

DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

(Part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust), Avalon Court, Hemlington, Middlesbrough, TS8 9HU
 School Unique Reference Number: **142373**

Inspection dates:	29 – 30 June 2022
Lead inspector:	Andrew Krlic
Team inspector:	Angela Spencer

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St. Gerard's is a warm and welcoming school that is truly inclusive. All members of the school community live out the school's mission statement of 'Walk then as children of the Light'. Staff go above and beyond for the pupils in their care
- All pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. The school nurtures the parents as well as the children.
- Religious Education is outstanding because all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and can mostly articulate their learning confidently. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their behaviour for learning is exemplary
- Teachers at St. Gerard's are passionate about their role, teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Some pupils are not clear about how they can improve their work because marking and feedback is not consistently of the highest standards
- Pupils are actively engaged in Collective Worship; they are proud of their faith and enjoy expressing it. Most pupils are confident to design and lead Collective Worship. They have the opportunity to lead both traditional and contemporary worship types. However, there is at present, insufficient capacity to fully embrace the ambitious plans the school has for further development of Collective Worship, including further opportunities for parental engagement in Collective Worship.
- Leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The executive head teacher and head of school are dedicated and committed to the school's mission. They articulate the vision for the school clearly. Together all leaders promote and monitor the Catholic Life of the school effectively. They have successfully implemented improvements to outcomes for pupils across the school.
- The school has successfully addressed the key issues raised in the last inspection.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Gerard's is a small Catholic Primary school with 173 children on role, which serves Hemlington, a suburb of Middlesbrough on the outskirts of town.
- The school is in an area that is predominantly white working class with high deprivation and complex social issues. 53% of the school's population are from the top 10% most deprived schools in England for the income deprivation affecting children index.
- St Gerard's is part of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, a group of twenty-seven schools including four secondary schools.
- Since September 2020, the school has a new executive headteacher appointed for St Gerard's and St Augustine's and in September 2021 saw a new head of school appointed.
- Following the appointment of the executive headteacher a new Local Governing Body (LGB) for both schools was formed and from September 2021 an executive leadership team was formed to share best practice, quality assure and to standardise high expectations for all pupils.
- The school has 70% Catholic teachers and 22% with the catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS)

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop shared leadership of Religious Education by:
 - Providing support and development opportunities in order to allow another member of staff to take the responsibility for Collective Worship across the school
- Continue to re-establish links with the community by:
 - Providing opportunities for parents and other stakeholders to join liturgies and Collective Worship.
 - Further developing the existing links with the parish and wider community post covid
- Improve marking and feedback by:
 - Ensuring that pupils receive clear feedback on precisely where they need to make improvements in their work.
 - Clearly marking in workbooks where pupils have received verbal feedback from the teacher

