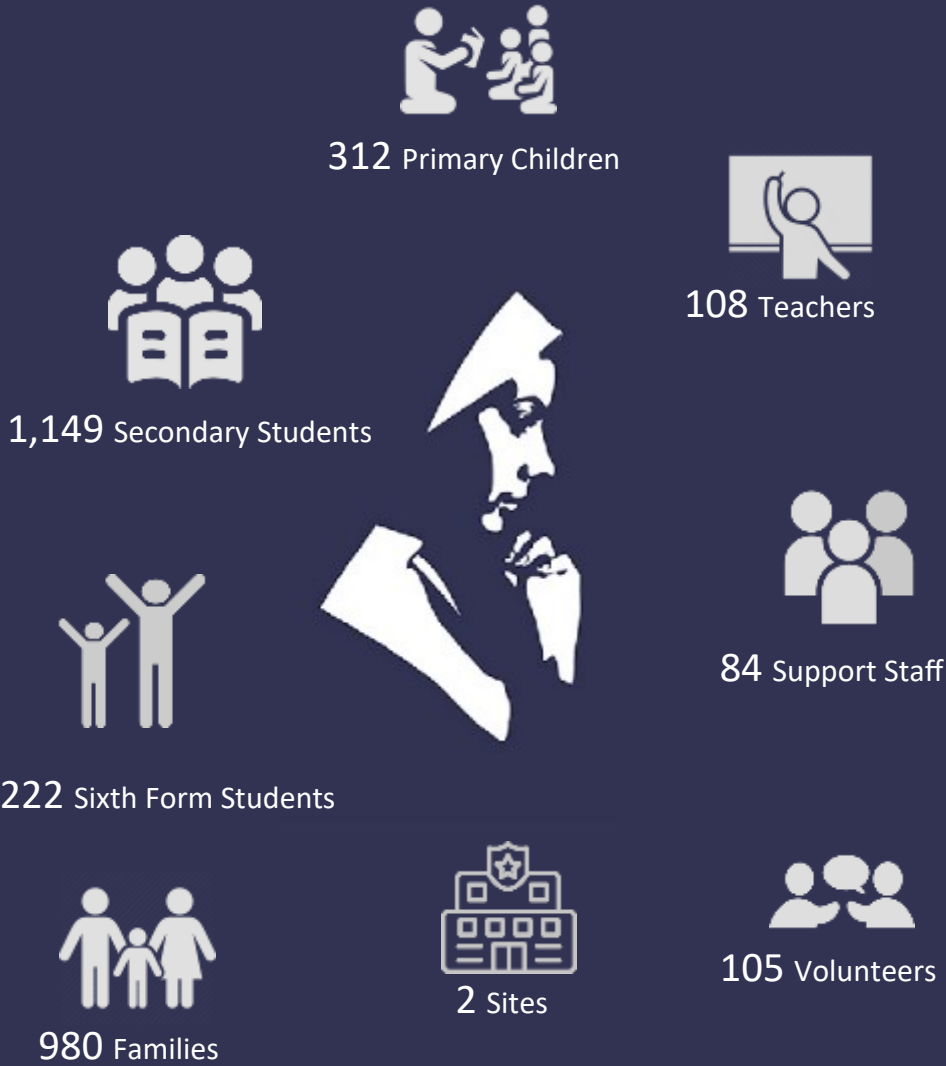
and effort that Governors, who serve as volunteers, contribute to ensuring the effective operation of schools within the ESCAT framework.

Governors’ commitment is vital to fostering an environment conducive to educational excellence and community.

The Directors also acknowledge the valuable contributions of school volunteers, who number over 100. The volunteers work in parent associations, they support sports, reading, and extra-curricular activities.

ESCAT Governance	
Members	5
Directors	8
Foundation Governors	15
Parent Governors	10
Community/LA Governors	2
Staff Governors	3

Across the Trust



Population data from CES census return 2024

Annual Accounts

The annual financial accounts and statements are accessible on the Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust's official website. Our auditors, HWB, are pleased to confirm that the Trust continues to operate as a going concern.

“Inflation permeated all aspects of our finances, from the delivery of refurbishment work through to the prices paid for ingredients in school meals.”

The primary duty of the Trust Board is to uphold a consistently high standard of education, while ensuring financial prudence throughout the Trust. Inflation permeated all aspects of our finances, from the delivery of refurbishment work through to the prices paid for ingredients in school meals. As price rises have hit families and households, minimum wage levels have had to rise. The Trust’s cost base has therefore risen as these changes have been implemented.

