



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL STOKE-ON-TRENT

Inspection dates 21st-22nd February 2012
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 - 11 years
Number on roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Ann Middleton Hill
School address	Spring Garden Road Longton Stoke-on-Trent ST3 2QN
Telephone number	01782 235340
E-mail address	stgregory@sgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2009
DFE School number	861/3488
Unique Reference Number	134667

Executive Headteacher Mrs Margaret Yates

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 2 full RE lessons and several classes were visited during RE lessons with the headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed an assembly, attended a whole school Mass and went on a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about collective worship, evidence which will eventually be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Gregory's is a larger than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Gregory in Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. Longton is a mixed area of council and private housing with a high level of unemployment. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 71%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 22%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion with special needs and/or disabilities. Attainment in RE on entry is below the national average overall. In September 2010, the school formed a collaboration with another small Catholic primary school, under the leadership of the executive headteacher.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Gregory's Catholic Primary School judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic school. In its Catholic life, collective worship, progress and attainment in RE its judgements are fully justified. This is also true of the school's judgement that the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. The headteacher and her senior leadership team are experienced and skilled in monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement. They know the school intimately, as do the members of the governing body. The parents hold the school, its Catholic life and RE in very high regard. Whilst the school has rigorous and effective monitoring procedures in place, which are analysed and lead to highly effective planning for improvement, it needs to be more explicit when communicating these to others in the self evaluation process.

School self evaluation

The strength of school evaluation rests in senior leadership's detailed and thorough knowledge of the children, parents, staff and a culture of openness and a determination to seek excellence. Monitoring of lessons is carried out regularly by observation and learning walks. Attention is rightly focused on pupils' learning, progress and attainment rather than style of teacher delivery. Whilst feedback is positive and good practice is acknowledged harder messages on weakness in teaching and learning are given and accepted in a professional manner. Judgements that teaching is predominantly outstanding is supported by developing assessment procedures, work in books and on display and 'learning walls'. Any area of weakness is tackled effectively and appropriate interventions put in place. Work found in books is exceptional and pupils from Foundation Stage to Year 6 are able to recall the things they have learnt with confidence and considerable

knowledge. They are also able to reflect on the meaning of the things that they learn in RE has on their own lives. One child commented that the things he learnt in RE 'shows in my spiritual being.' School self evaluation of RE pays attention not only to progress and attainment of knowledge but the impact it has on the spiritual development of the pupils.

The curriculum is closely monitored and great attention is paid to ensuring its quality and enrichment. Newly qualified and non-Catholic staff are exceedingly well supported in the delivery of the curriculum. Planning is done in partnerships, with experienced teachers supporting those with less experience. The subject leader provides much support for those few members of staff that are unsure of their subject knowledge. Plans are thoroughly monitored and every opportunity sought to enrich the curriculum through excellent sacramental programmes, multi-cultural provision and a range of activities. The curriculum is regularly reviewed by senior leadership with the support of a very committed parish priest

The Catholicity and worship life of the school is judged by the school to be outstanding. Inspection verifies this to be an accurate judgement. Whilst both the provision of collective worship and pupil response are frequently reviewed by senior leadership and evidence found in minutes more formal evidence of monitoring should be in place. Importantly though it is evident that collective worship is constantly developing and improving. A high level of pupil involvement in planning, preparing and delivering liturgy is evident.

The high quality of school self evaluation and the effective plans that have been drawn up in partnership with the partner school in the collaboration demonstrate the school has an excellent capacity to improve. Leadership is outstanding and the strong culture of nurture and sharing of best practice coupled with a determination to eradicate any weaknesses have created a whole school desire for development and improvement. Governors are also fully involved in the school's evaluation of its Catholic life and RE. They not only able to articulate the evaluation of these aspects of the school but are also involved in the processes of collecting evidence

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils are consistently outstanding across the school. Attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 is high. Pupils with learning needs make very good progress in RE because they are well supported, have a high level of self esteem, and are presented with challenging but appropriate work. More able pupils throughout the school make exceptional progress because they too are presented with appropriate challenge. 'Challenge' is a by-word and a feature of learning throughout the school. In her assemblies the headteacher sets challenges around learning and spiritual development to which pupils respond by email. The level of enjoyment of RE is high and pupils talk enthusiastically about their lessons and learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of lessons.

On the basis of the evidence of their attitudes values, relationships and commitment to the school, pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding. Pupils' understanding of vocation is excellent and they know they are seeking 'to be what God has called us to be'. They have an excellent understanding of how they should behave as a follower of Jesus and the importance of forgiveness. One pupil commented that he loved being in school because 'you are always respected by everyone'. They do show care, love and respect to those around them and take pleasure in each other's

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

successes. Collective worship is outstanding with pupils enthusiastic in the preparation and participation of prayer and liturgy. Many pupils voluntarily visit the beautiful prayer room which is themed to reflect the liturgical season. They are very familiar and comfortable with a range of prayers and ways of praying.

Provision overall is outstanding with a predominance of excellent teaching which encourages first-rate learning and high achievement. Planning is highly effective and takes into account prior learning. Assessment for learning is in place but needs further development a newly established moderation process is in process of being embedded. Marking is developmental and focused on RE objectives. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and there is evidence of some excellent opportunities to learn about and from other religions, respecting the lives and cultures and beliefs of others in and beyond the school community. There is some impressive adaptation of sacramental education for pupils of other faiths.

St Gregory's is an outstanding Catholic school in which all pupils flourish and benefit greatly from its vibrant Catholic life and excellent teaching and provision of RE.

Recommendations

Develop more formal processes for moderating and evaluating collect worship in the school in order to demonstrate the quality of liturgy overtime.

Embed levelling of pupils' work in RE, to ensure accuracy of assessment.

Broaden and develop opportunities for staff and pupils to work and worship together with the school's partner in the collaboration.



Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill.
B46 3EA

March 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, February 2012

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school judged itself to be outstanding in its Catholic life and RE. The inspection found that this judgement is fully justified because

- Your children flourish and benefit greatly from the school's vibrant Catholic life.
- Pupils achieve better in RE than in many other schools.
- Children make outstanding progress in RE because teaching is always at least good and often outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and care for each other are outstanding and reflect Christian values and teaching.
- Children respond exceptionally well to the collective worship they help so skilfully to provide.
- RE and the Catholic life is very effectively led by the headteacher and her leadership team.

I have recommended that the school develops more formal processes for monitoring and evaluating collective worship in the school in order to demonstrate the excellent quality of liturgy overtime. I would like teachers to further develop their understanding of levels of attainment in RE so that they can better inform you and your children of their progress. I have recommended that the school should continue developing its links with its partner school, St Maria Goretti, so that staff and pupils can work together and learn from each other.

Your children's contribution to the excellent Catholic and prayer life of the school is outstanding. Throughout the inspection they were welcoming, courteous and informative. They are justifiably proud of their school. I thank you, on behalf of the Diocese, for the part you play in supporting your children on their journey of faith.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Diocesan Education Service

Diocesan Inspector