

## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

URN: 104936

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 18-19 October 2023

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

1

### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The teachings of Jesus are at the heart of this school and all children are carefully led so that this has meaning in their lives.
- Prayer and liturgy are of the highest standard and this should be shared beyond the doors of St Gregory's into the wider family of Catholic Schools.
- Relationships between all members of the school family are extremely positive, with a kind and caring atmosphere that is tangible.
- Older pupils are exemplary role models of Christian living and are articulate and confident young people.
- There is a thriving, inspiring and unique partnership between school and the parish family.

What the school needs to improve:

- Share the best practice in the teaching of religious education so that this high standard becomes consistent across all year groups.
- Secure a greater understanding of standards in religious education by undertaking rigorous, external moderation.

## 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:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1

Pupils at St Gregory's fully embrace their mission statement. They know and understand its content. They can clearly show how it brings meaning to their life in the school and community. A member of the pupil leadership team, spoke about the change in the mission statement from 'with Jesus' to 'in Jesus', by explaining that if Jesus was only with us, we could walk away, but he is within us and so always with us. Pupils spoke about how this understanding impacts their actions, for example in raising money for homeless people and relating this to Jesus' teaching about the Good Samaritan. They reflected that they could not walk away from someone in need. When asked why this is important, a Year 6 pupil commented, "Jesus wants us to follow in His footsteps." They embrace opportunities for leadership. Many are members of the pupil leadership team, school council, choir, and *Mini Vinnies*. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are well mannered, polite, and respectful to all whom they meet. All pupils we met were positive ambassadors for St Gregory's and were excited to tell us all about their school. One commented that St Gregory's is special because everyone is, "Always welcome, no matter who you are, where you are from or what you look like."

The mission statement is known by all, understood and regularly revisited. Through speaking to various members of the school family, it was clear that all were involved in the recent mission review. There is a lived sense of community. Staff members shared that they feel supported as individual people and not just as members of staff. Many people spoke about being part of the school family and one teacher commented that whether Catholic or not, she, "Is still enabled to take the message away." Staff were observed speaking to each other and the children with evident care, kindness, and respect. Relationships between all at St Gregory's are warm. The school environment provided is an enriching witness to its unique mission and charism. There is evident care in the

school surroundings both internally and externally and constant reminders of the Catholic character of the school. For example, children spoke fondly of a variety of areas around the school including the *buddy bench*, *outdoor cathedral*, and prayer garden. There are many foci for prayer and reflection inside the school building which are of the highest standard. Relationships, Sex and Health Education provision is planned well and meets statutory requirements and follows the programme approved by the Archdiocese.

Leaders and governors are clear, articulate, and inspiring in their expression of the Catholic life and mission of the school and its community. Highly skilled governors are actively involved in the life of the school and its parish community and seek many opportunities to be a presence in the school. One governor commented that, "The Catholic faith shines out of each child." Christ is always at the heart of this school. There are exemplary links between school and parish. This is a flourishing and enriching partnership. The parish priest shared that he finds his involvement in the school feeds his life as a priest. He never feels like a visitor to the school but part of the staff. One example of this relationship is the hosting of parish Mass in the school hall fortnightly and the involvement of key members of staff and governors in parish ministry as catechists and the parish music ministry. Leaders are mindful of the well-being and dignity of their staff and have taken steps to reduce their workload. This commitment to the well-being of staff is exemplified by the dedication by leadership of an annual retreat day. Parents were united in their praise for the school and how their children are enabled to develop their Catholic faith.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

### Provision

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

2

### Leadership

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

1



Pupils engage positively in Religious Education lessons and their behaviour is outstanding. This is especially evident in upper key stage 2. They speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned and are religiously literate because in the best lessons specific vocabulary is carefully explained. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, strategies were used so that pupils were given opportunities to explain and deepen their learning through structured discussion and skilful questioning with a partner. This was strengthened by the careful use of subject specific vocabulary. During lessons, pupils are independent in their learning and eager to get started. In the best examples of pupils' work, there is high quality, which is well presented and shows evidence of challenge. Pupils spoke about how teachers support them in their learning and give feedback in the lesson to help them improve. Attainment in Religious Education at the expected standard is high with almost all children working within age related expectations. This is at least in line with other core subjects.

In some observed lessons, teachers skilfully guided children through the review of prior learning, direct identification of vocabulary and teaching of new knowledge in clear and concise ways. This enables children to deepen their learning and link it to previous lessons. This excellent practice was most apparent in upper key stage two, but this is not yet consistent across the school. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, children were presented with the challenging task of understanding wedding vows and reflecting their understanding of these by putting them into their own words. This was conducted in pairs. Children quickly engaged in the task and were fully immersed. Pupils work is beautifully presented and reflect care and pride in learning. This demonstrates the high regard with which religious education is held. In a lesson in Early Years, secure subject knowledge was evident in how the class teacher embedded the golden thread of scripture through her lesson. Although

subject knowledge is generally secure some teachers new to teaching religious education need to ensure that correct terms are always used. In the best lessons, questioning was used well to identify pupils understanding and support them in moving their learning on. Teachers and teaching assistants work alongside each other to support pupils in their learning.