There have been a number of specific challenges this year, these include:

- The Diocesan Academy Expansion project has stretched the Trust resources; sadly, the grants previously available to offset this are no longer available.
- The lack of SEND funding continues to put pressure on schools, the difference between the grant available to support a high needs student who requires consistent support and the actual cost is

now over £15,000; this money has to be found from the school’s budget share.

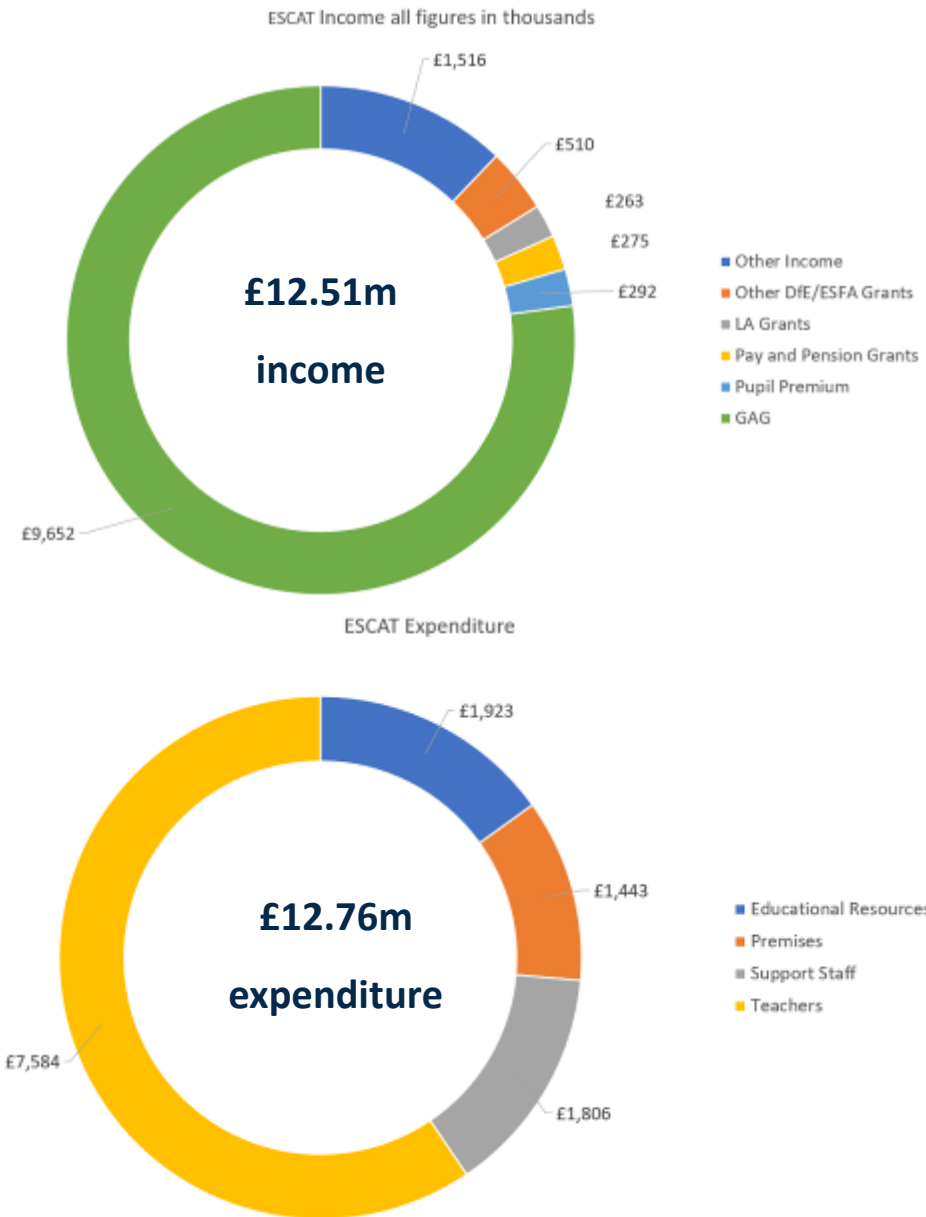
- The DfE formula to support the 2023-24 staff pay award was insufficient to cover the actual cost.

“Directors recognise that the financial models have to be resilient enough to withstand future uncertainties.”

The Directors supported a budget that saw a decrease in the value of reserves to maintain the provision within schools; school expenditure was supported by £250k from reserves, this included £50k of costs to support academy expansion. However it is clear that this position is not sustainable. The Government has already put Trusts and schools on notice that pay awards in 2025-26 can only be funded by additional efficiencies, this will demand a response from schools.

Directors recognise that the financial models have to be resilient enough to withstand future uncertainties; consequently, they remain committed to working with LGBs to ensure that each has sufficient contingency to maintain a sense of autonomy.

