



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Gregory's Catholic Academy**

URN: 140297

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 7-8 December 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
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

- Leaders, particularly the head teacher, are inspirational role models for the entire community. Their effective monitoring and accurate school evaluation ensure high standards for pupils.
- Catholic life and mission permeate the environment, demonstrating that this is central to all that happens at St Gregory's and every aspect of school life.
- The school's mission statement is the beating heart of the school, with all displaying 'service before self.'
- Progress in religious education is substantial because of the subject leader's vision and staff commitment.

- Pupils at St Gregory's display exemplary learning behaviour, allowing them to progress in religious education.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop and grow Catholic social teaching with all staff across all curriculum areas.
- Provide opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to work alongside older pupils in planning, preparing, and leading 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:.....

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

Pupils and staff can explain the distinctive ways in which St Gregory's is a Catholic school with 'service before self' at the heart of all it does. Pupils clearly understand that they are valued and cared for as unique creations of God. They know the importance of following the teachings and example of Jesus and the principles of the Church's social teachings; they are keen to live these out in the acts of charity undertaken. Pupils take the lead and actively participate in raising money to buy gifts for those who do not have any, as well as supporting vulnerable families. The school's commitment to supporting the community is exceptional. The school shows profound inclusivity, appreciation, and value to everyone. Pupils embrace this welcome and say, 'We follow Jesus' commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you.'" Consequently, pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary. Their engagement in chaplaincy provision is excellent because of its strong profile within the school. Pupils initiate and lead outreach and chaplaincy-based activities, allowing them to support others locally and nationally, for example, through creating leaflets and selling poppies to raise money for the British Legion. Pupils are responsible for caring for the earth as our common home. They recognise that they are 'stewards of creation' and know that acting now can help.

Christ is consciously at the centre of the school's aims and ethos. Its work to help others, particularly those who need additional support, is exemplary. Staff are excellent role models for pupils, encouraging them to bear witness to the school's mission and be good disciples of Christ. A strong sense of community is palpable and infused with Christ's teachings, evident in the quality of relationships at all levels. Everybody is acknowledged as a creation of God, meaning families and visitors are greeted with a warm welcome from the moment they arrive. All school community members are treated with dignity and care because of the excellent Christ-like pastoral provision for pupils and families. This is often targeted to those most in need through 'fair share' and ensures

that the most vulnerable are supported in an exemplary but discreet way. The school's physical environment is exceptionally well cared for and is an excellent witness to its mission. Spaces such as the Marian garden, class prayer areas, and the testimonial area at the entrance effectively promote the school's Catholic ethos.

Leaders and governors are unwavering in their commitment to their school's Catholic life and mission, resulting in a genuine dedication to all the families they serve. Collectively, they demonstrate ambition for the school because they are fully involved in the development and evaluation of it. They have accurately evaluated the enactment of Catholic social teaching across all curriculum areas to be an area for further development. They are supported by All Saints Collegiate, which also effectively holds the school to account concerning Catholic life and mission. Leaders embrace the archbishop's vision for St Gregory's because advice from diocesan officers and requirements stipulated in his directives are enthusiastically embraced. This is demonstrated by the collegiate, which works well with St Gregory's to grow future leaders, helping to secure the future of Catholic education. Parish links are strong, and pupils benefit from a strong, mutually supportive relationship of service. The head teacher is inspirational in her witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ; her passion permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pastoral support for staff is of great importance to leaders, and there is a planned investment and a commitment to staff well-being. Staff training is meticulously planned through in-service training, diocesan, and collegiate events. Consequently, staff strongly understand the school's Catholic identity and are confident in actively supporting its mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

Pupils develop excellent knowledge, understanding, and skills in religious education because teachers have secure subject knowledge and use a range of creative approaches to impart it confidently. Pupils articulately answer questions, make effective and appropriate use of religious vocabulary, and are reflective in their thoughts and written work produced. The positive impact religious education has on their spiritual and moral development is demonstrated in their responses in lessons and their beautifully presented exercise books. Pupil progress in religious education is consistently strong across all year groups. This is due to the meticulous analysis of data and actions taken by leaders and teaching staff, meaning there is a constant drive to continue to improve outcomes for all. Pupils become more religiously literate as they move through the year groups. This is because of the superb modelling by teachers and the school's high expectations for all its learners. Pupils are happy and confident learners. Pupils' engagement and behaviour in lessons are exemplary, meaning it is easy for pupils to concentrate in lessons, and they learn very well. Pupils are curious and ask intelligent questions to challenge themselves further. Pupils clearly understand the progress they are making and how they can further improve their work. Attainment in religious education is high and compares favourably to other core subjects; this has been sustained over time.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, meaning they plan a wide range of effective, creative, and engaging activities for pupils at different ages and stages of the religious education curriculum. Pupils learn very well because most teachers plan lessons, enabling pupils to remember and do more with their knowledge. The highly effective teaching of religious education contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of the subject. As a result of the feedback pupils are provided, they are aware of how to improve the quality of their work. Teachers routinely celebrate pupils' work, which is evident through the positive comments in books and the awarded house points. Staff know the importance of religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Teachers

