



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the St Catherine of Sienna Multi Academy Company

Park Road, Smethwick, B67 5HX

Inspection dates:

10th and 11th July 2018

Lead Inspector:

Debbie Huxtable

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Outstanding

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are central to the life of the school. Staff, pupils, governors and parents are deeply committed to its development.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their role. They are totally committed to the school and are deeply involved in the self-evaluation process.
- Evaluation of Catholic Life and the mission of the school is regular, rigorous and contributed to by all members of the school community.
- Assessment and moderation of Religious Education is embedded in the school cycle of self-evaluation and there is clear evidence of its impact on achievement.
- Pupils are respectful and show high levels of reverence during a variety of liturgies and Collective Worship. This was especially demonstrated at the celebration of the Mass, during the inspection, when all pupils were highly engaged and responsive.
- Pupils of all ages plan and lead Collective Worship with confidence and knowledge, using a variety of resources to engage their fellow pupils.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide excellent role models. They lead the school with commitment and have high expectations of pupils, staff and themselves.
- All recommendations from the previous inspection and monitoring visit have been met by the school.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency of the high standards in Religious Education across all classes in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Developing pupils Catholic Life leadership roles such as junior ministers, prayer partners or ambassadors, in order to deepen pupils' practice and understanding that we are called to serve.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- The school mission statement "*Loving and Learning*" is at the heart of the school. Pupils, staff and parents see it as a living, breathing, statement that dictates the actions of all. It is reviewed and reflected on annually by governors who believe it still drives the mission of the school.
- The Catholic School's Pupil Profile (CSPP) has been integrated into the Catholic Life of the school through assemblies, lessons and displays. Pupils see this as a focus for how they live their lives, both in school and in their wider community.
- Key stage 2 pupils have a deep understanding of Gospel values and the implications they have for the way they live their lives.
- The school has a welcoming and engaging environment. Senior leaders and staff have worked hard to ensure that the Catholicity of the school is at the heart of that environment and all changes or improvements stem from it.
- Pupils speak confidently about what makes their school a Catholic school and how their actions define it. They appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school and contribute to its evaluation through surveys, questionnaires and class discussions.
- Staff are deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school and make a significant contribution to its development. They work closely as a team, offering support to each other, praying together and attending retreat days.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils' value and respect themselves and each other as equals. They feel they are always listened to and that staff will deal fairly with any problems or challenges that arise.
- Pupils highly value the chaplaincy provision and they are enthusiastic in their roles as liturgy leaders. Some older pupils expressed a desire to do more for others and as one pupil explained, "I want to be more like Jesus in the Bible." This could be achieved through developing more opportunities for pupils to serve others in roles such as junior ministers in the Church, prayer partners with parishioners or other appropriate groups.

- Retreats and visits to local places of worship are highly valued by pupils and parents. They appreciate and take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides.
- Parents praised highly the personal care and family atmosphere that the school provides. They feel staff work hard to ensure all pupils grow physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Pupils believe they are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to care for others. They demonstrate this generosity by planning and engaging in a variety of fundraising activities for charities such as The Good Shepherd Appeal, Children in Need and Brain Tumour Research.
- Relationships between the parish and school are strong. Pupils attend Mass in the parish church and parishioners are invited to Mass in school and music concerts. Pupils attend other services, such as the Stations of the Cross, led by the parish at church.
- Sacramental preparation is well planned and skilfully delivered. Pupils and their parents or carers enthusiastically take advantage of the programme that involves workshops, Masses and other celebrations. The feedback received from parents and carers each year is always positive.
- Pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. Staff recognise their call to serve and are committed to meeting the needs of all pupils. This has led to the development of a room dedicated to the well-being of pupils, where highly effective pastoral programmes are led by skilled staff. The success of this work has led to plans to introduce further initiatives next year, which will provide similar opportunities for more pupils.
- Displays around the school and in the classrooms are of a high standard and reinforce the Catholic identity of the school as well as providing pupils with resources to support their learning.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of vocations through an annual Vocations Week. This year visiting speakers, included two Jesuit priests, shared their understanding and experience which deepened pupils understanding of what it means to have a vocation.
- The school plans and delivers relationships and sex education using the "Journey in Love" programme. Parents are invited to review the content and resources prior to the programme.