Finally, similar to last year, the Trust’s financial statements reflect the funding for the heating replacement project at Oaklands.





Assets and Estate Management

The Trust aims to ensure that, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the estate across both sites is fit for the purpose intended, complies with current legislation, is maintained to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment suitable for students and where relevant, for the use of the wider community. Our aims, articulated in our strategy, align with the vision and values expressed in Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* concerning our common home and the resources needed to provide a sustainable future for our children.

Investment

Heating replacement	£2.6m
Classroom refurbishment	£20k
General repairs	£220k
Other projects	£28k
IT infrastructure	£140K
Compliance checking	£18K
Insurance	£46k
Grounds Maintenance	£20k

In 2023-24, the Directors considered how the estate strategy should evolve as the Trust expands, recognising that the complexity and nature of stock within the estate would change considerably, this work is currently on hold.

“We have implemented a planned maintenance program across the estate to prolong the life of components and minimise reactive maintenance issues.”

In 2023-24, the Trust was allocated £36,000 in Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) across both schools, which was utilised for various minor projects, including refurbishments.

The Trust's medium to long-term strategies are significantly dependent on securing successful funding from central government, particularly through initiatives such as Capital Improvement Funding (CIF) or school rebuilding programs. We have implemented a planned maintenance programme across the estate to prolong the life of components and minimise reactive maintenance issues. A significant element of this focuses on mechanical and electrical installations. Despite this, reactive maintenance still forms a significant element of the Trust maintenance costs.

Corpus Christi remains listed on the

Laudato Si’

“Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.”

Francis 2015a, para.13

“Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.”

Francis 2015a, para.13

“All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.”

Francis 2015a, para.14

Department for Education's rebuilding initiative, although advancements in this area have been somewhat hindered by the election cycle in July 2024. Nevertheless, the newly formed government has reiterated its commitment to the rebuilding program and expressed a desire to expedite the progression of previously agreed-upon projects.

In December 2023, Oaklands submitted applications for two CIF bids, one aimed at replacing the leaking Sports Hall roof, which has surpassed its expected lifespan, and the other intended for critical structural repairs to the White House, a building that has stood for more than 250 years.

Unfortunately, both applications were not successful. On a national scale for the

2023-24 period, funding was awarded to 1,033 projects across 859 schools and colleges, reflecting a decrease from the previous year, which saw 1,408 projects receiving financial support.

“The next phase of work on the Oaklands site has a value of over £1m”

As a result of previous successful CIF bids, £10m has been invested in the school estate. The next phase of work on the Oaklands Site has a value of over £1m. Directors recognise that CIF is the only realistic funding stream to secure the necessary level of investment. Similar sums of money will have to be found in the future for other compliance work in the future.

The Trust resubmitted the applications for funding again this year.

Our Estate Strategy sets out the short, medium and long term actions to be undertaken by the Trust to assist with the achievement of the Trust’s aims and vision.

In 2023-2024, ESCAT focus was to:

- Maintain all buildings in a condition which is consistent with Trust objectives and the Trust’s needs, this included ‘light’ refurbishment to a number of classrooms, and floor finishes.
- Ensure buildings, services and grounds comply with legislation and are kept in a safe condition, thereby mitigating the Trust against potential claims in respect of negligence and statutory non-compliance matters.
- Ensure the planning, procurement and delivery of maintenance and capital works projects achieve value for money in line with the Trust’s Finance Policy and the Academy Handbook.
- Ensure that when undertaking maintenance, replacing or renewing faulty items consideration is given to reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiencies wherever possible across the Trust.
- Complete delivery of £2.7m heating replacement project at Oaklands.

Combined business services operating across both schools



Insurance

Negotiation/co-ordination of commercial provision
Common suppliers where best VFM



Purchasing

Negotiation of contract using Trust-wide buying power
Centralising of tender processes



Energy

Singe contract negotiation of Kw/h
Provision of regular cost and consumption reporting



Mechanical and Engineering

Negotiation of contract
Common standard of servicing and statutory testing



Health and Safety

Provision of Health and Safety Advice and consultancy
Provision of Health and Safety Auditing



IT Support

IT Project Management
Provision of 1st and 2nd Line Support



HR Support

1st line support and advice
HR processes and procedures, pre and post employment



Finance

IRIS systems
Finance and reporting, audit budget and VAT



Audit

Internal verification advice and consultancy
External Audit



Payroll

Co-ordination of internal managed payroll provision
Pensions and associated services



Facilities Management

Coordination of long term maintenance plans and access to consultants
Coordination of CIF grants

Student Outcomes

This is critical to our core purpose – delivering the best education means that all our pupils can achieve to the best of their ability. Directors support our schools’ belief that no child should ever be defined by a score or a set of grades, important though they are at different points in a child’s educational journey. Directors recognise that some children with very complex needs will never achieve the highest scores; that said the ambition for all children remains extremely high with all children achieving their potential.