The religious education leader has been in post for twelve months and has made a strong start. She is passionate about Religious Education and her role. These factors have been supported by the head teacher and deputy head teacher who support her in undertaking both formal and informal monitoring. The staff team know that they can approach her for advice at any time and there is a feeling that the teaching of this subject has a new energy. One member of staff commented that she is a credit to the subject. Leaders have ensured that religious education is given the same priority as other core subjects. The school follows *Come and See* and have begun to deliver the new Religious Education Directory in Early Years, which has been supported by engagement in training. School uses the scripture and supporting texts required by the archdiocese. However, leaders must be careful that additional scripture resources used and displayed, all fully support the programme for religious education and are age appropriate. Other training opportunities have been sought out for example training about Catholic Social Teaching to further strengthen subject knowledge. There are excellent links with other agencies which enhance the provision of religious education. The religious education lead has already made contact with the schools in the local cluster to re-establish links with the aim of sharing practice and moderation.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective Worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship .....

1

### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school .....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

1



Pupils are full, active, responsive and reflective participants in the school's prayer and liturgy. From their earliest time in school, they are reverent and prayerful and can speak about the impact that prayer has had on their lives and ways in which they act upon the messages that are shared. Pupils undertake aspects of leadership supported by their highly talented teachers. One member of the pupil leadership team spoke about how prayer has helped her through challenges. She also shared how she found that celebrations of the Mass were full of joy and energy. Observed acts of prayer were of the highest standard and were powerful and moving celebrations. Scripture was central and this was meaningfully linked to the children's lives. Practice was clearly embedded as the pupils naturally and reverently joined in with responses, sang joyfully and reflected in silence. Their behaviour throughout was excellent because of the prayerful atmosphere which was created through the clever use of music and lighting. There are regular opportunities for children to attend Mass and whole school celebrations both in school and in church. The parish family, joins the school fortnightly for their daily Mass. This is enjoyed by many parishioners who welcome the delight of seeing children at prayer.

The headteacher is an inspirational model of outstanding practice in prayer and liturgy. This has impacted on all the staff and pupils because of the quality of experiences provided. Acts of prayer and liturgy led by other members of staff were of a similar high standard. The passion for prayer and liturgy is tangible. The liturgical norms of the Church are skilfully woven through celebrations and the children are confident in their responses. Key members of staff use their talents creatively. This is especially evident in the music used in celebrations and how beautifully the children are led

in prayerful song. The artistic skills of staff were evident in the beautiful foci used during acts of prayer. Prayer spaces in the school are of a high quality which is especially evident in the school hall, outside cathedral and prayer garden. Pupils spoke about their use of these. For example, one pupil shared that the prayer garden is open at break times, and anyone can go there for a moment of quiet prayer and reflection.

The delivery of prayer and liturgy is prioritised by leaders and governors and is evidenced by the high-quality professional development training and resources provided around the school. The headteacher shares a calendar with staff which highlights weekly themes which is strongly rooted in the liturgical year. The calendar also shares scripture passages which link with the theme to support the planning of class-based Prayer and Liturgy. Members of staff have attended inspirational training on prayer and liturgy, and this has been cascaded to the wider staff. The high priority given to prayer and liturgy means that all understand its centrality in the life of the school. Leaders demonstrate a thorough understanding of the different forms of prayer in the Catholic tradition and are skilful in leading pupils in this. Parents, staff, pupils, and governors were positive in their praise for prayer and liturgy and its impact on their lives. The remarkable and exemplary practice evident in this school should be shared beyond the doors of St Gregory's into the wider family of Catholic schools.



## Information about the school

|                                                |                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name of school                            | St Gregory's Catholic Primary School                                         |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 104936                                                                       |
| Full postal address of the school              | Sandy Lane, Lydiate, L31 2LB                                                 |
| School phone number                            | 0151 526 5856                                                                |
| Name of head teacher or principal              | Mrs Deborah Albon                                                            |
| Chair of governing board                       | Mr Terry Freeman                                                             |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.stgregorysprimary.co.uk">www.stgregorysprimary.co.uk</a> |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Not Applicable                                                               |
| Type of school                                 | Primary                                                                      |
| School category                                | Voluntary aided                                                              |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 3-11 years old                                                               |
| Trustees                                       | Archdiocese of Liverpool                                                     |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed                                                                        |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2016                                              |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Outstanding                                                                  |

## The inspection team

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Mrs Louise Byrne  | Lead inspector |
| Mrs Zoe Gibson    | Team inspector |
|                   | Lead/team      |
| Name of inspector | Lead/team      |

## Key to grade judgements

| Grade    | England              | Wales                                            |
|----------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Outstanding          | Excellent                                        |
| <b>2</b> | Good                 | Good                                             |
| <b>3</b> | Requires improvement | Adequate and requires improvement                |
| <b>4</b> | Inadequate           | Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement |