



## **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 140640**

**St Gregory's Catholic School**

**Reynold's Lane**

**Tunbridge Wells**

**Kent, TN4 9XL**

**Inspection date: 14<sup>th</sup>&15<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs. Jackie Almeida**

**Executive Headteacher: Mr. Stephen Adamson**

**Head of school: Mr. Sean McQuillan**

**Inspectors: Mr. Tom Cahill**

**Dr. Janet Croggon**

### **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR

Tel 01689 829331

**Interim Director of Education: Mr Stephen Bryan**

**Publication Date 4th May 2018**



## Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Gregory's is a heavily oversubscribed comprehensive academy situated in the Tunbridge Wells deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Augustine's, Tunbridge Wells; Corpus Christi, Tonbridge; St Dunstan's, Southborough, St Mary's; Crowborough and St Thomas', Sevenoaks. The school celebrated its golden jubilee in 2016.

The proportion of students who are baptised Catholics is 42%. The school takes students from 11-19 years. The number of students currently on roll is 1,206 including 218 in the Sixth form. The school increased the number of places available in Year 7 from 180 to 210 in 2015. The school has secured significant funding for a major building project to accommodate the increase in the number of students attending the school in future years.

The attainment of students on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of students are White British while the number of students whose English is a second language is below average.

Currently the proportion of curriculum time allocated to Religious Education at KS3 and KS4 is 8.3%. This is due to staffing issues which have now been addressed and the school has clear plans to increase curriculum time for Religious Education for the next academic year.

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Gregory's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The progress and achievement of students in Religious Education is outstanding. GCSE results are regularly outstanding and often exceed results in other core subjects.
- The pastoral care and support provided to all students by teachers and support staff is excellent. As a result, students thrive in this highly inclusive and welcoming school where gospel values permeate all aspects of school life.
- Senior Leaders have a clear vision for further developing the Catholic Life of the school and together with all staff are outstanding role models to the students.
- Governance is outstanding with governors regularly visiting the school and attending training sessions for Catholic Life. They are well informed of how the school is doing in Religious Education.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further improve the quality of teaching in order to ensure all students experience outstanding teaching in Religious Education
- Continue to develop and monitor the curriculum offer to ensure at least 10% is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

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## Overall Effectiveness

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

1

### Religious Education

1

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

1

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

1

### Collective Worship

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

1

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## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- St Gregory's is an outstanding Catholic school with students who are loyal ambassadors for the school community and live out its mission statement: "St. Gregory's students make the world a better place because we believe that Christ is at the centre of our living and learning."
- Students have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills and take on roles of responsibility. These include being part of the Chaplaincy team, or Religious Education advisers who are students who give feedback to their teachers on their experiences during their Religious Education lessons. Older students can become members of the 'Greg Squad' who work with younger pupils in feeder schools to build community and help to develop the pupils' understanding in Religious Education. They are also encouraged to act as 'buddies' to new students joining St Gregory's.
- Students are actively encouraged to support those in society who are less fortunate than themselves. They have raised significant sums of money for international charities such as CAFOD and Missio. They have also raised funds for more local charities such as the Weald of Kent Hospice and the Evelina Childrens' Hospital. Students in each learning community are able to suggest which charities they wish to support. Older students also help support older people in developing their ICT skills in a local Cyber Café.
- Students also have the opportunity of attending a range of retreats to help develop their spirituality. All students are able to visit Aylesford Priory as well as the Diocesan retreat centre in Whitstable. The school is also planning a retreat to Worth Abbey for Key Stage 4 students.
- Each Monday during the daily review period, the whole school works on a programme to help students and staff to develop their understanding of the distinctive nature of this Catholic school. The programme has been devised by the subject leader for Religious Education and Chaplain who also provide the resources for the sessions. Review groups at the school are based on the vertical grouping of students from Years 7 to 13. These arrangements make a very positive contribution to building community at St Gregory's.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one parent wrote "The students are exceptionally well cared for at St Gregory's and the Catholic values of the school are reflected in the way students and staff interact with each other." Another parent wrote "We are not Catholics, but my son actively chose this school himself because of the Catholic ethos that students and staff showed on the many open days he attended. He has not been disappointed since starting at the school."



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

- The pastoral care and support provided to all students by teachers and support staff is excellent. As a result, students thrive in this highly inclusive and welcoming school where gospel values permeate all aspects of school life.
- The Chaplain provides outstanding support to both students and staff. Although only in post since September 2017, her impact on the Catholic Life of the school has been impressive and highly valued by the school community.
- The school is very well supported by local Parish Priests who regularly celebrate Masses at the school, as well as offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation to students and staff. They also support teachers and students in Religious Education lessons. The school also organises ‘Grill the Priest’ sessions where students are encouraged to ask the visiting priests about their lives as priests.
- The school has two chapels with the main chapel having the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Both are well used each day and make a very significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The school also encourages those of Other Faiths to use the chapels for prayer and reflection.
- Many religious artefacts and images are located around the school. Of particular note are the images of St Gregory recently installed. These were designed and made by students and staff in the school and are a very fitting tribute to the patron saint of the school.

