

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

URN: 142733

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton on:

Date: 9-10 February 2023

### Overall effectiveness

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

2

### 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.....

2

### 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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The school's mission statement, 'Walking together in the light of the Lord' is at the heart of the school, guiding the actions of the whole community. It has a profound impact on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils, motivating them into a serious commitment to the social teachings of the church.
- Senior leaders are inspirational role models who have created a successful, inclusive Catholic community through their commitment to the prioritisation of Catholic life and mission.
- Staff have good subject knowledge and successfully develop pupils' religious literacy so that they think and act, ethically and morally.
- The richness and variety of prayer and liturgy encourages deep engagement and reverence and results in pupils taking their faith beyond this school.

What the school needs to improve:

- To review the marking and feedback policy so that teachers phrase suggestions for improvement in religious education in a way that helps pupils engage with them constructively and time is set aside for pupils to benefit from this activity and improve their understanding.
- To ensure that staff receive appropriate training to consistently implement strategies that will help pupils retain and recall key religious education knowledge and skills long term.

## 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

The school's mission statement: 'Walking together in the light of the Lord', is undoubtedly the driving force behind everything that happens at St Gregory's. It has a profound impact on the pupils, who exhibit a sincere desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and be more like him. This is an inclusive school where pupils value the unique nature of each person, made in the image of God, and support the vulnerable as well as those from other faiths and cultures. An innovative programme to explicitly teach the virtues needs embedding but pupils' daily interactions with others indicate that have taken the message to heart and are flourishing as a result. All can speak confidently about why the word of God inspires them to reach out and help the vulnerable in the local and wider community. There are many opportunities for pupils of all ages to take on leadership roles and they do so enthusiastically. They are particularly keen to become Worship Leaders and members of the Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team, which was commissioned by Bishop David in 2022 and works with the local parish's 'Gregory Care' to support those in need. Some pupils were motivated to change their behaviour for the better to gain a place in GIFT! They are immensely proud of their school and believe 'God is present here'.

Staff at all levels are inspired by the charism of the school and have a strong desire to ensure pupils know they are loved and valued by God. Almost all are involved in activities that reflect the mission of the church, both in school and within the local parishes. One commented that; 'there is a strong sense of belonging, not just to the school but to the church'. As a result, the community is warm and welcoming. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of this school on their children; 'My daughter is confident, happy, and always full of life. I know the origin of the joy is everything that happens in school'. Chaplaincy work is led and prioritised by a strong core team of senior leaders and a newly appointed lay-chaplain. Their extensive schedule has a dynamic impact on the Catholic character of the school, evident in the

physical environment and the spiritual and moral development of the community. Pastoral care is delivered through the lens of chaplaincy and is an outstanding provision. Children talk very appreciatively of the transformational support they have received. Relationship and health education meets diocesan and statutory requirements but will be replaced with the newly recommended Ten:Ten programme in the summer.

Leaders are described by staff, pupils and parents as inspirational role models dedicated to ensuring that pupils experience an enriched experience of Catholic life. Along with governors, they ensure staff receive regular, high-quality training to maintain all aspects of Catholic life at its most stimulating. Leaders and governors embrace the values of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching, guiding all decisions on curriculum, resourcing, and the inclusive nature of the school. They find every opportunity to work with the trust and diocese and actively promote the Bishop's vision for education. Staff regularly attend training and meetings. They report that leaders are open, friendly and treat them with respect, resulting in a strongly committed team and a very positive impact on staff recruitment and retention. Governors have a strong personal motivation to act as guardians of the mission of the school and this is seen in action through their regular monitoring visits holding senior staff to account and involvement in self-evaluation. Pupils' views are sought regularly.

## 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.....

1



St Gregory's follow, 'Come and See', the scheme of work recommended by the diocese. This is appropriately sequenced to support learning and ensures pupils are taught the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. However, teaching strategies that help pupils to commit knowledge to long term memory are not implemented consistently. As a result, several pupils questioned with their books in front of them, struggled to recall key knowledge about topics from the previous term. Pupils do make good progress though in the development of religious literacy, a focus in all lessons that influences their ability to think ethically and morally. They talk confidently about spiritual development and relate it to everyday life. Pupils are proud of their work in books which is well presented and are enthusiastic about their religious education lessons. Behaviour is very good but, sometimes this can be passive rather than active engagement. Pupils work well independently when given the opportunity to do so but where highly structured work sheets are used and pupils copy from the board, ability to demonstrate their own ideas and understanding is limited. Children with special educational needs are very well supported by additional adults and are achieving in line with their peers.

