



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. GREGORY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

Inspection Date	Wednesday 22 January 2014
Inspectors	Deacon Paul Mannings Mrs. Barbara Melia
Unique Reference Number	111454
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011	

Type of School	Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	974
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Margaret Heelam
Executive Headteacher	Mr. David Lewis
Headteacher of School	Mrs. Rosemary Howard-Rigby
School address	Cromwell Avenue Westbrook Warrington WA5 1HG
Telephone number	01925 574888
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Date of last inspection	Tuesday 22 November 2011

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 Catholic High School is a voluntary-aided, 11-16, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is situated in the Archdiocese of Liverpool and within the Warrington Authority.
- The school is a constituent member of a federation with another Catholic high school in the neighbouring diocese.
- There are 974 pupils on roll of whom 88% are baptised Catholic, with 9.6% from other Christian denominations and 1.2% from other faith or religious traditions.
- The remaining 1.2%.have not declared a specified faith or religion.
- Pupils drawn from associated Catholic primary schools in the pastoral area account for 79% of the roll.
- There are 65 teaching staff of whom 65% are Catholic.
- The Religious Education department has five members; four full - time, one part time (in addition to other subjects).
- The Executive Headteacher has been in post since April 2013.
- The Headteacher of School has been in post since September 2013.

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 provides outstanding Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

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

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils interviewed were aware of how Catholic Ethos and Spirituality are directed by senior leadership. They spoke confidently about the Mission Statement's drive to offer them "no better inspiration than the example and teaching of Jesus Christ." They stated that the content of the Mission Statement is discussed frequently, particularly in Religious Education. This helps them to understand their school in terms of one family and community working together. They referred to all staff working to promote their personal development. They regard school overall as a happy environment because the majority feel safe and secure.
- Random pupils were questioned and offered similar views. All felt that the pastoral systems in place fully uphold the school's mission.
- Many other pupils showed clear understanding of the school's chaplaincy provision. Pupils particularly appreciated that chaplaincy offers them involvement in Catholic life.
- Formal and informal interviews together with comprehensive questionnaire evidence, reveals that Religious Education is at the core of pupils Catholic life. The Gospel message revealed within lessons offer them faith informed values. They understand how these values can be lived in their daily lives.
- The school operates a comprehensive range of charitable and social interaction, locally, nationally and internationally. Many pupils are involved and proudly provide evidence of their activities.
- All of the pupils interviewed or questioned informally were proud of the Catholicity of their school. They felt their faith or world views are respected. Their confident knowledge of Catholic social teaching enables them to understand how all faiths, religions' and secular groups can work together for the wellbeing of others.

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

- Pupils show outstanding levels of achievement and attainment in Religious Education.
- In Key Stage 3 standards have continued to rise over time since the last inspection. In 2013 at the end of Key Stage 3, 4.5% of pupils achieved Level 4, with 43% at Level 5, 48.7% at level 6 and 3.8% at Level 7.
- In Key Stage 4 standards have continued to rise over time. In 2012 75% achieved A*-C. This can be compared with performance at national level whereby 34.5% of the national cohort took GCSE and achieved 72%. A*-C. Performance at this school reflected almost a 100% cohort entry. In 2013 the same rate of progress was made whereby 74% achieved A*-C with the national average being 72.1% and the national average of the cohort being 36.7% compared to 90% at this school. Also in 2013 Catholic schools nationally achieved 60.9% A*-C compared to 74% at this school.