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

- Senior leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths of their school as well as the areas that require improvement. The experienced and committed governing body provides both support and strong challenge to senior leaders and have clear structures to promote, monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school. As a result, leadership and governance of the school is outstanding.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and they attend Masses and other events such as the annual Carol Service held at the school. They have a committee that receives feedback on the Catholic Life of the school and all governors recently attended a training day exploring the Catholic Life of the school.
- Senior Leaders and Governors have ensured that resources have been made available to support and develop the Catholic Life of the school including the appointment of a full-time chaplain and maintaining the two chapel areas.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

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

- Taking into account the starting points of the students, they make excellent progress in Religious Education and their outcomes are outstanding. Results at GCSE in Religious Education are consistently in line with those of other core subjects and often exceed them.
- Students made clear to inspectors how much they enjoyed their Religious Education lessons. Teachers plan to ensure lessons are both challenging and interesting through a variety of teaching styles, the use of ICT in the classroom and impressive but sensible use of social media.
- Exercise books were marked regularly as were end of topic assessments and students were clear about their targets and the progress they were making.
- Teachers of Religious Education give very generously of their time outside lessons to provide additional support for those who may find certain topics difficult and there is a very extensive intervention programme at Key Stage 4 to support students to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- In Year 12, the numbers opting to study A' Level Religious Education are some of the largest of any subject and much higher than many other Catholic schools. This is a clear indication that students feel they are well taught and very much enjoy the subject.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good**

- The majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good with a few outstanding lessons seen. This is in line with the school's own self-assessment.
- In an outstanding lesson seen during the inspection, the students were discussing the special characteristics of the Messiah and Anointed One as part of the study of Judaism. Students were actively engaged in this well planned and well-paced lesson. The teacher regularly checked the understanding and progress of students and their understanding of key concepts and key words. Extension work was provided for more able students to provide further challenge.
- In lessons where teaching was less effective, there was too great an emphasis on teacher led learning and as a result, pupils were not fully engaged and challenged.
- Assessment is very well developed by the teachers and clearly informs planning for learning and the monitoring of student progress.



- In recent years, the department has struggled to recruit suitably qualified teachers and the quality of teaching has been affected by this. The school has been very proactive in attracting and retaining well-qualified teachers this year. This stability is having a very positive impact on student progress. It will also allow the school to offer more than 10% curriculum time at Key Stage 4 from September 2018.
- The current team of Religious Education teachers are hardworking and committed to improving further the outcomes of the students. They are well qualified and possess excellent subject knowledge. They work as a team and collaborate by sharing teaching resources and supporting one another.
- Parents are very positive about the Religious Education provided to their children. As one parent wrote “The R.E. at St Gregory’s is so much more than a timetabled subject. The students are nurtured, respected and taught how to treat others, to care, to pray, to reflect and to grow into kind thoughtful and responsible adults.”

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

- The curriculum offered by the school meets the content requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools. However, at 8.3% across the school, it does not currently meet the proportion of curriculum time expected by the Bishops’ Conference. This is due to recent historic staffing issues which have now been addressed and the school has clear plans to increase curriculum time for Religious Education for the next academic year.
- At Key Stage 3, the course is based on ‘The Way, The Truth and The Life’ The school has adapted the course to ensure the needs of all the students are met. At Key Stage 4, the school originally opted for the AQA syllabus. The school has now moved to the Edexcel Syllabus A as the department felt this was a more appropriate course for the students at St Gregory’s. At Post 16, all students follow a course based on the NOCN programme.
- The current subject leader has only been in post since September 2017. In a short period of time since, she has transformed the department with her energy, determination and clear vision. As a result, leadership of the department is outstanding. In partnership, the subject leader of Religious Education and the second in charge review and assess the needs of the department in a bid to ensure it benefits both student progress and the whole school community.



- Leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the department and what needs to be improved further. They are unequivocal in their support of the department and quite rightly see Religious Education at the heart of the school.
- The link governor is a regular visitor to the school and the department and provides a very good blend of challenge and support. He ensures all governors are kept fully informed of the developments within Religious Education. He is on the Catholicity, Care and Community Committee of the governing body and regularly discusses the provision for Religious Education.
- Parents are kept fully informed of the Religious Education curriculum through the clear and accessible school website. They are provided with regular Religious Education Department newsletters on a regular basis. The department also makes very good use of social media to keep students and parents informed daily on what is happening in the department.

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- Students respond very positively to the many opportunities for Collective Worship provided by the school. They are respectful and attentive and normally respond well to the high expectations set by the school.
- There is a rich and varied programme for Collective Worship which included Masses, year group assemblies and learning community assemblies. There are many opportunities for prayer and reflection throughout the school day such as during review time, daily morning prayer in the chapel before school and other opportunities including Light Fever which is Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Fridays.
- In a service of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament attended by a member of the inspection team, students entered the small chapel with respect and reverence and responded warmly to the prayers and readings. Some students read their own responses to the images of the Stations of the Cross which they had studied during a review session. Music and candles enhanced the service.
- In another assembly seen during the inspection, the students lead the assembly, which focussed on the life of St Patrick. The students in the audience responded well to the question and answer session led by their peers. All students were made to feel included including a number of deaf students as a member of staff used sign language through the service to support them.
- Another notable feature of the school is that prayers are said in the examination hall before all exams. The students themselves requested this practice. A candle also burns throughout the exam as a sign of God's presence.
- Students spoke warmly of the school band and choir which take part in school Masses as well as services such as the annual Carol Service.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- The Chaplain and the subject leader for Religious Education work closely together to ensure students experience high quality Collective Worship, which deepens their faith and understanding of one another.
- Teachers are provided with high quality training and resources to ensure they know how to provide quality daily Collective Worship. This supports all teaching staff, especially those who are not Catholic.
- The chapels make a significant contribution to the quality of provision of Collective Worship.



**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- The Chaplain and subject leader for Religious Education have a timetabled meeting each week to plan a full programme of Collective Worship, which reflects the liturgical year of the Church. In addition, they meet regularly with the Headteacher.
- Leaders regularly visit review sessions (where daily Collective Worship takes place) and assemblies to monitor Collective Worship.
- Feedback is provided by the students who are members of the Chaplaincy team.

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