



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

#### WARRINGTON

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Inspection Date: Thursday 28 February 2019

Inspectors: Deacon Paul Mannings and Mrs Elizabeth Dolan

Unique Reference Number: 111454

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School: Catholic, voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive

Age range of pupils: 11- 16

Number on roll: 991

Chair of Governors: Mr Roger Harrison

Headteacher: Mr Edward McGlinchey

School address: Cromwell Avenue,  
Warrington  
WA5 1HG

Telephone number: 01925 574888

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Date of last inspection: Wednesday 22 January 2014

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- St Gregory's is an 11-16, Catholic voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- There are 991 pupils on roll of whom 635 (64%) are baptised Catholics, with 232 (23%) from other Christian denominations and 42 (4%) from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 82 pupils (8%) who express no religious affiliation.
- The school serves the associated parishes in the Warrington Pastoral Area, with a significant number of pupils drawn from schools in the wider area.
- The school has 114 teaching staff, 57% of whom are Catholic.
- The Religious Education Department has four full time members, together with two who teach part-time in addition to other full-time responsibilities. Five are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Chair of Governors, Headteacher, Lay Chaplain, Head of Religious Education, Second in Religious Education and Head of Personal Social and Health Education have all been appointed since the last inspection.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Gregory's is outstanding in its provision of Catholic Education.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The interview with pupils was a highlight of the inspection process. With confidence and clarity, pupils expressed how they live the school's mission. Furthermore, those consulted in class and in several instances around the school, confirmed the impact that Catholic Life has on their daily lives. Their inclusion in the mission is best expressed through the creation of the Vision Statement, a work in progress that already encapsulates the aims by which pupils aim to serve this school and themselves. This process has enriched their pride in school, and sense of belonging. They are aware that pastoral care and safeguarding underpins a secure basis for their personal development. They have a deep respect for each other. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable, a tribute in itself to the success of much work undertaken in this sphere.
- Pupils embrace the demands that membership of the school community expects. In their own words, this is because mission is, "about who we are and why we are here, and the values we share." *School Council, Young Leaders, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors* and inclusion in the *Warrington Hate Crime Partnership* are key examples of pupil action. Pupils' involvement in the expanded chaplaincy team is increasing and so too is their support for the *Faith in Action* project. There are weekly fund-raising campaigns for many charities (local and global) selected by pupils and supported by their own initiatives. They take full advantage of wide ranging extra-curricular activities because of the pervading sense of wanting to be involved in school life.
- The school's commitment to holistic development includes Relationships and Sex Education that is appropriate to pupils' age and capacity to understand the meaning of loving relationships.
- Pupils are at home in this school because its Catholic Life is fully inclusive of all ranges of beliefs and views. They interact regularly with local schools, parishes and wider diocesan life, specifically in preparation for Synod 2020.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The Mission Statement expresses commitment to partnership, community, service and the realisation of individual potential through spiritual, academic and personal development, with Christ as the sole inspiration. The staff is committed to mission through its example and service toward pupils.
- There is a strong sense of community amongst staff that is reinforced by the provision of training that focuses on the inclusivity of all aspects of Catholic Life.