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

- Leadership at all levels is deeply committed to the development of the Catholic Life and mission of the school. This is seen by governors and leadership as a core responsibility of all members of the school community.
- Self-evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is rigorous, well integrated and involves school staff, parents, pupils and the parish priest. Reflection on this leads to effective and focused planning for future developments.
- The headteacher provides governors with formal and informal reports on Catholic Life. Questionnaires, audits and information gathering from governor visits to school ensures they are well informed and able to make significant contributions.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the school. They consistently emphasise Catholic Life as a priority, through the targets in performance management, for the headteacher and staff.
- Governors are constantly seeking to develop their own skills and talents and have completed the Catholic Education Service (CES) audit. They use this to support their action planning for the future.

- School leaders recognise the importance of pastoral care for staff. High importance is placed on opportunities for staff to develop their own faith through staff retreats and effective training and support. This leads to a very strong supportive atmosphere where staff feel valued and appreciated.
- The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader have a clear vision for the Catholic Life of the school and are determined and committed to achieving the best they can for all pupils. They lead by example and are positive role models for staff and pupils.
- Governors and the senior leadership team ensure that staff training through the diocese is well attended and effectively impacts on the Catholic Life of the school.
- The headteacher has a clear and focused understanding of her role as leader of Catholic Life. She is enthusiastic and constantly strives for pupils to experience Catholic Life as rich and meaningful.
- The school uses a variety of strategies to engage and inform parents including those parents who are sometimes hard to reach. The school website, newsletters, meetings and inspire workshops all reinforce the Catholic nature of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They are highly motivated, enthusiastic, and have a desire to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Most pupils are productive in lessons and staff plan diverse methods of recording tasks and applying thinking skills. This is reflected in the high standards achieved in their books and most are comparable to expectations in other subjects.
- Staff plan using the diocesan scheme, 'Living and Growing as the People of God.' This was recently reviewed and adapted with contributions from all staff. Planning is now more focused on pupil outcomes and staff are more able to provide appropriate challenges, especially for the more able.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding with most pupils on task, motivated and actively engaged in their learning.
- Assessment is embedded in the routines of the school and there is sufficient assessment data to analyse trends in achievement and progress over time. To ensure judgements are accurate and reflect the school's high standards, the extra support provided to new and inexperienced staff will need to continue into next year.
- Teaching and learning is strongest and more consistent in key stage 2. Pupils make outstanding progress overtime and have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers introduction of a reflection task at the end of a piece of work has led to pupils being challenged and deeper learning taking place.

- Teaching and learning in Early Years and key stage 1 is at least good with some examples of outstanding. The school had accurately identified areas for development and some support has already been put in place. Leaders are committed to continue this support into next year, to ensure that all pupils are experiencing the same high standards across all classes.
- A process of peer review took place during the year with groups of three teachers working together on planning and delivery of lessons. This enabled staff to accurately identify their own learning needs and offer support and advice to their colleagues.
- Additional adults in classrooms are highly skilled and well deployed. They provide effective support to teachers and pupils. They can also effectively lead Collective Worship.
- Marking and feedback to pupils is effective and accurate. It provides real opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. This current good practice, which has developed over time, now needs to be reflected in an updated marking and feedback policy.
- Pupils, even those with special educational needs, have a very good knowledge of the Bible including the common parables and miracles of Jesus. When asked for examples of miracles, one pupil in key stage 2 replied, "Well, we are all miracles."
- The presentation of pupils' work is mostly outstanding. In some classes, expectations are clearly higher than in other core subjects. Pupils are proud of what they achieve in their books.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of other faiths, appropriate to their age and ability. Staff build on this each year through detailed planning of whole school focus weeks, teaching in Religious Education lessons and visits to places of worship. Pupils demonstrate respect and integrity when discussing traditions of other faiths.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about how they can inspire and motivate pupils in their lessons. Less experienced staff feel they are well supported and can seek advice and help from the Religious Education lead, headteacher and other members of staff.
- A baseline assessment is completed as pupils enter the school. This enables the school to review provision, in line with the growing needs of the pupils, as many enter school with limited knowledge of religious artefacts or prayers.
- Progress in Early Years and key stage 1 is at least good and above diocesan expectations. Progress is accelerated further in key stage 2 and attainment by the end of this phase shows a large majority of pupils exceeding diocesan expectations.
- Pupils work collaboratively or independently and enjoy discussing the key messages of the Gospels. They can confidently relate previous learning to new and more challenging tasks.

