



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for  
**St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, South Shields**

URN: 149034

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 8-9 June 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	<b>1</b>
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The quality of relationships at all levels is outstanding and contributes to this being a happy school where Gospel Values are at the centre of school life.
- The mission and ethos of Catholic education are at the heart of this faith community.
- All staff are excellent role models, promoting the mission and Catholic life of St. Gregory's school.
- Teachers' high level of subject knowledge leads to pupils demonstrating very good progress in religious education lessons.

What the school needs to improve:

- Sustain the quality of the self-evaluation of religious education undertaken by leaders and governors in order to maintain high-quality teaching and learning and to enable outstanding pupil outcomes.
- Provide more specific feedback in religious education so that all pupils fully understand and can articulate what they must do to progress in their learning.
- Develop the leadership of Collective Worship through formal monitoring and evaluation, and by offering staff continuous support in developing consistently high-quality experiences of 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

A true sense of community is evident in the quality of relationships and in the inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture. St. Gregory's school is an extremely supportive community, valuing all and ensuring everyone is welcomed in a spirit of hospitality. It is driven by the mission statement, 'We give thanks to God, work together and always try our best', which is lived and loved by the entire community. Pupils have a deep-rooted respect for all and proudly explain how they respect everyone's uniqueness and how school helps them to, 'Come together and follow Jesus'. Pupils proudly commented, 'We are allowed to stand out and make a difference'. All pupils are respectful and kind, demonstrating practical care and deep concern for the most vulnerable. This is reflected in the positive response of pupils to charitable activities, such as collecting food for Key Projects foodbank and the work of the Mini Vinnies in fundraising campaigns. Mini Vinnies and class captains talk passionately about their work towards the 'Live Simply Award' and how important it is. Pupils are highly motivated to work for the common good. They feel a lived sense of belonging because of the strong ethos of welcome, reflecting the teachings of Christ. Pupils and families feel valued and cared for because staff are deeply committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect.

A powerful sense of community runs through school. Staff are fully committed to the school's mission. They embrace the Gospel Values and are excellent role models. Pastoral care and nurture of all pupils are a high priority. The love and care demonstrated for pupils is evidenced through voluntary lunchtime mindfulness sessions, which support wellbeing, are anchored in spirituality, and are linked to Gospel teachings. This high level of pastoral care is widely appreciated by parents. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about school and very supportive

of its work. One parent commented, 'St Gregory's is a wonderful school where children are taught to value themselves'. Another commented, 'Gospel Values are at the heart of school and staff are dedicated in nurturing all children'. Pastoral care is very strong; pupils know they are genuinely loved and unique in the image of God. All pupils and families are well supported through high quality mindfulness programmes such as 'Tranquil Treehouse' and other 'Healthy Minds' projects. These programmes are well-received and valued by all. The provision for relationships and sex education (RSE) is well met, being taught in line with statutory and diocesan requirements, firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church.

Leaders are highly ambitious for St Gregory's. They are dedicated to ensuring pupils experience an enriching Catholic education that provides excellent formation. Governors make a significant contribution. They are supportive of the school's mission, and are actively involved in its evaluation, whilst offering challenge and support. They proudly value links to the Church, fully supporting the school in its core mission. New staff are fully supported, and training is tailored so that Catholic life and mission of school are consistently strong. Leaders are exemplary role models, creating a highly supportive culture, where the well-being of staff and pupils is paramount, resulting in an ethos of mutual respect and growth. Staff are treated with respect and dignity, resulting in a highly motivated and committed staff team. Staff feedback highlights how they feel valued and supported. School leaders have successful strategies for engaging with parents and, as a result, parents have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.

## 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



As a result of well-planned teaching sequences, pupils demonstrate very good subject knowledge and understanding in religious education. From variable starting points pupils make good progress, with no significant variation between groups of learners. Pupils are very well-engaged and highly articulate about previous and current learning. They talk confidently about their work, using religious vocabulary accurately and confidently. Pupils have outstanding religious literacy which begins in reception class and continues to develop through to year 6. As a result, pupils are confident, knowledgeable and can explain how their learning in religious education helps them to be the best they can be. Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour for learning. This is a result of staff ensuring that pupils are provided with creative and exciting stimuli to enable them to reflect on their responses. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because ‘the teachers make it fun and help us to understand what we are learning’. The coverage and progress evident in pupils’ books endorse the findings of monitoring undertaken across the school. Attainment in religious education is strong, with most pupils meeting age-related expectations by the end of the key stage.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, well informed by ongoing training and support from the subject leader. There is a culture of staff working together with dedicated support from senior leaders to ensure that teaching is never less than good. Teachers enable pupils to reflect meaningfully on the learning objectives of each lesson and make skilful use of questioning to respond to each pupil’s level of understanding. The use of ‘The Big Question’ is becoming well embedded throughout school. Lessons are well structured and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers adhere to the school’s marking policy, recognising and valuing pupils’ efforts, and encouraging and supporting pupils to do their best and to

