



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Gregory's Catholic Academy, Stockton On Tees

URN: 139492

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 22-23 March 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- All staff are excellent role models, promoting the mission and Catholic life of the school.
- Senior leaders are inspirational in driving the vision and mission of St Gregory's forward in a very caring and inclusive manner.
- Relationships throughout the school are based on the highest levels of care.
- Teachers' high level of subject knowledge leads to pupils demonstrating good progress in religious education lessons.

What the school needs to improve:

- Provide greater challenge in religious education lessons to ensure that increased progress is made for all groups of pupils.
- Ensure that greater depth and effective questioning is planned into religious education lessons to enable all pupils to extend their learning.
- Further extend pupil leadership and pupil evaluation opportunities in prayer and liturgy across the school.

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



There is an inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture at St Gregory's driven by the mission statement, 'Forward together in the Love of Christ', which is well understood, lived, and loved by the entire community. Pupils feel a lived sense of belonging because of the strong ethos of welcome that leaders and staff have nurtured, reflecting the teachings of Christ in a very practical way. Pupils and their families feel exceptionally valued and cared for because the head teacher and staff are deeply committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect. Pupils proudly explain how they respect and value everyone's uniqueness and that the school helps them to 'come together and follow Jesus'. Pupils are exceptionally respectful and kind towards each other and demonstrate practical care and deep concern for the most vulnerable in society; this is reflected in the positive response of pupils and their families to charitable activities at the school, such as collecting food and clothing for Ukranian refugees and the work of the Mini Vinnies in fundraising for The Bungalow Partnership and the local hospice. As a result, children are highly motivated to work for the common good and to help those in need. The chaplaincy provision at St Gregory's has a powerful impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils take great pride in their roles as Pupil Chaplains and Wellbeing Ambassadors and regularly take on these leadership roles within prayer and school events with great enthusiasm.

Staff at all levels are fully committed to the school's mission. They embrace the Trust Virtues readily throughout school life and are excellent role models for pupils. This is reflected throughout the school in the way children are valued and respected, in the engaging and attractive religious displays, and in the many ways Catholic life and mission are enhanced

across the school, as well as through the charitable outreach. A powerful sense of community runs through the school at all levels. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are very supportive of its work, with one parent commenting, 'St Gregory's school is a family we are proud to be part of'. Pastoral care is very strong; as a result, pupils know they are genuinely loved and unique in the image of God. Relationships and sex education is planned and taught in line with diocesan requirements and is rooted in the teachings of the Church.

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for St Gregory's and have clear action plans that drive continuous improvement. They are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils experience an enriching Catholic education that provides excellent formation. They are meticulous in ensuring staff receive high-quality training and induction so that the Catholic life and mission of the school are consistently strong. They ensure all staff are treated with respect and dignity, resulting in a highly motivated and committed staff team. Staff feedback highlights how they feel valued and supported by the school. The governors are thorough in their challenge and evaluation of the school, and they ensure that continuous improvement is ongoing and given the highest priority. They are proud of the strong links to the Church and fully support the school in its core mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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.....

2



Well-planned teaching sequences help pupils steadily improve their knowledge and understanding in religious education. Pupils make good progress from their starting points because teaching enables them to know more and remember more. Pupils' religious literacy is strong, reflecting the well-planned teaching they receive. A clear focus on learning, practising, and remembering religious language runs through lessons for all year groups and leads to good outcomes. Pupils across all age groups demonstrate excellent behaviour for learning, and good levels of concentration in lessons. This is because all staff ensure lessons are engaging and enjoyable and meet individual pupils' learning needs. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because they 'learn about Jesus and think about how to be like Jesus'. Attainment in religious education is generally strong, with most pupils meeting or exceeding age-related expectations by the end of the key stage.

Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and there is a culture of working together to ensure teaching is of good quality. Lessons are usually planned around pupils' prior knowledge. However, some pupils do not make enough progress in lessons because work is not sufficiently challenging. Teachers ask questions which help them determine where pupils are in their learning journey, though they do not always ask questions that require responses at a greater level of depth. Some teaching assistants ask well-targeted and precise questions which help consolidate and extend learning, particularly with the younger children. Most teachers adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy, recognising and valuing pupils' efforts. Teachers encourage and support pupils to do their best and understand how to improve. Pupils talk confidently about how their work is assessed and how they can access extension questions but are not confident when articulating what they

need to do to improve their work. Links are increasingly being made between religious education and other areas of the curriculum and the development of Catholic Social Teaching through the wider curriculum is very effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education programmes and resources deliver the curriculum aims set out in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and that the required amount of time is given to religious education. The intent and implementation of the religious education curriculum have been carefully considered, and learning is effectively sequenced to meet the needs of pupils in each key stage. As a result, prior learning is effectively enhanced and built upon. Leaders are committed to training all staff, which is seen as a key element in developing them to ensure all pupils receive high standards of teaching. All staff, particularly the most recently appointed, benefit from excellent support, both for their own spirituality and also to secure their subject knowledge. This results in good outcomes for pupils which have parity with other core subjects. Leaders' self-evaluation of religious education demonstrates the required monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge and there is a clear vision for teaching and learning. They have a good understanding of strengths and areas for further development and take effective action to secure improvements. All findings of this monitoring are reported to the governing body on a termly basis.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities for prayer and they show reverence, respect and positivity. They engage well because prayer and liturgy is well-planned and contains clear messages. As pupils progress through the school they develop their capacity to plan and lead prayer in their class or with other groups, though this requires further development. Pupils take advantage of opportunities to plan and lead whole-school liturgies which are planned using the four-part structure of welcome, sharing of the Word, reflection on the Word, and mission. Liturgies often conclude with pupils being invited to take a physical object, such as a message, to reflect on how they can follow the teachings from scripture. They demonstrate confidence in praying in creative ways, including quiet reflection, liturgical dance and joyful singing. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the liturgical cycle and of the various seasonal school and parish traditions. Themes for prayer are often reinforced in lessons, ensuring all pupils understand them and can apply them to their lives and the lives of others, such as the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Parents are regularly invited to partake in the planned liturgies and acts of worship planned across the year and they value the many opportunities offered to join with pupils and staff.

Prayer is central to the daily life of the school. It is at the heart of all school celebrations and gatherings where a variety of opportunities and experiences are offered. The importance of a range of prayers is understood and valued by both staff and pupils. They understand that prayer is their opportunity to talk to God and can happen anywhere, at any time. Pupils across school speak highly of their individual prayer journals. One pupil commented, 'When I feel sad or worried about something, I write a prayer in my journal and then I begin to feel much better'.

Staff and pupils create a calm, prayerful atmosphere during prayer and liturgies. The use of carefully chosen music, artwork, creative displays, and visual images around the school helps to provide innovative and engaging acts of worship across the whole school. Scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy and are chosen to reflect the liturgical season, enabling all pupils to actively participate. Pupils are well supported in their preparation for the sacraments.

Leaders regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's cycle of monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement. The views of pupils and parents are gathered regularly and these help the school to know how well it is doing. School policy and planned liturgies and worship support the moral development of pupils and staff extremely well. All staff are provided with opportunities for professional development that includes liturgical formation. New staff are well supported in the planning and leadership of prayer and liturgy and feel a deep sense of commitment to the school's mission statement. One staff member commented, 'You can feel the sense of community, love and togetherness in this school. We're all part of the school's spiritual journey'. School leaders, including the school chaplain, display a secure understanding of different ways to pray, which is relevant to the school community and is reflected in the high-quality planning of worship. Leaders, including the parish priest are models of very good practice for staff and pupils in planning and providing quality acts of worship. Parents are very supportive towards the school and they value highly the contribution it makes to the spiritual formation of their children.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	139492
Full postal address of the school	Ragpath Lane, Stockton on Tees TS19 0DU
School phone number	01642 672262
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Marie Best
Chair of governing board	Mr Tyler Holmes
School Website	www.stgregorys.bhcet.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	8 - 9 June 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Elaine White	Lead inspector
David Miller	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement