



# Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Workington

URN: 149246

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster on:

Date: 1-2 March 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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.....	2
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	2
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
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

- Pastoral support and inclusion, including the support and care shown to vulnerable pupils and those with special needs and disabilities and their families is exemplary.
- Governors and leaders are ambitious for the school and committed to collaborative working to improve outcomes for pupils, they have prioritised regular staff training in religious education.
- St Gregory's provides a very positive learning environment resulting in excellent relationships between staff and pupils.

- Links with the parish have been strengthened and are appreciated in the school and parish communities.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour, including their enthusiastic approach in their role on the school council and Laudato Si group are commendable.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop independent work in religious education so that pupils are provided with greater challenges that will enhance their knowledge and skills in the subject.
- Leaders and governors need to develop systems to evaluate the quality of collective worship across the school, both adult (in class and for the whole school) and pupil led, to ensure the very best practice is reflected in all settings and the responsibility is shared amongst staff. This practice needs to be regular and consider the views and experiences of the whole school community including pupil voice.
- Further develop the role that pupils take in leading, designing and developing prayer and worship throughout the school in a creative manner.

## 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:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

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

2

### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

2

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

2

St Gregory's provides a high level of care for all pupils, which allows them to flourish and feel happy and safe at school. Central to the school's Catholic character is the way it reaches out to welcome all families including those who are vulnerable, with special needs or disabilities or new to the area. This outstanding support is well structured and enhanced by the strong leadership of the acting head teacher, senior leaders and inclusion team together with governors, who recently prioritised funding from the Department for Education to provide free school meals for all pupils in school to help with the current cost of living crisis. The culture of welcome and reaching out to the poor and vulnerable, rooted in the teachings of Christ, is evident in the many interactions that take place around the school. This is reinforced through the active participation in the 'Laudato Si' group, focusing on the Catholic social teaching and the call to care for our common home. One pupil stated the need for action saying 'there's not infinite resources and we need to look after our world'. Pupils demonstrate respect for themselves and for those of other religions, beliefs and those of no religion.

Despite the recent changes, staff provide positive role models in all school activities, reflecting the school's mission statement in action. The pupils appreciate the work of staff and all the opportunities they provide. One stated that 'calm club at lunchtime helps me cope with my day in school.' A child in Foundation Stage stated that 'what Jesus wanted him to do - to love your enemies was very confusing and he needed help'.

Pupils understand that the school community is committed to following Jesus, they accept their personal responsibility to serve those in need and enjoy supporting many charities both locally and globally, for example the local hospice, the crisis in Ukraine and Cafod.

The provision for relationship, health, and sex education meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements, it is faithful to the teachings of the Church and pupils are able to discuss what they have learned in these lessons. Parents were fully involved in the consultation process when the curriculum changed to include this.

Directors, governors and leaders are deeply committed to the school, they exercise their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school extremely well, ensuring Christ is at the centre of everything they do. They promote the Bishop's vision for the diocese and respond well to diocese policies and initiatives.

The school has developed strong links with the parish and parishioners appreciate their presence at Mass, as witnessed in the Year 4 class Mass during inspection. The parish priest is a regular visitor to school and classes use the church as a resource. For example, the reception class was introduced to learning about the Sacrament of Baptism when the parish priest led a role play in church.

The school environment reflects its mission and identity through quality resources and displays reflecting the school's Catholic character, there are plans to develop the outside area with more planting, shared by discussion with the Laudato Si group.

The school is committed to the education of the whole person and provides a range of well-planned and effective opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. For example, the use of the *Care of Creation* materials were used as a focus at the start of the academic year.

Directors, leaders and governors demonstrate respect for the dignity of workers and ensure that the decisions they make respect this. Policies and structures are in place, which provide supportive pastoral care for staff, and there is commitment to both physical and mental wellbeing of staff as evidenced in the recent Wellbeing charter promoted by the Mater Christi Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

The acting head teacher and governors know their school very well. Discussions with parents and the parent questionnaire show that the work that the school does is valued by the school community. Regular newsletters, together with the school website, *ClassDojo* systems and social media communicate effectively to parents and the local and wider community.

New staff to the school are supported well in their induction. In addition there is a guide for teachers on prayer and diocesan training for teachers new to Catholic Education that is followed up by support from leaders in school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2



The school has met the areas for development from the last inspection under the framework that they were set. Religious education outcomes are good because assessment data, pupil's books and the school's self-evaluation show that religious education attainment is in line with the other core subjects.

Pupils speak with confidence about what they have learned in religious education, showing an awareness of some key concepts and using some key vocabulary. One pupil interviewed stated 'I like RE best, because you use it all the time'.

Religious education provision is good, lesson observations and interviews with pupils and staff show there are systems in place to check knowledge at the start of the unit and reflect on learning at the end. There is also what is termed a *Big Picture Sheet* at the start of each new topic in every book. This gives the learning objectives of each unit and should help pupils understand the prior knowledge they are building on and what is to be developed in the coming year. These need to be consistently dated with greater focus on teacher feedback to provide pupils with a clearer understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Time needs to be built in to reflect on their learning and answer any questions from teachers; this practice is effective in some classes but not consistent throughout the school.