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

- The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader ensure that all members of the school community have high expectations and are constantly striving for excellence.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the standards in Religious Education because they are regularly provided with detailed outcomes for pupils. With the Religious Education subject leader and headteacher, they can accurately identify strengths and areas for development.
- The Religious Education subject leader is highly motivated and dedicated to his role. He has a clear vision for the future and knows what the school needs to do next to improve further.

- Through regular monitoring and evaluation, the Religious Education subject leader has accurately identified the strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. He shows a determination that, through the highest quality teaching and learning, all pupils will achieve the very best they can.
- Pupils' performance is robustly analysed and tracked to show individual class trends, as well as vulnerable groups. Through this analysis, leadership accurately identified boys' performance as an area of concern. This led to a more detailed review of boys' performance overall and appropriate actions were taken, which are beginning to show impact.
- Staff are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities for professional development. This takes place in school and by outside agencies such as the Diocesan Education Service and the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and that it has full parity with other core subjects.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Celebration of the Eucharist is central to the school community. Pupils, staff, parents and governors are enthusiastic and look forward to the celebration of whole school and class Masses.
- Pupils respect and show reverence during all opportunities for Collective Worship. They recognise it is a special time for themselves and others.
- Staff are committed to ensuring pupils experience a variety of high quality liturgies. Assemblies, class prayer times, stations of the cross, rosary and dedicated days of prayer all form part of the annual planning of Collective Worship.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. This is built on each year by high quality liturgy, linking Collective Worship and Religious Education lessons.
- Class prayer times are a strength of the school and outstanding examples were observed during the inspection. Spirituality, expressed in a school display as, "The raising of one's heart and mind to God," includes opportunities for spontaneous prayer, mediation, reflection and music to create a prayerful atmosphere.
- Pupils of all ages plan and lead their peers in a way that engages interest and enthusiasm. Even the very youngest pupils show creativity and good use of resources.
- Pupils know, use and understand many of the traditional prayers of the Church. This was previously identified by the school as an area for development and through staff guidance; there is now clear evidence of the impact of interventions.
- Pupils sing joyfully and with enthusiasm. They experience both traditional and contemporary music and hymns and enjoy adding extra meaning through actions and sign language.

- Prayer bags are enjoyed by pupils and highly valued by parents. These have been further developed by staff, who see them as a means of supporting and providing a focus for prayers at home.
- Parents and carers are regularly invited to attend Mass and Collective Worship in school. They see this as a privilege and are always impressed by the reverence and respect shown by pupils.

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

- The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are reflective of their own practice and place high priority on the experience pupils have of Collective Worship in their school.
- Evaluation of Collective Worship is ongoing and staff receive regular, informal feedback and support.
- Governors are committed to ensuring that staff have appropriate opportunities for professional development, so that they are skilled and confident in planning and delivering Collective Worship.
- Some governors regularly attend Mass and other liturgies and provide feedback to school leaders. As a result, they are well informed of the high-quality experiences pupils receive.
- Leaders and staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Church's year. They use this to develop a meaningful calendar of Collective Worship that includes themes for the Mass, assemblies and other liturgies.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	100402
Local authority	Sandwell
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	261
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair	Joyce Gardner
Headteacher	Krystyna Bickley
Telephone number	0121 429 4609
Website address	www.st-gregorys.sandwell.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-gregorys.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Gregory's is a one form entry primary school with two classes in the current Reception Class (2017-2018).
- The school is situated in Smethwick and serves families in the parishes of Our Lady of Good Counsel and St Gregory.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently high at 88%.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is well above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below age related expectations.
- The headteacher has been in post for nine years and there have been significant changes to the governing body, especially in the last two years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspector observed teaching across eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the parish priest, staff and parents.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass, examples of Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan and teachers' planning.