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- All members of St Gerard's community have a strong sense of belonging to a Catholic school. Opportunities to promote the school's ethos within school are grasped. All pupils benefit greatly from the Catholic Life of the school. A real sense of prayerfulness and calm pervades the school.
- Pupils entering St Gerard's come together to celebrate the spiritual focus of school life weekly and do so with enjoyment and enthusiasm and in a variety of ways.
- Almost all pupils, including those that are not baptised, benefit greatly from the Catholic life of the school.
- Staff have high expectations of all pupils, as a result of this, behaviour in the school is outstanding. Pupils treat one another with respect and are polite and courteous to visitors. Pupils are particularly respectful of those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils enthusiastically live out the mission of the school. They strive to help those less fortunate than them. Examples of this include the CAFOD walk for hunger, walk for water and Christmas CAUSE (Catholics Against Unemployment) boxes within the local community. Parents commented that the work with CAFOD had become a talking point within their homes and has helped to develop their children's view of the world and their sense of inequalities that currently exist.
- Almost all pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others and know that they are made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. They are quick to offer support to others and are polite and courteous to all. The pupils always refer to their mission statement when discussing their own behaviour or the behaviour of others.
- The school has outstanding provision for prayer. Pupils benefit from the use of the school's prayer garden and prayer room which are always available for them to pray and reflect. A key stage one pupil commented 'it is good to be able to take quiet time to myself if I need it, I can talk with God and Jesus in school.'
- Almost all pupils highly value the school's chaplaincy provision, taking leadership roles and actively participating in opportunities provided by the school. Year 4 pupils proudly explained that they had taken part in a retreat to the Lady Chapel as part of their sacramental preparation.
- Almost all pupils take full advantage of the opportunities that the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's mission statement of 'Walk then as Children of the Light' is clearly lived out by members of the school community. Staff members consistently go above and beyond to ensure that this mission statement is implemented across the curriculum and out into the wider community. This was evident during the COVID period where staff catered for pupils academic and social needs. One parent commented that 'families would not have made it through the lockdown period if it were not for the school's care and support.'
- Staff work hard to provide pupils and their families with a range of opportunities to enhance their faith and spirituality. The school regularly holds liturgies and Acts of Worship that involve the wider community.
- Staff have taken part in a 'coming together retreat' which they highly valued. Provision is made by the leadership team for the development of staff member's spirituality. Both the governor and the school's senior leaders place strong emphasis upon staff wellbeing and work life balance.
- The school's curriculum reflects a firm commitment to Catholic social teaching. As a result of this teachers and pupils promote the care of our common home and work hard to respect the dignity of every human person. Displays around the school clearly show the work that has taken place linked to Laudato si and Fratelli tutti. Pupils were keen to discuss relevant environmental issues such as climate change and recycling confidently giving their opinion on such matters.
- The school has clear policies and structures in place relating to the pastoral care of all pupils, this is central to the school's mission. Those who face economic disadvantages are cared for and championed by the school, a good example of this is the school's cause boxes' that support vulnerable families within the locality.
- The school's curriculum for pastoral care is well designed to meet the needs of pupils and extends to families and people within the locality. PSHE and RSE are taught in a cohesive manner and linked to Catholic teachings and principles.
- Pupils were keen to share their 'year of pilgrimage' work which has involved various visits to significant holy places. This has clearly engaged the pupils and developed both their prayer life and spirituality.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority by leaders and governors. The school is extremely well supported by the Academy Trust especially those with responsibility for Catholic Life and RE standards. Leaders at all levels are very ambitious in developing the Catholic Life of the school and this is clear in the formation of the new executive RE leadership team.
- Leaders know and understand their school well. School self-evaluation reflects effective monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements taking place.
- Clear strategic planning and careful self-evaluation is undertaken by school leaders to ensure that the school is constantly improving. The school's strong Religious Education co-ordinator has clear systems in place and is continuously striving to improve standards.
- The school has a well-planned programme of career progression and development to ensure that all staff are well trained to carry out their work. This includes in-house Continuous Professional

Development, (CPD), peer and paired mentoring, access to Diocesan CPD and the highly regarded support from the Academy Trust. As a result of this staff at all levels are well placed to support and develop Catholic Life.

- Governors could clearly articulate the challenge and support they provide for the school's leaders. They understand the school's strengths an area of development. Governors were also keen to promote the wellbeing and work life balance of staff.
- Communication with parents and carers is frequent and informative involving them in the life of the school. Parents commented that St. Gerard's is a family school where everyone is cared for and supported. The school has good links with the local parish and recently the parish has provided additional support to enhance chaplaincy within the school. The school must now ensure that these links with the parish and local community are further developed post pandemic.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

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1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- The pupil's response to and participation in Collective Worship at St Gerard's are good. Pupils sing joyfully, act with reverence and are keen to participate in acts of Collective Worship.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and the approaches required in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities. During the inspection pupils from key stage two had visited the Cathedral to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Peter and St. Paul. Pupils shared information about the Saints with the congregation as part of the homily.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of many pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts. Liturgical music and other forms of prayer are both traditional and contemporary.
- Some pupils participate voluntarily in acts of worship and prayer, they deeply value the provision that the school makes for this.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Praying together and for others forms a key part of the daily experience for staff and pupils. The school also offers a range of opportunities for the wider community to be involved in prayer.
- Collective Worship is also skilfully linked to the Church's wider mission such as the support of the vulnerable and the care for our common home. As part of the going-forth element of Collective Worship, pupils have written to Downing Street encouraging the Prime Minister to take urgent action to support the poor who will be most affected by climate change.
- Collective Worship is given the highest possible priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experiences of Collective Worship are of such a high quality that they are universally cherished by every member of the community.
- A range of Collective Worship takes place within the school on a regular basis from whole school liturgies to small groups. The pupils relish the opportunity to organise and lead this worship and

make strong links to their current work in RE. During the inspection pupils led a Collective Worship that was based on CAFOD's Fair-trade work.