understand how to improve. Pupils talk confidently about how their work is assessed and how they can access extension questions but are not as confident when articulating what they need to do to improve their work. Leaders effectively target actions to support newer staff to ensure that consistently high-quality teaching and learning is evidenced across all year groups. Strong links are increasingly being made between religious education and other curriculum areas. The development of Catholic Social Teaching through the wider curriculum is extremely strong and effective. Teachers understand the centrality of religious education in the spiritual and moral development of pupils which results in the high status they give to the subject.

Leaders maintain religious education at the heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and that it is given as high a status as other core subjects. The intent and implementation of the curriculum have been carefully considered and learning is very effectively sequenced to meet the needs of all pupils. Prior learning is very effectively enhanced and built upon. Leaders are committed to training all staff in developing them to ensure that all pupils receive high standards of teaching. All staff benefit from excellent support for their own spirituality and to secure their subject knowledge, resulting in good outcomes for pupils; this has parity with other core subjects. Leaders use a variety of approaches to monitor the effectiveness of the school's work and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They have a clear vision for teaching and learning and a good understanding of how and what effective action is required to secure improvements. All monitoring judgements are reported to the local governing committee on a regular basis.

## 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 .....

2



Prayer and liturgy are central to school life and praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. Pupils experience a wide variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities and particular enjoy singing, doing so with great enthusiasm. They recognise prayer as an essential part of school life and display very positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy, which they engage in very respectfully. Themes for prayer are reinforced in lessons, ensuring all pupils understand them and can apply them to their lives and the lives of others, such as the situation in Ukraine. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and make good connections to the cycle of prayer and liturgy in school. They write thoughtful prayers and reflections and discuss their faith eloquently, articulating their genuine spiritual relationships with God. One child commented, 'We don't always know if our prayers are heard, but we just believe that God is always listening'. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to prepare and lead prayer times and fully understand their role when leading liturgical prayer, undertaking these with great confidence. Many pupils are beginning to develop their skills when evaluating acts of worship, identifying how they can make further adjustments and improvements.

Prayer and liturgy are the heartbeat of this school community and make a very good contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of all pupils. The rhythm of the school day is built around regular prayer, and praying together has a positive impact on the school's sense of community. There is a clear policy for prayer and liturgy which is effectively planned and resourced to reflect the Church's liturgical year, offering a variety of quality opportunities and experiences for all members of the school community. Scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy and are carefully chosen to address the theme and liturgical season. The use of carefully chosen music, visual images and displays in and around school continue to

support and inspire prayer. Sacred focal areas evident in all classrooms and are used creatively and with reverence, providing further encouragement for prayer and reflection. All staff are committed to providing a spiritual model of prayer and liturgy which allows pupils time for reflection, leading to a commitment to go forward and act differently. Parents are invited to partake in many of the planned liturgies and acts of worship planned across the year. One parent commented, 'It's great to be part of the liturgies as they are always so special'.

Leaders have a secure understanding of high-quality prayer and liturgy ensuring that prayer and worship are relevant and have a clear purpose and message. They place high importance on clearly relating prayer and liturgy to the lived experience of the school community. New staff are well-supported in the planning and leadership of prayer and all staff are provided with opportunities for professional development that includes liturgical formation. The views of pupils and parents are gathered at regular intervals, and these help the school to know how well it is doing. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of prayer and liturgy within the school. However, this monitoring and evaluation is not always formalised to show impact on further improvements. Relationships between governors, the parish priest and the school are very strong. Consequently, they provide effective support mechanisms to pupils, staff and the whole community. Parents are very supportive towards the school, and they highly value the contribution prayer and liturgy makes to the spiritual formation of their children.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149034
Full postal address of the school	Harton House Road East, South Shields. NE34 6DZ
School phone number	0191 4552909
Name of head teacher or principal	Alison Dunne
Chair of governing board	Michael Puech
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-gregorys.co.uk">www.st-gregorys.co.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Elaine White	Lead inspector
Leigh-Anne Young	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