



St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141924

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

21–22 May 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Leaders are deeply committed to St Gregory's Catholic life and mission, resulting in the school being firmly at the centre of the local community.
- Excellent pastoral care ensures that everyone feels welcomed and supported.
- Exemplary relationships between the school and parish have enabled the school to flourish and ensure that Christ is central in words and actions.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge in teaching religious education and use effective questioning to maximise learning and support pupils' understanding.
- Leaders, particularly the principal, are inspirational role models in leading prayer and worship. They enable pupils to become closer to God and develop their faith more fully.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure pupils can clearly articulate the theology underpinning their enactment of Catholic social teaching principles
- Develop pupils' profound understanding of the impact of religious education on their moral and spiritual development and how it influences their everyday lives.
- Facilitate staff and pupils to frequently prepare high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

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

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

1

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils understand the school's mission statement, 'Aspiring to be great, through loving and learning, following in the footsteps of Jesus.' All the pupils totally and actively embrace this. They have a clear sense of belonging to the school as a family and of their roles in working together, where Christ is at the centre of this vibrant Catholic school. Pupils are confident and recognise that everyone is a unique person made in God's image and likeness. Pupils actively participate in the school's mission and consequently show love and respect for those around them. Pupils appreciate opportunities to actively live out Catholic social teaching principles, particularly through their support of vulnerable families in the local area with fundraising and food bank collections. Pupils are yet to fully articulate the theology underpinning their actions and how the teachings of Jesus can influence their daily lives and responsibilities. Behaviour is good in lessons and throughout the school, with pupils engaged and interested in their learning. Whilst an active chaplaincy team is in place, this leadership is yet to be distributed throughout the school.

The school's mission statement is at the beating heart of the school. It is a clear and inspiring expression of the Church's educational mission, one that is known and lived out by all. Pupils truly embrace it and aspire to be great. The pastoral care from staff is exemplary. Those most vulnerable are exceptionally well cared for, loved, and cherished, demonstrating that the light of Christ is shining through the work of the staff. St Gregory's is the 'anchor in the community.' Relationships are strong, and all are made to feel welcome. Parents truly value the support they receive, and leaders readily reach out to the most vulnerable and those with the greatest need, often discreetly and selflessly, as faithful disciples of Christ. The school environment truly depicts the Catholic ethos of the school. Prayer areas are attractive and well-presented, but more so in the communal areas. A newly erected chapel is a powerful reminder to all of its importance and

centrality to the life of the school. Chaplaincy provision is good; however, it is yet to be distributed throughout the school so all pupils have the opportunity for further moral development. Relationships and health education (RHE) meets the requirements of the diocese because pupils understand the importance of each person and the value of all in the eyes of God.

Leaders and governors truly live their mission as guardians of the school. Local governing body members regularly visit the school and, therefore, are very familiar with it. They carry out their responsibilities with integrity and provide both challenge and support to school leaders. Despite being relatively new, they have a strong strategic vision and show energy, passion, and determination in their roles. Policies and procedures clearly reflect the school's Catholic mission. Relationships between the parish, school, and community are strong and flourishing. The new parish priest is a visible presence in the school and has a significant impact. The views of parents are appreciated and valued. The visit of the jubilee icon to the school is a further example of the firm and flourishing parish and school links. Whilst there is a Catholic lens on the curriculum, additional work is needed here to make this more explicit. Leaders recognise they are on a journey to make self-evaluation and monitoring more robust so that it has a rapid impact. Training is planned and effective, as is the induction of staff; however, staff do not yet benefit from further training and support in understanding how they can be more impactful in promoting and contributing towards the school's Catholic life and mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

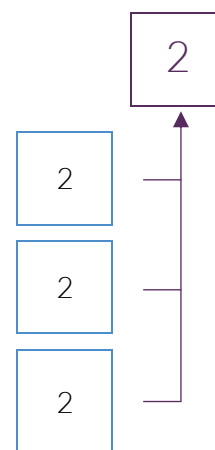
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons; consequently, their behaviour is good, and they are engaged and motivated during these lessons. Pupils are encouraged to establish links with prior learning, which helps them achieve well and remember more of the knowledge they learn as they progress through the curriculum. Pupils are not yet required to apply their knowledge and skills to reflect spiritually and consider the implications of religious commitment in daily life. Whilst teachers ask probing questions of pupils, pupils do not routinely ask questions of teachers. Consequently, opportunities are missed to utilise pupils' curiosity to enhance learning. Pupils with additional needs are very well supported and access learning well. In most classes, work is presented well. However, this is not consistent across all year groups. Pupils enjoy religious education because they value the subject and appreciate how it is presented. They know how well they are doing, but cannot always articulate clearly what they must do to progress. Attainment in religious education is at least as good as other core subjects and, in some cases, slightly above.