“Corpus Christi remains one of the top performing primary schools in Portsmouth.”

At KS2, progress in reading, writing and Maths was broadly in line with national averages and 8% higher than the Local Authority average. Corpus Christi remains one of the top performing primary schools in Portsmouth.

At Oaklands, the percentage of students achieving Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs surpassed national outcomes by more than 6% and exceeded the Local Authority figures by 7%. Furthermore, the attainment levels across a wider array of subjects were also higher than both the Local Authority and national benchmarks.

The Directors have taken note of these impressive results.

Directors maintain vigilant oversight regarding the methods employed by LGBs in evaluating and monitoring outcomes, including analysing the frequency with which Governors receive reports that include provisional outcomes.

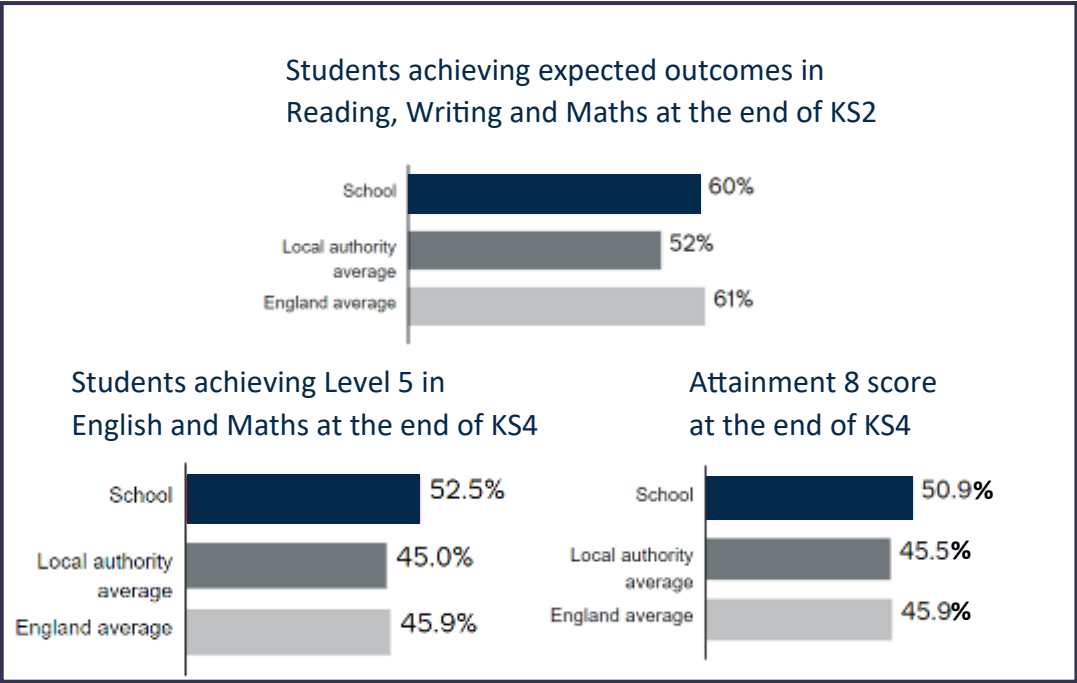
Congratulations are in order for all the students who have participated in examinations and assessments in 2023-24.

Finally.....

The Directors are ambitious to provide the highest quality of service for the children and families within the Trust. This commitment is firmly rooted in the principles that characterise our distinctive Catholic identity.

This year has seen numerous positive developments, notably the favourable Ofsted report for Corpus Christi and the diligent preparations at Oaklands for the upcoming Catholic Schools Inspection. We are nearing the completion of the largest Capital Improvement Fund investment project that the Trust has ever undertaken, and both of our schools are currently at full capacity, with waiting lists in nearly all year groups.

Statement from the Board



As Directors look to the future, our focus will be on effectively addressing the evolving needs of our community. We aspire to establish ourselves as an 'employer of choice' while implementing a digital strategy that will enhance our IT capabilities, including measures for cyber-security. We aim to broaden our reach through strategic partnerships with both local and wider communities, with collaboration within the wider Edith Stein partnership being essential to this goal. Our commitment to green initiatives and environmental sustainability remains a priority, all while we continuously refine the curriculum offered to our pupils.

Despite the challenges ahead, we believe that the upcoming year holds great promise.





ESCAT Curriculum

Our schools have the autonomy to formulate their own curricula while adhering to the parameters established by national guidelines. Our schools offer the National Curriculum and more, with at least a 10% commitment to RE, and 5% in the Sixth Form. In this context, both schools have integrated elements of Catholic Social Teaching into the design and execution of their schemes of work. In 2023-2024 the initiatives undertaken by Oaklands in this area have gained national recognition.