- The relocated Chapel has been thoughtfully re-ordered. Its sighting at the heart of the campus is a sign of lived Catholicity. It is available for public and private prayer. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved therein, which in itself is appreciated by the community not least in this period following *Adoremus*.
- The full-time Lay Chaplain is inspirational and meticulous in the gradual inclusion of pupils and staff in the wider sharing of chaplaincy. There is interaction between several local clergy so that parish links are maintained. Chaplaincy partnership with homes and families remains a positive work in progress. This includes significant support for those experiencing personal difficulties.
- Provision for the pastoral care of pupils is paramount. Their spiritual and moral development is promoted holistically through prayer, care and focus on individual needs. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is provided within the remit of Personal, Social and Health Education. The aims and objectives are rooted in Catholic Teaching. The content is delivered on designated days with support from approved external agencies. There is a specialist unit in the final stages of Year 9 on the *Sanctity of Life*. The RSE process is about the development of each person made in the image of God.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- At St Gregory's, Catholic Life is a core leadership responsibility. This is specifically expressed by the work of the *Governors Community Committee* that provides rigorous monitoring and well targeted improvements, all expressed in the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document as well as the school's *Statement of Curriculum Intent*. Both focus on *Christ at the Centre* in ensuring a school where God given talents are nurtured. Regular feedback to the full governing body ensures that relevant and regular training is provided for staff, in addition to the induction programme for new staff.
- There are highly successful strategies for engaging with home and community. Parents make full use of the open-door policy that enables prospective and existing school parents to visit any time. It is fact that pupil numbers have continued to increase significantly. This is the result of major impact being made by liaison with primary schools. Its well-structured and continuous provision means that pupils from Years 5 and 6 are invited to attend events at St Gregory's. There is strong interaction between schools' staff. There are *Discovery Days* and *New Pupils Days*. This has resulted in a growth of single-minded confidence shown by new parents' and pupils in their selection of this school.
- St. Gregory's is closely involved in all Archdiocesan networks including *Catholic School Direct*. There are links with several schools in the sharing of best practice. The contents of school policies are informed by national and diocesan requirements and guidelines.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Since the last inspection, until 2018, GCSE results remained consistently above national averages. In 2018 there was a dip in performance specifically amongst some middle band achievers. The higher bands met expectations. Consequently, performance for that Year 11 cohort was good overall. Since then, robust and continued practice in examination techniques and questions has prepared the current cohort well, a fact indicated by assessment outcomes in both Year 10 and 11. Religious Education is a major contributor to the school's Progress 8 performance and ranks high amongst other diocesan schools.
- In Key Stage 3 achievement remains strong with most pupils exceeding their expected rates of progress. This provides firm scaffolding for development.
- Pupils are well motivated by both realistic and aspirational targets, accompanied by carefully mapped learning pathways and differentiation that maximises individual progress according to their starting points and capabilities.
- They are engaged in learning. Ongoing monitoring in class provides security to succeed. Pupils confidently talk about their progress and share outcomes. They are practised self-starters, well aware of how to approach the next stages of their learning. Their behaviour in class during inspection was first rate. They respond well to constant encouragement to become religiously literate and to use their knowledge and understanding effectively. They are encouraged to reflect spiritually and challenged to apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life. These are the reasons why pupils enjoy Religious Education and want to succeed.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.
- During inspection there was notably high-quality teacher enthusiasm, tight planning and consistent levels of pupils working together productively. Teachers presented and explored several difficult topics in ways that captured pupils' interests and evoked much discussion.
- Starters, main content and plenaries seamlessly developed the learning process. Prior learning was at all times effectively recalled and practised. The high-level skills of *Reading*, *Memorising* and *Summarising* are prioritised. These are always linked to pupils' opportunities for personal reflection and meaningful application.
- Teachers used a wide-range of resources. Optimum use is made of independent and collaborative learning. Careful use of time enables pupils to remain on target to complete tasks and share their findings.
- Pupils readily respond to teachers skilled dialogue and questioning which enables them to consider and develop their responses. This is how they are encouraged to participate. Their efforts are listened to and affirmed.
- Scrutiny of workbooks and assessments provides clear evidence of quality marking. The school's policy for assessment is well embedded in departmental practice. The focus is firmly on formative and summative assessments as an integral part of the learning process. High quality feedback enables pupils to know where they are at in terms of progression, which skills they have developed and what they must do to make further progress. In turn this enables their engagement, interest, achievement and progress.
- The quality of pupils written work in exercise books is very high, evidencing progress in learning, pupils' interest and the will to continually improve and succeed.

## How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders, governors, line and departmental management are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- The department has full parity amongst core subjects for funding, accommodation and resourcing.
- Line management, head of department and second in department are deeply experienced, skilled and collaborative. The departmental staff community is equally as committed, hardworking, creative and productive.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document as a highly efficient means of recognising strengths and areas for improvement, is entirely fit for purpose in underpinning the departmental development plan.
- The Religious Education content meets the requirement of the Bishops Curriculum Directory (2012) as well as Archdiocesan requirements. *People of God - Called to Serve* is the framework in Key Stage 3. At the end of Year 11 all pupils are entered for GCSE *Religious Studies Catholic Christianity*, with *Judaism* as the second religion.
- There is significant inclusion of and respect for other faiths, religions and world views.
- Well-constructed programmes of study and supporting resources include full use of Scripture and Church Teaching. In all lessons the daily breaking open and sharing of the Gospel firmly upholds the imparting of *British Values*.
- All classrooms are well appointed with quality display materials, so making them conducive learning bases.
- Leaders and governors have a structured process for tracking and analysis of pupil performance, together with strategies for intervention.
- The quality of teaching is well monitored, through the schools' own processes and by departmental collaboration. There is quality provision for continued professional development, which includes participation in diocesan training and networking.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Prayer and Worship encourages them to contribute practically or personally through thought and reflection. Pupils regard Collective Worship as a time set aside to stop, think and pray.
- Pupils readily take the initiative to actively participate. They are keen to help lead and share year group gatherings. They are equally as willing to help younger or less experienced pupils in preparing their prayer and worship.
- Inspectors attended a year and form group gathering wherein pupils were highly involved in leadership and presentation. In one example there was a modern dramatic presentation of the *Good Samaritan*. Both acts of worship were thought provoking and challenging. They obviously typified the standard of regular provision.
- Pupils are well aware of how the *Liturgical Year* unfolds. They fully appreciate the school's own contribution to personalised liturgy, especially when every class reflects on the school prayer at the end of the final lesson of the week. In fact, this prayer could be a mission statement in its own right.