Teachers possess excellent subject knowledge, enabling them to impart knowledge confidently to their pupils. Lessons observed on the theme of 'Pentecost' demonstrated, for example, teachers' strong expertise in helping pupils understand the impact of the Holy Spirit on the lives of the apostles. Teachers support and encourage pupils using positive praise, impacting their attitudes towards learning. Teachers are skilled in using questions during lessons; they tailor questions to the needs of specific pupils and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to reflect and respond. Still, there are inconsistencies in approach across the school, meaning pupils are not constantly challenged to think more deeply and respond more fully to the demands of religious education in their lives today. Teachers are aware of the different needs of pupils in their class and, together with a team of committed

teaching assistants, support individual learners effectively. Support staff would welcome further training in helping learners with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). Teachers plan to meet the requirements of the diocesan scheme of work, but they do not always ensure that tasks are planned based on pupils' prior attainment. This means that teachers' expectations for pupils are not always sufficiently high concerning their independent work. Pupils experience a range of tasks in religious education lessons, with opportunities for pupils to express their learning with creativity and individuality. Pupils' efforts and work are regularly celebrated during lessons and assembly, increasing pupil motivation.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing, and accommodation. Leaders ensure that the curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and that all classes cover the required content. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education meets the needs of different groups of pupils; they have recognised a disparity between the achievement of boys and girls, and through a focused approach, there is now evidence that this gap is closing. Monitoring teaching and learning within the subject enables leaders and governors to identify the main strengths and areas for development; however, the monitoring cycle does not always allow for specific improvements to be assessed for impact following implementation, thereby hindering continuous improvement. The head teacher and the diocesan adviser support the subject leader. She has a clear vision for developing the subject and is motivated to achieve this vision, utilising the expertise within the Emmaus multi-academy company (MAC). Leaders understand the need to share best practices across the school and MAC to strengthen the delivery of religious education and enhance pupil outcomes. Leaders are addressing opportunities for pupils to engage in enrichment activities that enhance the school's delivery of the curriculum.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

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

2

Pupils engage positively with the school's prayer and liturgy provision, demonstrating active and reverent participation. They contribute to communal prayer, join in reflective silence, and enthusiastically sing, especially in Key Stage 1. There are limited opportunities for pupils to offer spontaneous prayers and thoughtful responses, as sometimes prayer times turn into question-and-answer sessions rather than allowing for spiritual reflection and a loving encounter with God. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the different seasons within the Church's liturgical year and know how these changes affect the prayer area in their classroom. For example, young pupils understand that the colour will change to green during ordinary time. They know that prayer can happen anywhere and that they can pray in special places within the school, such as the newly erected chapel. Still, they are less confident and experienced when accessing and leading a more comprehensive range of prayer opportunities, such as silence, meditation, music, reflection, and more traditional Catholic prayers. Prayer leaders undertake their roles in class daily; pupils speak positively of this opportunity. Pupils enjoy opportunities to prepare and lead acts of worship, though this needs further development.

Pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of Catholic traditions. They can discuss the prayers they recite at various times throughout each day and at different points in the liturgical year, for example, the Rosary in October and May, and the prayer for the Eternal Rest during the month dedicated to the Holy Souls. A daily pattern of prayer enables pupils to recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. Key moments are reflected upon, for example, the death of Pope Francis. The principal is an exemplary model of good practice in delivering high-quality prayer and liturgy. He is an inspiring Catholic leader and an excellent role model for staff and pupils. Staff now need to follow his example in supporting pupils in planning and leading high-quality prayer and liturgy. Scripture is used in prayer and liturgy and is appropriate

to the liturgical calendar. Displays around the school are attractive and supportive of prayer, highlighting the importance of prayer at St Gregory's. The chaplaincy team looks after and cares for the prayer areas around the school. They take great pride in this role and hold this responsibility in high regard. Planned prayer and liturgy form part of a regular and comprehensive programme of routine gatherings, including the celebration of Mass, assemblies, and class worship. Their commitment is further enhanced by a close partnership with the parish priest, who regularly visits the school. Parents are supportive towards the school and value the jubilee icon's arrival at St Gregory's.

Leaders work closely with the parish priest to plan the school calendar, ensuring that Mass is celebrated frequently and all major feasts and seasons in the Church's year are celebrated. Leaders ensure that staff training is timetabled, including MAC and in-school training. Leaders and governors have outlined their expectations for pupils' development of participation skills as they progress through each year group in the school, providing helpful guidance to staff. The principal is an excellent role model for his staff and pupils because he demonstrates the highest standards. Whilst training for staff around prayer and liturgy has been provided, staff would welcome further support in delivering consistently high-quality prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, are keen to improve prayer and liturgy by identifying key priorities; however, the quality and impact of worship are not yet reviewed rigorously enough to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement in this area.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141924
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	333 3405
Full postal address of the school	Park Road, Bearwood, Smethwick, B67 5HX
School phone number	0121 429 4609
Headteacher	Kevin Brown
Chair of governing board	Joanna Griffin
School Website	www.st-gregorys.sandwell.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Emmaus Catholic MAC
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Rebecca Nash
Nichola Damms

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