“Oaklands has focused on adapting the curriculum to better support neurodivergent students.”

We have incorporated high-quality schemes of work within our schools that facilitate progress for all students, while also allowing teachers to tailor their approaches to meet the unique needs of each child. Our curriculum sets ambitious expectations for every child and is firmly rooted in the local community it serves. During the academic year 2023-24, our curriculum teams have concentrated on enhancing specific elements.

During 2023-2024, Corpus Christi continued on its improvement journey culminating in a successful Ofsted. The main foci of the school's improvement included:

- Developing pupils' understanding of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching and how these can be demonstrated through our actions.
- Embedding the high quality provision in writing.
- Improving pupil outcomes in arithmetic and quick recall in Maths.
- Development of pedagogy in History, Science and Computing.

At KS3 and KS4, Oaklands has focused on adapting the curriculum to better support neurodivergent students, as well as emphasising retrieval and practice techniques. Meanwhile, at KS5, the emphasis continues to be on scaffolding learning for students with lower abilities in A-level courses.

“Educational strategies are aligned with our objectives.”

We maintain a clear understanding of the knowledge we aim for our students to acquire, the essential information they need to retain, and the skills they should develop. This clarity ensures that our educational strategies are aligned with our objectives, fostering an environment where all students can thrive and achieve their full potential. By prioritising these elements, we are committed to providing a comprehensive and inclusive educational experience that meets the diverse needs of our student population.



Risk Management

In September 2023 the Directors published their risk management strategy. The Trust delineates between strategic risks, which fall under the purview of the Directors, and operational risks, which are the responsibility of the schools.

“The nature of the education sector means that Trusts face different types of risk and levels of exposure.”

The Trust recognises that all organisations will face some level of risk in most of the things they do. The nature of the education sector means that Trusts face different types of risk and levels of exposure.

The responsibility for the management and control of the ESCAT Trust rests with the Trust Board and the CEO, however to facilitate effective governance, the Audit and Risk Committee has been entrusted with the ongoing review and supervision of the strategic risk register.

This delegation ensures that there is a dedicated focus on identifying and mitigating risks that could affect the Trust's objectives and operations.

The process of risk management is inherently dynamic, rather than being a singular event, risk management within ESCAT is viewed as an ongoing process that necessitates continuous monitoring and assessment to adapt to the evolving landscape of potential threats.

The CFO and CEO regularly assess risk and will advise the Board if the change is materially significant.

Equally, Directors recognise the responsibility for a cyclical thorough evaluation of previously recognised risks to determine any changes in their status or impact.

Directors also recognise that although a level of risk may have changed, the evaluation may not be significant enough to necessitate a change in the scoring matrix or deviation from existing risk mitigation strategies.

“The system of internal control is complementary to the external control functions operated by our external auditors’ scrutiny through bodies such as Ofsted, the Catholic School Inspectorate or reports from external consultants.”

To manage dynamic risks the Trust has a system of internal controls designed to identify and prioritise the risks. These are designed to manage risk to a level that suits within an appetite agreed for the Trust, rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. ESCAT can therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance.

A number of methods are utilised, including internal scrutiny by the committees and the internal audit team, user experience, and objective data sets. The system of internal control is complementary to the external control functions operated by our external auditors’, scrutiny through bodies such as Ofsted, the Catholic School Inspectorate or reports from external consultants. Directors have visibility of all scrutiny reports.

Directors are satisfied that in 2023-2024 strategic risk was sufficiently managed by the Trust.

Materially significant changes in risk in 2023-2024

Area	Level	Reason for change
Financial security	Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Change of government funding uncertaintyUnfunded elements of pay risesIncrease in unfunded element of EHCP provision
Fall in number on roll	Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Corpus Christi Ofsted improved reputation making it a more ‘attractive’ school
Trust academies going into category and impact on Trust reputation	Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Corpus Christi Ofsted improved rating next inspection in 5 years
Inadequate Safeguarding and Child Protection	Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Safeguarding at Corpus Christi recognised as good by Ofsted





Catholic Life and Mission

ESCAT is founded on a set of fundamental principles that serve as the foundation for all its activities. As integral parts of the Church's community, both the Trust and its schools seek direction from the teachings of the Church. Specifically, these principles are significantly influenced by Catholic social and moral teachings, which provide a framework for the operation and interaction of groups, societies, and institutions.

“Our strategy sets our four core aims. There is a direct line of sight between these and the school development plans.”

