

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

URN: 147631

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

18–19 January 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

2

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

2

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

2

What the school does well

- The deeply committed head teacher, supported by a highly effective leadership team and knowledgeable governors, genuinely places Christ at the heart of the school.
- The welcome afforded to all members of the school community envelops everyone with love and allows all to flourish within the sanctuary of St Gregory's.
- An improved focus on religious literacy and pupils knowing more and remembering more in religious education ensures that pupils make strong progress.
- The school environment authentically reflects the Catholic character of the school, it embodies the school's mission and provides a haven where the pupils' faith can be deepened.

- High aspirations for all pupils from their very first day ensure that by the end of their time at school, all can celebrate their God-given potential and are ready for the next stage of their faith and life journey.

What the school needs to improve

- Create opportunities for older pupils to undertake dynamic leadership roles to progress the faith life of the school, ensuring they are highly visible and prominent within and beyond the school community.
- Further improve the quality of religious education by expanding, extending, and enriching teaching and learning, liberating pupils through inspirational and memorable experiences.
- Develop a clear and comprehensive strategy that identifies precisely how pupils in all classes will progressively acquire the skills required to participate in and lead prayer and liturgy.

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

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils at St Gregory's express that they feel loved and valued, this is rooted in a strong sense of belonging to the school's family. Christ is known to all from a very young age. A child in the Early Years Foundation Stage expressed, 'Wherever we are, He is there'. Very high levels of mutual respect exist between pupils, ensuring that everyone is accepted in the likeness and image of God. An older pupil explained how his role as a language ambassador was inspired by the way he had been supported when he was a new arrival to the school. Pupils are beginning to respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching, showing they are missionary disciples by supporting the local food bank and bringing joy to others through singing at a local care home. There is a clear commitment to support local charities, and pupils now need to be more proactive in leading initiatives to support national and global issues. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary both in lessons and in other areas of the school. They are extremely polite, welcoming, cooperative and generous with their time.

Catholic tradition is rooted in school life and this is encapsulated in St Gregory's status as a *School of Sanctuary*. The mission statement of 'Where greatness grows' is known and lived, it has a visible impact on the daily life of the school. Strong relationships are highly evident at all levels. The school is just like a family. The head teacher inspires all her staff through her servant leadership and humility, she is expertly supported by a devoted and experienced deputy head. Staff are fulsome in their praise for the leadership team and all are role models for the pupils in their care. Those new to the profession conveyed that they feel fully supported as teachers in a Catholic school. Catholic life is visible in all areas of the environment, with care and attention given to bringing to vibrant life the school's identity and mission. The dedicated adult leader of the Growing in Faith Together team leads with passion and joy. Pupils are eager to partake in missionary activities and talk proudly about what they have done. Although there are lots of opportunities for pupils to be involved in groups, the school needs to review how these are structured and appoint older pupils to take the lead in driving the mission forward further. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets statutory requirements.

Governors express that, 'We make Christ known regardless of background and belief.' They are fully able to articulate the mission of St Gregory's and are committed to continual development. An example of this was the allocation of resources to create the warm space initiative as well as providing a free breakfast club for those who need it most. Parents value all that the school does to support them and their children. A parent shared, 'The difference over the last few years is phenomenal; we all feel part of the community'. Leaders and governors work in close partnership with parents and carers. They have created highly effective strategies for engaging with them, such as facilitating school-wide stay and learn sessions. Leaders including governors highly value feedback from all stakeholders and act upon it to drive further improvements. The Catholic curriculum underpins the rest of the taught curriculum, this has been achieved through the collaborative working practices of the whole staff team. Despite no longer having a church next to the school, strong parish links have been maintained, with the parish priest being a loved and regular visitor to St Gregory's and parishioners being warmly welcomed into school events.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

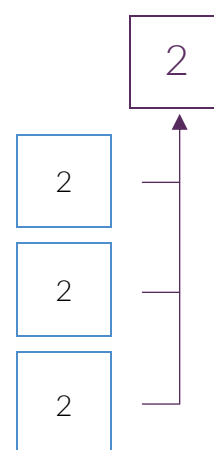
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils development of knowledge and skills is at least in line with expectations by the time they leave Year 6. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they are learning and confidently recall previously acquired knowledge. In the majority of year groups there is evidence of progress, which is shown through the checking in and checking out process. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils confidently made links between Jesus' mission and how they should care for the common home. In lower Key Stage 2, pupils responded well when challenged in their understanding of the meaning of the liturgical calendar. Levels of religious literacy are high with even the very youngest pupils being able to articulate a variety of reasons why we celebrate in church, using subject specific vocabulary. In the best lessons observed, pupils showed the highest levels of engagement when allowed to be independent and take initiative. This good practice now needs to be extended to other classes. Work in books and floor books is of a good standard, with pupils taking pride in their presentation and keenly explaining their learning

opportunities. Some pupils did express that they would like the opportunity to write more at length in order to demonstrate the depth of their understanding.

