CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School

URN: 140640

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Most Rev. John Wilson, the Archbishop of Southwark

05–06 June 2024

Summary of key findings

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

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

What the school does well

- Pastoral care is a huge strength
- Students demonstrate excellent leadership skills
- Leaders ensure that religious education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of students
- Staff student relationships are very strong and effective
- The embedded culture of welcome celebrates everyone

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed systems to enable students to take a greater role in the planning and leadership of school prayer and liturgy.
- Embed consistency of marking and feedback so that students can identify how to improve.
- Devise systems to ensure student voice and other relevant stakeholders are integral to the school's self-evaluation.

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

2

The parish priest described St Gregory's as a welcoming community which 'celebrates everyone.' Students said they 'love a sense of community, friendship groups and good relationships between students and between staff and students,' and where, 'every child is known and loved.' Parents stated, 'the school is a wonderful welcoming community and all of my children have been cared for both physically and spiritually.' Further, 'the school offers a strong sense of faith and are very inclusive.' Students understand Catholic social teaching; they take part in charity events such as soup days or charity walks and clearly understand why they do this, 'because God tells us in the Bible.' Behaviour is good and there is a calm atmosphere where students feel safe and know with whom to talk if facing difficulties. Student groups such as the school council are excellent role models for their peers. Students led on growing the student chaplaincy team significantly and initiated a way of celebrating teachers by giving a 'slip of appreciation' to staff recognising their work. Student artwork identifies the names of the buildings, such as a life-size painting of St John Henry Newman in the Newman wing.

The mission statement, 'every child is known and loved' is a clear expression of the Church's mission for education. It is rooted in the charism of Pope St Gregory the Great, and is embraced and lived out by staff who are role models for students in caring for others and encouraging them to participate in charitable events. Catholic social teaching is mapped across the curriculum with explicit displays highlighting Catholic social teaching principles in different departments. The inclusive nature of the school is exemplified in the St Francis de Sales Centre for the Deaf. Deaf students are shown how they can be included in all aspects of school life, supported well by additional adults and students visit the centre regularly to learn British Sign Language. Parents stated, 'the pastoral care is exemplary,' where 'staff go above and beyond to support and nurture the students.' The environment reflects the Catholic character and charism which impacts on the Catholic experience of students. A governor stated, 'It makes a real difference to the lives of students.' The environment fully reflects the school's

mission and identity, for example significant investment in the school chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Relationship, sex and health education uses TenTen resources and meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

The development of the Catholic life and mission is a priority by leaders and governors. Regular meetings are held with the person in charge and reports feedback to governor meetings. This is also part of the strategic direction of the Trust which supports the governing committee through 'excellent training.' Parish clergy state they always are welcomed into the school and supported in, for example, a stewardship appeal to which they had a 'great response.' Most parents understand the school mission statement and are highly supportive of it stating that they have been 'involved in parent forums to discuss the ethos and mission of the school,' and feel their voice is heard and are 'very impressed with the school and the Catholic mission.' The pastoral care of staff is a high priority stating that 'it is readily apparent that the staff care deeply for the students and for one another.' Staff expressed that they are cared for as individuals describing the school as 'an amazing family.' New staff are welcomed and given a clear understanding of what it means to teach in Catholic education, this is supported by ongoing professional development provided by the Trust and the diocese.

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

Students are developing secure knowledge which reflect the *Religious Education Directory*. They described religious education as 'interesting with different views.' They particularly enjoyed learning about faith and 'the array of different topics.' One student stated, 'I love RE because it gives me opportunity to explore other religions and social and moral issues in daily lives.' Another student stated religious education 'opened my mind' and another stated that it was 'inspiring, more advanced explanation of the world, cultures and traditions' and showed that 'actions have consequences.' Using retrieval strategies students identify previous learning and make good progress. A parent stated, 'My child enjoys RE lessons and really looks forward to exploring it at GCSE level.' Students are religiously literate, able to discuss key terms about topics related to for example, Judaism, and can quote and explain Bible passages. During a session on inclusivity in the deaf centre a student in response to a question about extempore prayer stated, 'it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.' Through a good range of tasks and application of the assessment policy, students can present their work in a variety of ways and most students know how to improve. This needs to be consistent across all groups. Students are achieving at least in line with other core subjects.