Our Mission is highest quality Catholic education; embracing all within our community and bringing them closer to, and living their lives like, Jesus Christ while enabling everyone to fulfil their potential. Our strategy sets our four core aims, there is a direct line of sight between these and the school development plans. Directors through the reports provided, monitor progress against the aims.



Aim 1: Provide a Catholic Christian education for all pupils in our schools, creating better citizens.

Schools within ESCAT are fundamentally aligned with the mission of the Church, we aim to "bring people closer to Jesus Christ, through His Church." Each school functions as a missionary and evangelistic community, contributing to the broader mission of the Trust. This Trust is an integral part of a larger Catholic community, entrusted with the vital responsibility of educating children and nurturing their spiritual growth.

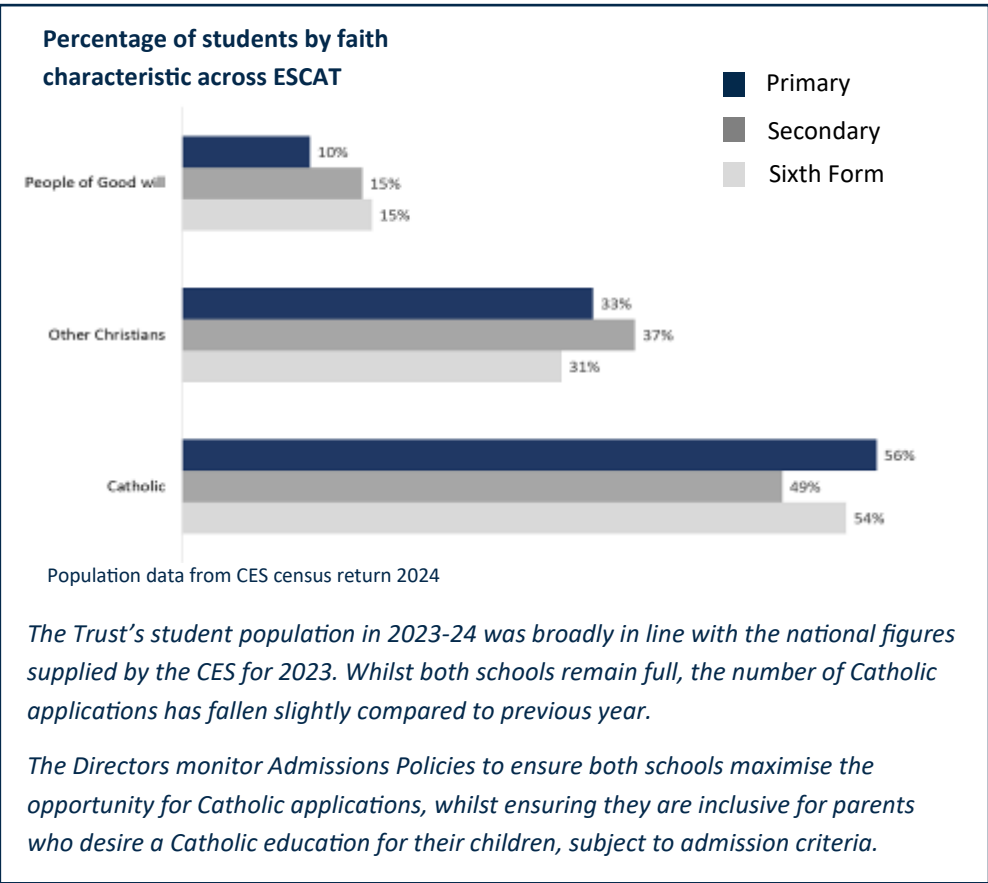
Our schools are driven by a unified vision of life, accompanied by a well-defined educational philosophy. This faith-centred perspective recognises the world as a manifestation of God's creation, viewing human existence as a reflection of God's image and a journey towards eternal life with Him. We hold the belief that Jesus Christ embodies "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and we strive to emulate His teachings throughout our lives. Our communities are characterised by their openness, warmth, and inclusivity, fostering strong partnerships with parents and families to ensure that students are prepared to pursue happiness and live according to Catholic values.

“This holistic approach to education is not limited to the Religious Education curriculum”

Our staff members are encouraged to be the face of Christ, guiding students towards making informed and responsible choices. This preparation enables children to engage more deeply with reality and to cultivate a profound understanding of life's purpose.

This holistic approach to education is not limited to the Religious Education curriculum; rather, it permeates all facets of school life from Early Years through to Year 13. Directors have seen evidence of this in schools.

Christ - who came to offer us "life in all its fullness" - focuses ESCAT schools on the comprehensive development of each individual in their communities.





Catholic Life and Mission

Aim 2: Through high quality prayer and worship, develop personal relationships with God.

