

# St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Woodfield Road, Ealing, London W5 1SL

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 06 October 2016



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is good

- The religious education curriculum has developed well through a new scheme of work that ensures greater scope than previously to extend the pupils' religious literacy.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education. However, although pupils attain well, progress is not consistently good across all groups.
- Good teaching is characterised by creative resources and warm working relationships. Classrooms are very encouraging environments in which to learn.
- The headteacher and senior leader in charge of religious education are driving forward developments in religious education successfully.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The level of challenge in classrooms has not been sufficient to develop fully the religious literacy of the pupils.
- Guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, both oral and written, is too variable across years and classes.
- Marking does not concentrate enough on the correct use of religious language.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education is at the centre of the school's life. Classroom provision meets all of the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It receives high priority in the school.
- Governors and senior leaders are very active in guiding the Catholic life of this Catholic community.
- Worship and prayer are built successfully into the daily life of the school. The day is framed by morning prayers, assemblies and, in turn, the celebration of Mass.
- St Gregory's contributes very well to the Common Good. Pupils and staff follow willingly the Church's call to action on justice and peace. Efforts to help others are well grounded in an understanding of the Christian message.
- Partnerships are strong in the parish, with the Diocese, and with parents. There are growing links with other Catholic and non-Catholic local schools and with groups from other faith traditions.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no issues for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, the school has appointed a new coordinator of religious education who is also a senior leader. A new scheme of work has been adopted that encourages far greater rigour than the previous programme. Additionally, the school has recognised that expectations of what the pupils can achieve in classroom religious education must rise so that the many able and very able pupils can thrive and develop further their religious literacy.

### The content of classroom religious education is good

Planning in religious education shows clearly what aspects of the Curriculum Directory are to be taught and accessed by the staff and pupils. The very recently adopted scheme of work encompasses very well all of the main areas of study expected by the Bishops' Conference. These areas relate carefully to age-related expectations and are well informed by clear success criteria for pupils' learning. Progression is well integrated into the scheme of work through a three-year cycle of planning. A specialist programme covers the early years. Staff enhance the implementation of the scheme of work with a range of creative resources. The study of other faiths is across all year groups, including a focus on Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism. A more robust and scholarly approach to religious studies is supporting the pupils well in developing their religious literacy faster than previously.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils' attainment in religious education has improved over the last year and is now closer to that of other core areas. However, previous progress has been slower than would be expected given pupils' starting points. Current rising expectations of staff and pupils are resulting in speedier progress, particularly for the many able pupils. As a result, pupils currently in the school are achieving well. The school is highlighting a scholarly ethos, informed by the patron, St Gregory the Great, Pope and scholar. There is a strong emphasis on deepening understanding through informed questioning, making cross-curricular links and pondering the 'big questions'. Pupils are very well informed about the traditions and customs of others, not only from within the Catholic community but also about those of other faiths. They are developing their religious literacy well. The school's motto, 'Working and learning together with Jesus as one family' very much permeates the daily work of the school. Pupils take great pride and care in their work in religious education. They are very articulate in oral responses, demonstrating the potential for excellence in their written work. In line with other core areas, work in religious education is internally moderated regularly. The school also takes part in both deanery and diocesan moderation. Termly reports in religious education are shared with the parents.

### The quality of teaching is good

At St. Gregory's, pupils greatly enjoy religious education lessons because of the creativity and enthusiasm of both staff and other pupils. Classroom environments and the school site generally are rich in stimulating display on aspects of religious education. Staff pool resources so that pupils across parallel classes have similar experiences. This was very evident, for example, across the early years in their work on creation. Warm working relationships allow pupils to express ideas, concerns, and misconceptions. The school is driving forward teachers' skills in using a range of open-ended

questions, in probing likely misconceptions about religious concepts, and in assessing the accuracy and depth of pupils' responses. St Gregory's benefits from a higher proportion of teaching staff with Catholic qualifications than that found normally in primary schools. Teachers' fundamentally strong knowledge base is an excellent foundation on which to build deeper learning experiences for the pupils. In some classes, there are good examples of the impact of the school's recent push to develop the depth of the pupils' understanding. In a Year 5 class, for example, on the call by Pope Francis to consider our stewardship of the environment, pupils were able to develop the associated religious language, make comparisons with scriptural accounts of the world compared to their experience today, and to reflect generally on their conclusions. Nevertheless, there are still examples in some classes of missed opportunities to develop pupils' thinking and communication skills in discussion. Other opportunities are lost in the guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work. Marking sometimes misses basic spelling errors, for example, as well as provision for genuinely useful developmental dialogue in the teacher-pupil written responses.

### **The leadership and management of religious education**

**are good**

The headteacher and subject leader are both recent appointments and have a very clear vision for the future of religious education at St Gregory's. There is an honest appraisal of where the school could do better and help the pupils to achieve the highest possible standards. However, this work is at the very early stages of development as they seek to build on the good foundations existing within the school. The development of the staff is a strong central drive in the school's pursuit of excellence with professional training linked closely to the school's improvement plan. They recognise that there is much more to do to challenge the learning of the many able pupils in the school and to raise expectations. Teaching is regularly, monitored, evaluated, and guidance given to staff on how to be even better. Leaders and governors recognise that the educational mission of the Church is at the heart of the school's work.