It is evident that teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. Planning is developmental and builds on prior attainment. Teachers know their pupils well with strong relationships ensuring that lessons are calm and focused. In some lessons, teachers use questioning to deepen understanding and provoke theological thinking, such as asking, "Does not attending church mean that you don't have faith?" Religious education is highly valued and more than sufficient teaching time is devoted to it. Feedback, both in the moment and written in books, supports pupils in understanding what they need to do next to make progress. In all classes the dedicated support staff are effectively deployed to provide high quality input and enrich the learning experiences. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs who are supported with love, patience, and compassion. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to engage in the Word of God through their religious education; this was evident when scripture was skilfully interwoven in a Key Stage 1 lesson about community.

The passionate and proactive religious education subject leader truly leads by example. She has a clear vision for her subject and galvanises others to ensure that they share this with her. She has a comprehensive overview of standards, areas of strength and focus for development within her subject and an ambitious plan for further improvements. The religious education governor is highly committed to her role and knows first-hand the standards within school and what the next steps are. Religious education is comparable to other curriculum subjects and leaders and governors demonstrate their commitment to the subject through resourcing decisions. As part of the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust, staff have continually benefited from high quality training and support which has undoubtedly had a positive impact upon standards. Regular professional networks have created opportunities for moderation and sharing of best practice. The self-evaluation of religious education is detailed and accurately informed by effective monitoring. Leaders now need to consider ways to further enrich pupil's experiences in religious education to make them even more memorable and engaging.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

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

2

Pupils show reverence and participate with confidence in liturgy, joining in with responses with a sense of purpose and understanding the importance of prayer as members of a Catholic school. A member of the Growing in Faith Together team said, 'Every time we pray we get closer to Jesus'. Pupils talk confidently about the liturgical year and the colours associated with the season. They are familiar with scripture and can articulate how the Word of God relates to their everyday lives. Over the last two years, there has been a clear focus on developing approaches to pupil led liturgy and significant progress has been made in this area. Pupils of all ages are given the opportunity to plan and lead class worship and they do this with enthusiasm. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils spoke proudly about the ways in which they had previously supported younger classes in their pupil led worship and their desire to do this more. In the most effective prayer and liturgy observed, pupils were given time to pause and reflect before sharing their thoughts and feelings; this time for quiet reflection needs to be a consistent aspect of all prayer and liturgy. The oldest pupils confidently and independently plan and lead gatherings, taking great pride and ownership of this.

Prayer is at the heart of life at St Gregory's. There is a daily pattern of prayer and weekly liturgy across the school that is effectively planned by the leadership team. Relevant and appropriate scripture, symbolism, and resources are used to enhance the experiences for the pupils. Teachers are supported in their planning of prayer and liturgy and are increasingly confident in their ability to create opportunities for pupils to be involved at an age appropriate level. All staff are role models of good practice. The staff fully engage in all aspects of the prayer life of the school and as a result, pupils readily follow their lead. Music and singing are used to enhance the atmosphere of prayer and liturgy and pupils join in with communal singing with energy and gusto. Pupils understand that prayer is a way of connecting with God. An Early Years Foundation Stage child said, "Is it time to talk to God?". All classrooms have visible, interactive prayer spaces, and a newly developed sanctuary room has been carefully designed to provide a place for

reflection and contemplation. In some of the gatherings observed, pupils were given a very clear go forth message, this was not consistent however, and leaders recognise that this needs to be a fully applied aspect of their policy so that pupils always take with them a focus to impact positively upon their lives and the lives of others.

Governors are fully involved in the prayer life of the school, attending gatherings regularly and being a visible and supportive presence. There is a clear calendar in place to allow the community to gather and celebrate the Eucharist at key times of the liturgical year, and some of the ways in which pupils contribute to this. Leaders now need to clarify expectations regarding the level of pupil involvement and leadership through a clear and progressive skill strategy policy. Leaders support the sacramental programme and this is welcomed by the parish priest. Professional development and formation are given a high priority and this is recognised and appreciated by all staff. A recent visit to the Laudato Si' centre provided an opportunity for staff to link together Catholic life and mission, prayer, and the bishop's vision for the diocese. School is well resourced to deliver prayer and liturgy, and the progress that has been made in this area since the last inspection deserves real recognition.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147631
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3502026
Full postal address of the school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Presto Street, Farnworth, Bolton, BL4 8AJ
School phone number	01204332658
Headteacher	Kelly Watson
Chair of Local Governing Body	Lee Berry
School Website	www.stgregorys.stoccat.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Teresa Of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	11 th November 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Helen Sullivan
Vannessa Knowles

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