



June 2013

Diocesan Education Service,
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Krystyna Bickley
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St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
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Dear Krystyna

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: June 3rd 2013

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on Monday June 3rd 2013 and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the link governor for religious education (RE) and the parish priest in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 5 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a section 48 inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, a governor representative, the subject leader for RE, and some Year 6 pupils, observed 4 half lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

St Gregory's was an outstanding school at the last inspection and it judges itself to have sustained and built on this high standard of Catholic education. The evidence from the monitoring visit agrees with and validates the school's self evaluation. The quality of the provision for Catholic life and collective worship is outstanding, coupled with the outstanding contribution the pupils make to Catholic life and their outstanding response to collective worship. The processes the school has in place to promote, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of its programmes are both robust and well embedded, with great attention to detail. Pupils have regular opportunities, using questionnaires, to feedback their views on how, for example, their prayer life might be improved or their learning in the lessons. For instance, they wanted to do more creative things in lessons and to have more detail in the topics they cover. As a result the teachers developed more creative strategies and provided very detailed feedback on the impact of every aspect of their planning. Pupil voice is a key feature supporting the self evaluation process and it enables them to interpret the school's Catholic mission in their own way. They take responsibility for the preparation of Mass and liturgies, developing well the skills of planning and presenting their own liturgies, of which they are very proud.

The senior leadership team uses the monitoring processes very effectively, with dated meetings in the development plan to remind staff of their role in coming events, then seeking feedback for future improvements both from staff and pupils through questionnaires. This engenders a clear, accurate and reliable judgement on effectiveness. The school constantly tests the quality of every activity. For example, the staff and governors were able to evaluate their retreat day and also the prayer and meditation course they attended as part of diocesan training. There are regular audits of the quality and impact of the seasonal prayer focus in the classroom, liturgies, and the cross curricular potential in every subject to link back to the topics covered in RE. The governing body take critical note of the annual report and make use of a separate column for governors' written comments. This helps to ensure that governors pay more than cursory attention to documentation and gives them opportunity to evaluate and to challenge where appropriate. The link governor for RE is experienced and proactive, with a close knowledge of the subject. Her frequent learning walks with the headteacher



have a precise focus, the findings of which are then written into a report and fed back to governors and staff. This is a very useful tool because it feeds into the subject development plan which itself is very detailed and monitored closely for measurable progress. Frequent reviews and post mortems on the quality of collective acts of worship are carried out throughout the school and lead to significant improvements over time, as in the growing confidence of many pupils to plan and present their own liturgies and class assemblies. The prayer life of the staff is well supported with opportunities for prayer and meditation. Close links with the other Catholic schools in the cluster have led to joint training, for example, the day on Mass responses with four other schools. The impact of this has been demonstrated in the confidence the pupils and staff have in participating in the school and parish Masses. The school is successful in engaging the parents and the parish, in a variety of ways, for example, joining the pupils in their liturgies and prayers. Their opinions as well as the pupils' are actively sought through frequent questionnaires, and this feedback provides the guarantee for the accuracy and reliability of the school's own evaluative processes.

The quality of the self evaluation of the provision and outcomes of religious education is outstanding. The progress and achievement of pupils at both key stages are above average. This includes those children with special educational needs. Teaching over time is consistently good to outstanding. The quality of the monitoring and tracking of progress is outstanding, because it is consistent and detailed, and does not remain a collection of data. The RE governor specifically, and the rest of the governing body, take a close and informed interest in this subject, monitoring closely that section in the school development plan to ensure that objectives are signed off within the given time scale. The partnership between headteacher and RE co-ordinator is a very effective one in tracking progress and putting in effective strategies to maintain the high level of achievement and to bring all teaching to the highest level through lesson observations and book scrutiny. The school's philosophy is worked out in practice, with constant reference to two main questions: "What do we do now?" and "How can we develop further?" The processes for evaluating the impact of provision are robust, and involve governors, staff and pupils themselves in review, reflection, and planning for each half term's topics and schemes of work. Parents are becoming ever more closely involved in this partnership with their child. The school has brought the benefits of the Inspire Workshop to RE, and in an excellent session Year 3 pupils and many of their parents discussed the Feeding of the 5,000, the only miracle mentioned in all four Gospels, teasing out its significance and its link to the Feast of Corpus Christi. Then children and parents together went on to prepare the parish Mass for the following Sunday and join the whole parish community. The positive parental feedback from these activities is certainly a reliable measure of their efficacy and is resulting in more parents using the *Wednesday Word*, joining in the school Masses and liturgies, the sacramental programmes, and supporting their children's prayer bag use.

A strong feature of the school's self evaluation of Catholic life and RE is its meticulous approach to detail, and its use of feedback questionnaire data from pupils, parents, governors and staff to test impact in every area of the school's Catholic life. This provides an excellent sounding board, which confirms the accuracy and reliability of the school's own judgements and provides the spur to maintain and refine the high quality education that St Gregory's provides specifically in these areas.

The school is an exemplar of highly effective self evaluation and improvement planning.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Skivington
Diocesan Inspector