Teaching is never less than good. Most lessons begin with a retrieval exercise to enable students to demonstrate prior learning, and students said that their lessons had a variety of activities which they enjoyed and helped them progress in their learning. For example, students were encouraged to move around the classroom reviewing information on Jewish festivals and extracting relevant information, thus developing their analytical skills. Behaviour for learning is good, and questioning enables students to demonstrate their understanding and use of key vocabulary. Adaptive teaching is enhanced by using differentiated resources and other adults which enables students to access the content. Students are confident in verbalising answers and a signer ensures deaf students can access and take an active part in lessons. Scaffolding activities and a pair and share activity showed students engaged and demonstrates sound religious literacy and the use of evaluation questions, responses to

which showed clear understanding of the topic, further develops student skills. Space and time is given for students to reflect upon their work and teachers praise good student responses explaining why the response is good.

Leaders and governors ensure religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory,* and resourcing fully supports its delivery. The curriculum covers all key stages, and the KS5 core religious education programme has been devised to reflect the *Directory*. The department is well staffed with well qualified specialists, timetabling meets Bishops' conference requirements and policies such as homework and reporting to parents are equitably applied to all core subjects. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision for outstanding teaching and learning and has had a significant impact upon the development of religious education since her appointment. Her expertise has led to much greater confidence and passion among staff for religious education. Governors ensure opportunities are provided for professional development in embedding the *Directory*. The curriculum is devised to provide a sequential approach which is planned to meet the needs of all groups of students. Governors ensure staff professional development has a high priority. Self-evaluation of religious education is carried out by governors through regular lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and regular meetings with the subject leader. Reports feed into the regular governing committee meetings and lead to targeted improvements. Governors monitor standards in religious education through rigorous analysis of data.

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

Students respond well to and participate in prayer and liturgy through, for example, sharing traditional prayer, and silent reflection. Prayer uses symbol, for example, a candle was lit and blessed by the parish priest to mark the beginning of the examination season and was kept burning in the chapel throughout the day. Students undertake ministries such as reading and thorough the use of examen evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy. Music is used to create a prayerful atmosphere and relevant hymns are sung. Signers help those with hearing difficulties participate fully. Prayer and liturgy is linked to Catholic social teaching through, for example, a reflection on solidarity with the poor. Students are given the opportunity to reflect upon current events for example they remembered D-Day and linked it to Corpus Christi and sacrifice. Students recognise the impact upon the wider life of the school and upon families. A parent shared his experience of leaving his Year 11 daughter at a friend's house, to prepare for a GCSE examination, the two friends prayed for each other before entering the examination room. A parent stated, 'Each individual's relationship with God is different and the school promotes, nurtures and supports this.' This is exemplified by Muslim students who shared that they were able to participate in prayer in their own way.

Planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school with a rhythm of prayer which includes, for example, morning prayer, teacher-led collective worship and voluntary opportunities such as Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Parents stated, 'prayer is regular at St Gregory's at the end of every lesson and also in all parent meetings.' Liturgically appropriate scripture is chosen enabling student participation. Class prayer books provide opportunities for students to write their own prayers and reflections. For example, one student wrote in the class prayer book, 'make more friends as my life goes along and please help me create a healthy relationship with them.' The beautiful chapel provides a space conducive to prayer and reflection. Staff are models of good practice encouraging quiet reverence in this 'sacred space.' The school seeks to work well with local parishes. Clergy are welcomed to the school and celebrate Mass and other liturgies. The head teacher accompanied by

students join parishes on Sundays for Mass and to meet parishioners which has led to them becoming involved in the school. The enthusiastic student chaplaincy team are very knowledgeable about and have the skills to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. They also spoke of their experiences on retreat which enhanced their spiritual life.

The policy on prayer and liturgy has been subject to scrutiny by the governing committee and as a result is carefully formulated, regularly reviewed and fit for purpose. Leaders understand students' different levels and skills of participation and there are great opportunities for growing student leadership through for example the student chaplaincy team. The liturgical calendar provides opportunities for the celebration of the Eucharist on holy days and the patronal feast. Provision is made to ensure all can access the Mass. Provision is made for local clergy to be available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the school which is open to all in the community. A significant budget has enabled the development of the chapel into a sacred space accessible to all. Students have great enthusiasm for leadership which should be channelled into increased student-led prayer and liturgy. Students evaluate prayer and liturgy which is collated and fed into reports to the governing committee. The school should devise systems whereby this feedback and that of other relevant stakeholders become integral to self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School
School unique reference number (URN)	140640
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8865435
Full postal address of the school	St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School, Reynolds Lane, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9XL
School phone number	01892527444
Headteacher	Michael Wilson
Chair of Local Governing Body	David Lain
School Website	http://www.sgschool.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Stephen C Horsman	Lead
Bridget Durrant	Team
Sulumenty Odihambo	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