In our schools, Collective Worship is far more than a statutory requirement. Our Prayer Life and Collective Worship is guided by the ESCAT Prayer and Worship Policy, monitored by Governors and Directors. Prayer is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to the moral and spiritual development of pupils and staff. Both schools are blessed by the service of local clergy and chaplaincy provision.

“From Reception through to Year 13, students are encouraged to take an active role in worship.”

Engaging in daily collective worship, often facilitated by students, plays a vital role in fostering community cohesion by establishing a consistent framework centred around the fundamental values and symbols of our faith.

From Reception through to Year 13, students are encouraged to take an active role in worship, thereby deepening their connection to their school community and its shared beliefs, as well as building community cohesion by creating a

consistent structure around the core values and symbols of our faith.

“Themes such as forgiveness, humility, gratitude, and justice are central to Collective Worship.”

Students use prayer and worship to explore and comprehend the core values that underpin the schools’ ethos. Themes such as forgiveness, humility, gratitude, and justice are central to Collective Worship, providing students with dedicated time for prayer and reflection. Collective Worship in ESCAT schools varies from whole school gatherings through to smaller groups coming together as classes, form or year groups. Additionally, our schools encourage spontaneous prayer, with visible signs, symbols, and prayer stations playing a crucial role in this initiative. Our schools monitor the involvement of students in this important area.

“Our schools reach out spiritually to the wider community.”

Much of the work to develop our young people is reported to parents through school newsletters. Our schools reach out spiritually to the wider community. Directors have seen evidence of this, online, through shared communication, community Masses, parish engagement and parental volunteering in charity events.

“The presence of Corpus Christi, with the parish church located on-site, enriches this experience.”

Throughout the academic year, our school communities gather to celebrate significant events in the Church’s liturgical calendar, including Lent and Advent. Staff are reminded of the liturgical season through Staff Bulletins. Observance of Holy Days of Obligation occurs within the school setting and often extends to the broader parish community. The presence of Corpus Christi, with the parish church located on-site, enriches this experience. Through regular participation in prayer and worship and the sacraments, the rhythm of the Church’s year becomes an integral aspect of both school life and the individual lives of each pupil, reinforcing their spiritual development.

Directors are confident in knowing that prayer and worship is a part of each school’s DNA. There is evidence of a shared language of values that builds a close-knit cohesive community.

A flavour of what makes us unique

Macmillan Cancer
Save the Children
St John's, Korogocho
CAFOD
British Heart Foundation
Rowans Hospice
Cancer Research
World Book Day
Buckland Soup Kitchen
Portsmouth City of Sanctuary
Caritas

Our financial support for charity



Our work in the wider community



Prayer, Worship and Liturgy



Care for each other



Adoration
Reconciliation
Teaching Mass
Staff and Community Mass
Form and Year group Mass
Whole school Mass
Carol Concerts
Mission Days
School Feast days
Prayer stations
Retreats for staff and students

Staff Wellbeing Group
Specialist induction
Anti bullying ambassadors
S4S students
Family Learning day
Community Masses
Events for the disadvantaged
Pastoral care

Food bank donations
Community support projects
Leadership training
Operation Christmas Child
Reverse advent calendar
Care home visits
Student volunteering
Pre-loved uniform sales
Young Carers
Support within Parishes

Catholic Life and Mission

Aim 3: Provide formation for staff and Governors in all schools to enable them to understand and fulfil their respective roles.

The spiritual and religious growth of the community extends to the staff members.