Pupils engage well in lessons and show a willingness to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. They enjoy their learning, therefore behaviour is good in lessons. Pupils are well supported by staff. To further improve, focus needs to be on developing independence in lessons and providing more challenge. There is over reliance on worksheets and this restricts the opportunity for pupils to fully express themselves. It limits pupils'

creative responses and their ability to draw on the skills and knowledge they have in other areas of the curriculum.

Most teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge. They are committed to the value of religious education. Planning is linked to ongoing assessment so that most pupils learn well. Questioning during lessons is developing, aiding teachers to identify where pupils are in their understanding, thus improving learning for most pupils.

The acting head teacher, who is also the subject leader for religious education, has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a good level of expertise in securing this vision, ensuring that the school curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (RECD). There is a heavy reliance on a published scheme, chosen to develop subject knowledge and confidence. As these skills grow, further development is needed to be more creative in delivery. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils were observed role playing a trial of the characters in the parable of the Prodigal son, and evidence was seen in books of the staging a freeze-frame based on the story of Samuel, linked to commitment.

Directors, leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing; and scrutinised through work regular sampling at senior leadership and governor level. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to good outcomes. Professional development activities have been made available for all staff, with governors investigating the possibility of engaging more teachers in the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies to improve this further.

Pupils achieve well in religious education when compared to other core curriculum subjects. Progress is accelerated from very low baselines on entry and outcomes are improved by enrichment opportunities. For example, there are visits and residentials to Castlerigg Diocesan Youth Centre at Keswick and a recent visit to the relics of St Bernadette in Carlisle.

Sufficient opportunities are provided for learners to progress sequentially through subject content in readiness for the new *Religious Education Directory* (RED).

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship .....

2

### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school .....

2

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

2



Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of St Gregory's and valued by all. From a young age, pupils respond well to experience of prayer and liturgy; they participate through respectful reflection, joining in prayer and singing enthusiastically, as witnessed throughout the inspection. Prayer and liturgy is appropriate to pupil age and stage of learning. Pupils understand a rich variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. In the Early Years, children know that they light a candle to show that Jesus is the light of the world. Pupils observed in Year 2 placed glass pebbles in a jar on the prayer table to remind them of something they were going to do that week to follow the example of Jesus and be a better person. Pupils are able to recognise and talk about the ways in which prayer and liturgy influence the wider life of the school. For example, they shared a liturgy with the local Catholic cluster in Advent and held a liturgy in response to the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The children were observed praying for the Turkish and Syrian earthquake victims in a Year 4 class Mass.

Prayer is routinely planned and is a central part of every school day, ensuring prayer life of pupils, staff and leaders. Interviews with pupils and observations show that this daily pattern of prayer reflects the liturgical life of the church. Seasonally appropriate scripture is shared across liturgical year with the Sunday gospel shared and reflected on each Wednesday.

Older pupils were observed leading worship for their peers and following the recent prayer leader training for pupils in upper Key Stage 2 they need to develop their role in leading, designing and developing prayer and worship throughout the school in a creative manner.

All prayer and liturgy observed started in a calm manner with music to gather and to reflect. The inspection took place in Lent and seasonally appropriate scripture passages were central to prayer and liturgy, which enabled everyone present to fully participate. Pupils interviewed

said they enjoy worship and are able to discuss what they have learned. Parents, parishioners and governors are welcome to share in the spiritual life of the school through prayer and liturgy. For example, celebrations, liturgical activities and weekly lunchtime Masses are shared in the parish and school community.

Leaders celebrate the uniqueness of St Gregory's community, with support given to the most vulnerable, enabling all in the community to access liturgies, and this was witnessed during the inspection. They understand the liturgical year and are role models to both staff and pupils. Priority is given to high quality professional development for staff and pupils and this needs to be embedded to have further impact. Leaders and governors need to develop systems to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy across the school to ensure the very best practice is reflected in all settings. This monitoring and evaluation needs to be regular and take into account the views and experiences of the whole school community, including pupil voice.

Relevant staff work well with families to include them in the prayer life of the school and to support the developing prayer life of pupils. The school works well with the local parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy, especially after the recent pandemic and this partnership is a strength of the school. Newsletters are shared, enabling effective communication between home, school and parish.

The school makes good use of spaces available for prayer and all classes have dedicated prayer tables. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to visit the parish church for the celebration of Mass. The parish priest has recognised the pupils' improved participation in the liturgy and resulting wider engagement at parish masses. A parent commented, 'The parish is so welcoming – we are invited to meet together in a warm space, it is much appreciated.'

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149246
Full postal address of the school	Furness Road, Workington, CA14 3PD
School phone number	01900 606050
Name of head teacher or principal	Laura McAllister
Chair of governing board	Kevin Greenhow
School Website	<a href="https://www.stgregorys.cumbria.sch.uk">https://www.stgregorys.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mater Christi Multi Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Mrs Frances Wygladala	Lead inspector
Mr Alan Parry	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

## 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