frequently provide pupils with bronze, silver and gold challenge questions, enabling them to reflect individually on the issues studied at their level. The effective deployment of support staff has been particularly beneficial in engaging boys.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum taught at St Gregory's meets all expectations of the archbishop. The subject has full parity with other core subjects, as indicated in classroom timetabling and the quality of work completed in lessons and books. Subsequently, staff and pupils consider the subject integral to the school curriculum. Staff appreciate the wide range of training opportunities and use the knowledge gained to maximise pupils' learning. Effective training has been provided internally by experienced staff and beyond the school from the diocese and the collegiate. This further demonstrates the commitment of leaders and governors to developing religious education across the school. The subject leader for religious education is a committed, faith-filled role model. She uses her knowledge and expertise to provide high-quality support to other staff, especially those new to teaching. Alongside the head teacher, she is forensic in her monitoring, evaluation, and improvement approach. Her vision for the subject is inspiring, and she works effectively with other senior leaders and staff to ensure this vision is brought to fruition. Subject monitoring is comprehensive, meaning staff are given clear and constructive feedback concerning developing their professional practice, which positively impacts outcomes in the subject. This is especially evident in the support provided to teachers new to the profession.

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 fully immersed in the school's prayer life. This is demonstrated by their engagement, reflectiveness, and reverence in leading prayer and liturgy. They are truly joyful in prayer. All pupils, including the youngest, are very reverent and engage in prayer with the deepest sincerity and levels of respect. This is because of the embedded high expectations and routines surrounding worship. Pupils articulate how prayer and liturgy influence their lives, through the actions that they take in school and in the wider world. Pupils enjoy leading prayer in school and demonstrate confidence in doing so. This is because of the modelling provided by adults. Pupils can fully engage in prayer, select appropriate scripture readings and hymns within the liturgical season. Consequently, they have an excellent knowledge of the significant seasons and feasts in the Church's year as well as knowing the traditional prayers of the Church. However, pupils' physical use of the Bible in worship is not always evident. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to evaluate times of prayer and liturgy, which are evidenced in their Catholic life big books. Consequently, pupils know how they want to improve their future prayers and are given the opportunity to do so.

There is a developed pattern of prayer within the school, central to its daily provision which is fully embraced and lived by all. Significant moments in school and parish lives are identified, planned for, and then celebrated in prayer. Pupils understand that alongside the more formal times for prayer they can also pray independently at other times, such as in the dedicated prayer area on the playground where pupils gathered spontaneously to pray for a pupil's poorly parent. Pupils know that they can pray anywhere and at anytime. Staff are highly skilled in leading prayer and liturgy and act as positive role models. They are confident in leading responses and gestures, and all join enthusiastically with singing, further motivating pupils. The dedicated spaces for prayer are very special; they are well maintained, resourced, and well looked after. Mini Vinnies carry out audits of these areas to ensure they are of a high standard. The star room is a special place for those of other

faiths to pray. Families support the prayer life of the school and value the ability to participate in shared celebrations such as Mass and 'stay and pray' sessions.

Prayer is prioritised by leaders and the celebration of the liturgical year is central to school life. Significant days in the Church's calendar have a high priority. The school's policy for prayer fully reflects the vision of leaders. Staff appreciate the training they receive in prayer and liturgy, and subsequently use what they have learnt to support the pupils' and their spiritual formation. The high-quality training that staff receive encourages them to further reflect and evaluate on their practice so that worship is of the highest quality. Priority is given to resourcing prayer and liturgy with both staff and pupils using relevant materials and artefacts to complement and further raise the profile of worship across the school. Staff formation is given priority and a collegiate training day with an external speaker enabled personal faith development for leaders and staff in the context of being called by God to Catholic education. Older pupils show deep appreciation in leading prayer. They are exceptional role models, though their expertise is not yet fully deployed to help pupils in younger year groups. Leaders and governors are ambitious for prayer at St Gregory's, and are fully involved in the self-evaluation of the school. Consequently, they know the school's strengths and what it needs to improve. They are fully immersed and committed to the school in its journey of 'service before self.'

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	140297
Full postal address of the school	Spring Garden Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 2QN
School phone number	01782 254833
Name of head teacher or principal	Victoria Brickley
Chair of governing board	Anne Middleton-Hill
School Website	saintgregorys.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	All Saints Catholic Collegiate
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Rebecca Nash	Lead inspector
Geraldine McCauley	Team inspector
Vicki Wayman	Team inspector

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