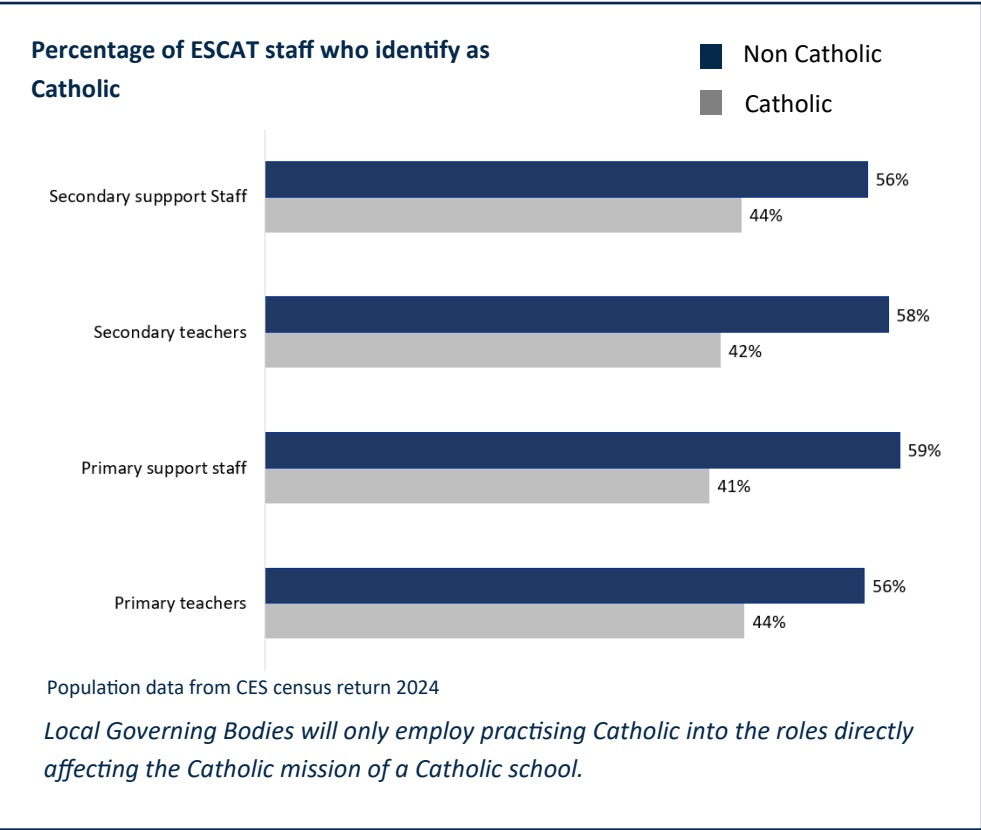
ESCAT school leaders possess an intimate understanding of their teams. This insight enables them to determine the most effective ways to incorporate prayer, worship, and reflective practices that resonate with their staff. Staff are invited to participate in a way that makes them comfortable prayer and formation.

“Over the past year, ESCAT schools have engaged in training focused on leading prayer and worship.”

Directors play a crucial role in monitoring opportunities for faith formation, which may include specific in-service training activities, such as the implementation of a retreat program every few years, as well as more frequent events woven into the school calendar. Over the past year, ESCAT schools have engaged in training focused on leading prayer and worship, while also emphasising the vital connection between teaching and personal development. Both schools have established comprehensive induction programs for new staff, so they grasp the unique responsibilities, related to their role associated with working in a Catholic environment.

Meetings of LGBs commence with prayer and scripture. Resources to support Governors have been shared with Directors, including prayer materials developed by the schools themselves. The transformative experience of working in a Catholic school has deeply influenced many staff members, with colleagues often describing their journey as spiritual.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, another ESCAT staff member became a Catholic. The colleague cites her experience in a Catholic school as part of her discernment process to become a Catholic.



“The transformative experience of working in a Catholic school has deeply influenced many staff members.”

The leaders within our schools openly refer to their staff as disciples, a term that inherently suggests a relationship built on listening and learning. The role of Jesus as a 'Rabbi' or teacher is evident throughout the Gospels, which consistently highlight his teaching. Even those aspects of his ministry that do not directly involve instruction, such as healings, serve to communicate the proximity of God's Kingdom. Teaching in a Catholic school is thus seen as an opportunity to illuminate the profound beauty of God's creation; leaders reinforce this.



Catholic Life and Mission

Aim 4: Nurture strong and positive relationships between the families, the school communities and the parish that are enjoyed by all.

ESCAT schools are established to support dedicated families and their parishes in the celebration and practice of their faith within the community. Directors acknowledge the complexities involved in ensuring that all parties collaborate effectively. Within our schools, numerous students, educators, parents, and clergy are engaged in efforts to enhance the significance of this relationship.

Some of our work in 2023-2024:

- *Regular meetings with the parish priests and chaplains to keep all parties updated on upcoming school events and projects in school.*
- *Parish priests invited to staff and Governor INSET and weekly briefings.*
- *Provide structured opportunities for priests to get involved with the life of school community, for example visiting certain classes in the primary phase and RE lessons in Secondary.*
- *Priests in school to lead worship with students.*
- *Walking pilgrimages to local parishes.*
- *Celebration of the sacraments within school.*
- *Celebration of school feast days with the parish.*
- *Early morning community Masses in school for the wider community.*
- *Students visiting parishes for celebration of Mass during Holy Days of Obligation.*
- *Organisation of Alpha events supported by the parish in school.*
- *Practical support for charitable work organised by parishes.*
- *Parish school Mass in Spring where students attend in uniform.*
- *Publicise parish events to the school community through newsletters.*
- *Links to parishes on school website.*
- *Staff representatives on the Evangelisation Teams.*
- *School notice boards within parishes.*
- *Active encouragement of staff and students to take part in parish retreats.*
- *Specific publications designed to share community life within the schools with parishioners.*
- *Teachers playing a visible role in the parish for example leading choir, reading and ministering.*



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