- The school has fostered strong links with the parish and wider community. As a result of this, the school enjoys good attendance at organised worship events and regular 'Family' Mass. It is clear that the school's provision of Collective Worship is highly regarded in the parish and the locality. Parents would welcome further opportunities to be included in their liturgies.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- School leaders have expert knowledge in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. They inspire staff and pupils by modelling this outstanding practice.
- Leaders have secure knowledge of the Church's liturgical year, seasons, and feasts. They employ this knowledge effectively to the school's well-planned curriculum. Pupils benefit through a range of well-planned celebrations and events. During the inspection pupils from key stage two visited the Cathedral to celebrate the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance.
- The highest priority is placed on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. Staff are well supported by the Trust and Diocese in this respect.
- Monitoring of Collective Worship takes place on a regular basis. The school's Religious Education leader has rigorous systems in place to ensure that best practice is shared across the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are encouraged and supported to regularly lead Collective Worship. This is well evidenced by leaders in monitoring files. However, there is not sufficient capacity, at present, at leadership level, to ensure the development of the school's ambitious plans for the future in Collective Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

2

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education Choose an item.

- Pupils really enjoy their Religious Education lessons. Their engagement with the subject is outstanding and they therefore achieve well. Attainment tracking indicates that the vast majority of pupils from their varied starting points show achievement to be good and in line with other subjects
- Pupils of all ages enjoy and value their Religious Education lessons. Older pupils are articulate and demonstrate that they have a commitment to the values and skills they learn. Almost all pupils are focused and engaged in lessons. The depth of understanding was demonstrated by the year 4 students who asked and in turn answered some very challenging questions.
- All pupils concentrate in their lessons and are rarely seen off task. Behaviour is outstanding and all lessons were unaffected by interruptions. The pupils take pride in their work which shows in their RE books and can be seen in the wide variety of displays around the school.
- The interest and involvement pupils show during lessons is a true reflection of the value students give to the quality of and their enjoyment of RE.
- All pupils are focused upon making progress in their learning within lessons. They diligently complete the task that they are presented with and are active learners within lessons. Pupils could articulate the sequence of learning within the RE curriculum and could accurately recall prior knowledge.
- Pupils generally enter the school with a baseline that is below average. Due to good and in many cases outstanding teaching over time pupils leave the school with attainment in Religious Education that is generally above average.
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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The majority of teaching in RE is good with some outstanding examples. Teaching is therefore effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and that they are making progress, good procedures for assessment exist and this enables pupils to make good progress as they are tracked closely.
- Teachers and leaders plan well to ensure the needs of pupils are met. Teachers have good subject knowledge which inspires learners and challenges pupils. This leads to good progress as seen in work scrutiny.

- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, most pupils are motivated and concentrate in lessons. Behaviour for learning in all lessons was good.
- Teachers use observation and questioning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, thus improving learning for most pupils.
- Working walls are used effectively in all classrooms. Pupils make good use of the vocabulary and scripture that is displayed to develop their written work.
- High quality resources, including other adults, are used very effectively to optimise learning for each pupil. Support from teaching assistants during lessons impacts positively upon pupil progress.
- Most staff give good quality feedback that leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and progress of most pupils. Most pupils are given the opportunity to respond which improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve. However, in some instances feedback is not precise enough to allow pupils to make the necessary next steps and it is not always clear where verbal feedback has been given.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school have a clear understanding of servant leadership and carry out their responsibilities in an exemplary manner. As a result of this they are clearly respected by staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education is an asset to the school. She has an inspiring vision for outstanding teaching and learning and a high level of expertise and drive to secure this vision. The school must now look to develop other staff members in order to share some elements of leadership and management of RE.
- The curriculum leader is used effectively to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is at least consistently good with pockets of outstanding teaching within the school.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education shows rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education.
- Well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the leaders and the school which leads to outstanding progress from the pupil's baseline in Religious Education

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

School details

School name	St Gerard's Catholic Primary School
Unique reference number	142373
Local authority	Middlesbrough/Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Terence Patrick Draine the Bishop of Middlesbrough under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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