### **What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Ensure that robust attention is given to provision for the most able within the learning environment in religious education.
- Embed teachers' understanding of the importance of developing pupils' religious language, both oral and written, through well-considered dialogue, meticulous marking and written guidance on how to improve.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The school was asked at the last inspection to review the school's mission statement with the whole community. This the school has undertaken and the headline mission of the school is displayed prominently throughout. Each day begins under the banner of 'Working and learning together with Jesus as one family'. A strong sense of service has been fostered among all members of the international school community. Parents play a major role in the school's service to others. Community involvement in the school's Catholic life is now strong.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding.

Religious education receives its full allocation of 10% of taught time at each key stage. Religious education is very clearly at the heart of the school and influences deeply the overall quality of provision for this Catholic community. Classrooms really reflect the importance of religious education as at the core of the curriculum. Senior leaders and governors play a key part in the development of religious education and support the staff well.

### The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

is outstanding

Pupils and staff all know and live the school's mission statement in their rich daily prayer life. Display boards, religious artefacts, art, and prayer tables all contribute exceptionally well to reminding the school community of the purpose of their work. Of particular note is the way the school not only supports the pupils' liturgical practice but encourages traditional forms of Catholic prayer, relevant to the cycle of the year. Pupils, for example are well versed in the mysteries of the rosary and its place in a life of prayer. Liturgical celebrations take place in school and in the near-by Abbey Church where the pupils attend Mass weekly. The Year of Mercy is well marked with its 'Mercy Door', pupils' ambassadors, and participation in a diocesan pilgrimage. St Gregory's angels involve pupils in a range of good works, reflecting Gospel values, and for which they gain their 'wings' as rewards. Pupils also experience opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Pupils are actively involved in both preparation and leadership of worship. For the weekly Abbey Mass, one class prepares readings, bidding prayers and the offertory. Some pupils are altar servers and the school choir sings at Mass. Year 5 experience a retreat as will Year 6 in the coming year. Calm reflection, sharing and discussion are all part of life at St Gregory's.

### The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

are outstanding

Pupils are regularly exposed to Catholic social teaching at St Gregory's so that they learn from an early stage how to put faith into action, locally, nationally, and internationally. At their own levels, the pupils understand very well the foundation of their work for charities. They support a local homeless charity, pilgrimages to Lourdes, Cafod and a residential home. They also support ex-servicemen through their annual poppy appeal. During the inspection, through an assembly, the pupils were made aware of the issues facing the victims of Hurricane Matthew. Overall, pupils flourish at St Gregory's. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

**Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf****are outstanding**

Governors and senior leaders are committed to developing this diocesan school. The school has grown to three forms of entry to support the needs of the local Catholic community. The school is a very active member of the Ealing deanery, facilitating cooperation with other Catholic schools. Staff are active in diocesan in-service conferences. There are good and developing links with other local non-Catholic schools. Home-school and parish links are promoted very well and are strong. Regular newsletters, digital communication and the Wednesday Word all contribute to regular information and involvement of families in pupils' education. Parents are invited to the school Masses in the Abbey. Governors also live within the community and are very much in touch with the families that the school serves. Links with other communities of different faith traditions are growing through visits and visitors in multi-faith week. Pupils visit a Hindu temple, the Sikh Gurdwara and a local mosque.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school****are outstanding**

Senior leaders and governors are determined to provide a school where Christ is at the heart of all learning and activity. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. There is a real will among the school community to do the best possible for the pupils and their families. The school's Catholic ethos is evident around the site from the behaviour of the staff and pupils to the examples of the various charities that the pupils support. New staff are well inducted into the school with good opportunities for professional development, including following Catholic accredited courses. Expertise within the governing body supports the headteacher and senior staff very well in their drive to sustain and improve this Catholic school.

**What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- Take forward plans to further strengthen links with other faith communities.

## Information about this school

- The school is a three-form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Ealing, West London.
- The school mainly serves families from the parish of St Benedict's.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 97%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2% and from other faiths is 1%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 83%.
- The proportion of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities is well below average. Three have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from other White European heritages is high but the number from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 43 pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

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| <b>Department for Education Number</b> | 307/3506 |
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b>         | 101923   |
| <b>Local Authority</b>                 | Ealing   |

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                 | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>            | 3-11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>               | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b>       | 664  |
| <b>The appropriate authority</b>      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                          | Mrs Maura Lyons  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                    | Ms Margaret Kolanowska   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>               | 020 8997 7550  |
| <b>Website</b>                        | <a href="http://www.st-gregorys.ealing.sch.uk">www.st-gregorys.ealing.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Email address</b>                  | <a href="mailto:mrichards@st-gregorys.sch.uk">mrichards@st-gregorys.sch.uk</a>   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>    | 20 May 2011  |
| <b>Grade from previous inspection</b> | Outstanding  |

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, the acting headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection, 20 lessons or part lessons were observed and a learning walk undertaken.
- The inspectors attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils, in and out of lessons, and examination of school documents.

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector

Ms Nicola Walsh

Associate Inspector

Mr Daniel Keane

Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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