- Pupils are encouraged to offer their own skills in music, creativity and reading. They are equally as welcome to be part of background preparation.
- They believe Collective Worship is inclusive because it speaks to everyone regardless of faith, age or ability. Pupils regard this as a strength of the school because it provides a forum whereby pupils can listen to and learn from each other. They remarked on how they are confident to express their beliefs and views because there is mutual respect and a safe environment. These are the reasons for how and why Collective Worship makes a strong contribution to pupils spiritual and moral development.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Its provision is inextricably linked to the expression of Catholic Life by ensuring that prayer and thought shared in community is a daily experience for staff and pupils.
- To this end there is an inclusive policy which clearly states that Collective Worship is more than a legal requirement. It is provided to take account of all differentiated needs amongst those who are part of Church, others for whom this is their first or only experience of Church, people of other world faiths and traditions, and some who express no faith or belief.
- The policy informs the coordinator's planning, which is in accordance with the *Liturgical Year*. Themes and resources are efficiently shared each week. Leaders of Collective Worship are encouraged to adapt resources to their own needs. In addition to daily prayer there are voluntary masses and services throughout the year.
- Over time there has been effective provision of training for pupils and staff that has further enriched the fact that this is a praying community.
- Again, the Chapel is a key example of a space for personal stillness, somewhere to take time out or to celebrate as community.
- Classrooms too contain evidence of personal creativity in Collective Worship. Herein there has been the thoughtful creation of prayer spaces. One specific example includes worthily prepared personal intention and prayer cards, completed and displayed in a designated space.
- Collective Worship includes invitations to parents, especially those visiting the school for the first time. It has a prime place during events and days set aside for primary liaison.

### **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- This is evident in the quality of the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document. Its content shows understanding of the nature of Collective Worship and how its provision is essentially for community and personal participation in prayer, assisted by the provision of variety in forms of expression.
- The evaluation of Collective Worship is an ongoing agenda item at *Community Governors* meetings. In response, governors and leadership contribute to Collective Worship through attendance and participation. They carefully consider the outcomes of the monitoring process conducted through learning walks with the essential involvement of pupil progress managers, and by feedback from *Pupil Council*. This opportunity for feedback confirms pupils' appreciation of Collective Worship as inclusive. Monitoring also includes feedback from parents within their feedback and evaluations of their visits to school.

- Leaders at every stage ensure their contribution, formal and informal, is of the highest standard in order to promote best practice. For them Collective Worship is about prayer and reflection and not show or performance.
- Senior leaders carefully consider the recommendations of the coordinator in ensuring training that is entirely appropriate for staff and pupils. This includes continuing to extend the breadth of Collective Worship experiences beyond the campus, for example in increasing involvement with the Lourdes Pilgrimage and in the provision of retreats. It also includes participation in diocesan preparations towards *Synod 2020*.
- Essentially governors and senior leaders ensure that Collective Worship is a genuine expression of the Gospel lived at St Gregory's.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

In the last inspection the single area for improvement was to maintain outstanding achievement and attainment in Key Stage 3. This was to be done by ensuring consistent provision of rigorous individual targets for improvement. This was a task well in progress at the subsequent monitoring visit and subsequently well sustained. The school should now:

Maintain the quality of the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document by:

- Using concise qualitative statements that refer to supporting documents.

Further enrich the successful development of Religious Education by:

- Continuing to increase curriculum provision from 8% to 10% in Key Stage 3 (Key Stage 4 is already compliant at 10%);
- upholding the successful drive to increase pupils' rates of achievement in GCSE through continued practice in examination technique provided in school and by attendance at all Archdiocesan training and networking.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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### CATHOLIC LIFE

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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***