Staff have good subject knowledge as a result of sincere commitment and access to good quality training and support. They are dedicated to the value of religious education for pupils and can articulate how it underpins the whole curriculum. Good quality resources are used well to enhance the learning. Planning links to prior knowledge, but although success criteria are clear, they are not consistently revisited with pupils to embed knowledge. Staff do not routinely test or quiz pupils on previous learning and the re-cap at the start of lessons often comes from the teacher rather than pupils. So, although pupils demonstrate good understanding in lessons, their ability to recall knowledge is not being strengthened systematically. The school is working on the development of

questioning skills and some staff use questioning well to identify understanding, to follow up with greater challenge and to re-frame explanations when necessary. In lessons where this is less good there is an over reliance on lengthy, voluntary question-answer sessions which allow some pupils to remain passive. Reflection in lessons however is used to good effect, strongly impacting on pupils' spiritual and moral development. All teachers value and praise pupils' efforts, encouraging and motivating them to do their best. They mark books regularly and provide feedback using pink and green highlighting indicating work that meets the learning challenge or needs development. However, comments are not responded to routinely by pupils and sometimes teachers' questions lend themselves to an unhelpful, 'no', 'yes', 'don't know' response or a misconception which is not addressed.

Religious education is more than a core subject in this school with clear priority given by leaders to professional development and resourcing. The religious education subject lead is highly regarded for her high level of expertise and readiness to support staff. Good quality training is delivered termly to introduce new modules and secure subject knowledge, resulting in teaching that is mainly good. The curriculum is monitored through activities such as book scrutiny, drop-ins, planning checks and pupil voice. However, there has been less emphasis on development of strategies that support knowledge being committed to long term memory and pupil voice questions focus on what pupils think their teacher does to help them remember rather than what they can actually remember. Self-evaluation activities and outcomes are shared with governors and link clearly to priorities for action in the School Development Plan.

## 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 exposed to a vast wealth of prayer experiences such as prayer stations in the Emmaus room, classroom prayers, assemblies, reflections, reconciliation, saying the rosary and involvement in choral music and hymn singing. Considerable effort is put into planning quality prayer and liturgy experiences, creating the right mood through use of music, religious artefacts, clear messages and clear links to scripture, so that pupils engage deeply. A priest from Northampton cathedral described pupils of all ages, as 'amazingly reverent and prayerful'. In lessons and in the focus groups, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the liturgical year and can talk confidently about the special place of traditional and spontaneous prayers in their lives. One pupil explained that prayer was helping him to discover his mission in life and God's plan for him. Another explained that at her previous school she 'was struggling with God' but in this school she knows he is guiding her life. Pupils who are Worship Leaders speak of the pleasure they receive from being involved in planning, delivering and evaluating liturgies. They are able to make strong links between their prayers and their commitment to supporting the vulnerable in the wider community.

This is very evidently a Catholic school, as all aspects of its day-to-day life are supported and enriched by well-planned and universally appreciated, prayer and liturgy. A variety of forms of prayer are used routinely and mark different points in the day, allowing the pupils to reflect on the importance of God in their lives always. Staff leading worship are highly skilled and help pupils to engage fully, making clear links to the appropriate scripture readings of the day. A range of excellent resources are available, including artwork, drama representations and music. The school is blessed with a large number of musically talented staff who support assemblies and other liturgies, acting as good role models for the pupils and enhancing the opportunities for spiritual growth for all. The chaplain is newly in post but has already demonstrated her ability to reach out to staff as well as

pupils with creative and spiritual reflections. There is a beautiful and well-maintained prayer space in the Emmaus room which is central to the whole school and immediately obvious to visitors. However, spaces across the school and in classrooms are also used imaginatively to allow all pupils to engage in spontaneous prayer. Parents expressed a wish to have more opportunity to join the prayer life of the school and this is in hand now that Covid restrictions are increasingly relaxed.

Leaders are skilled and inspirational role models and it is through their hard work and prioritisation that collective worship is so prominent and successful in the school. This is recognised by staff, pupils and governors and greatly appreciated. A prayer and liturgy policy has been created very recently and has not yet had time to have an impact. However, it has been expertly crafted by leaders and supported by governors to help all staff, regardless of experience, by providing a clear understanding of expectations. Mass is celebrated very regularly at key times of the liturgical year and the focus on training staff for prayer and liturgy has resulted in high quality experiences at all levels. This motivates pupils to take on active roles and is also impacting on their faith formation. Involvement in evaluation of prayer and liturgy by pupils ensures their experiences remain relevant and meaningful.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142733
Full postal address of the school	Grange Road, Northampton, NN3 2AX
School phone number	01604 403511/409582
Name of head teacher or principal	Kirstie Yuen
Chair of governing board	Nicola O'Neill
School Website	<a href="https://www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk">https://www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11years
Trustees	Diocese of Northampton
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Grade 2

## The inspection team

Jane Crow	Lead inspector
Robert Mundy	Team inspector

## 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