- Overall pupils are making at least three levels of progress set against individual performance data. A significant number are attaining progress in higher levels. Attainment indicators for Key Stage 4 are almost all above average.
- These rates of achievement are commensurate with standards of progress made in class. Most pupils remain on task because they are motivated by challenge.
- Pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education is a key factor in their success.
- Pupils' behaviour in class was outstanding on the day of inspection. It was clear this was the norm because pupils were well used to co-operating with the styles of teaching and learning. This too reinforces overall achievement.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- On the day of inspection pupils gathered prayerfully and respectfully. Their participation in the leadership of the worship was outstanding. They showed confidence, enthusiasm and understanding. This in turn engaged the whole community. Pupils sang well. Readings were delivered with quality and sincerity.
- Pupils are motivated by the newly adopted format which follows the Gather, Listen and Respond framework. They specifically value the scope offered for quiet time and personal reflection. It also offers them a clear outline plan to preparing their own content.
- Pupils readily want to acquire skills to develop their own leadership of worship.
- Pupils respond well to the content of Collective Worship. This has given them a renewed awareness of the Catholic values and traditions of the school.
- Collective Worship offers the pupils challenge. They value Thought for the Day aspects of worship. Their knowledge of world events, joys and tragedies are increased. They commend the regular times whereby they can pray for the needs of the school community. This in turn reinforces their sense of school as a family. They feel it "Sets them up for the day."
- The quality of prayer experiences is encouraging pupils to pray privately. They understand that Collective Worship is an enrichment of their spiritual development not least because it gives them the opportunity to listen to the faith expressions of others.
- Pupils with world views value Collective Worship. They too feel included and part of it. They respect the relevance of the themes and thoughts for the needs of all people.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- On the day of inspection the four full-time (core) members were each observed for a full lesson. Teaching and learning was nothing less than good.
- Teachers have thorough subject knowledge. Planning is rigorous. There are high expectations of pupils. In all lessons many pupils were inspired by the quality of presentation and resources. They responded with high levels of engagement, courtesy, collaboration and co-operation.
- At all stages of each lesson the content was matched to the age, stage and aptitude of the pupils.
- Achievement and effort was celebrated.
- Assessment is robust. It is evident at the formative stage within tasks for peer assessment, collaborative learning and in individual study pathways. End of task assessments are linked to Religious Education Levels of Attainment. These are

known by pupils. Levels and GCSE grading serve pupils well in enabling them to monitor their progress and to set individual targets for development.

- Prior learning is well recalled and developed.
- The progressive rolling-out of content ensures pupils meet learning outcomes and are aware of their own study pathways for future lessons.
- A sample of pupils' written work was scrutinised. Random work was also observed in class. The content in both Key Stages matches the programmes. There is key understanding of key words and concepts. There are wide and varied styles of recording. There are differentiated scaffolding and support materials and resources. These meet the needs of all pupils.
- In Key Stage 3 marking and annotation shows pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own formative progress against set criteria. They plan and set their targets for improvement. In some areas this needs to be more rigorous. Targets need to be constructive and consistently high in quality. This will enable all pupils to understand how to improve their work and so maintain exceptional progress.
- In Key Stage 4 targets are more challenging and specific in how to improve work. Consequently pupils gain knowledge of their skills and understanding. They are confident and clear about how to make progress.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- The time allocation is 8% in Key Stage 3 and the required 10% in Key Stage 4. The 8% provision is acceptable in light of timetable restraints but should not be reduced.
- In Key Stage 3 the programme of study follows the process for Research, Revelation and Response. The content is well supported by materials devised by the department. This will enable an efficient transition to the new national programme currently in preparation.
- In Key Stage 4 GCSE Religious Studies is undertaken by all but some fifteen pupils. The specification focuses on Catholic Christianity, and Religion and Society. The content absorbs well the prior learning in Key Stage 3. It provides an effective means of in-depth study of Catholic beliefs and values, together with the implementation of Catholic social teaching.
- All programmes include other world faiths and religions.
- There are wide ranging extra-curricular field visits and hosting of guest speakers. These further amplify the department's exposition of the Gospel, together with the beliefs and practices of other faiths and religions.
- The curriculum provides a core commitment to upholding the school's Catholic life.
- The content makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. They are encouraged to think, reflect and to contribute their views. This is all underpinned by a curriculum that provides thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith.
- Consequently the school is fulfilling the broad requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales – 2012.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- This in turn ensures the outstanding response made by pupils and staff. It also adds a key dimension to the school's Catholic life.
- Skilful co-ordination has made a key impact. There has been a renewed emphasis on in-service training. In 2013-2014 Collective Worship was made a performance management objective for all staff.
- Themes are efficiently shared with all staff and pupils. They are effectively linked to the cycle of Sunday gospels and to the wider Liturgical Year.
- A daily Thought for the Day is distributed as a resource for adaptation by form tutors and pupils.
- There is daily provision in form tutor groups and year/house assemblies. There is a full programme of services for major feasts and celebrations.
- Comprehensive provision for various prayer experiences, particularly retreats, enable pupils to personally appreciate the diversity of public and private prayer.
- The provision of the Romero Chapel enables staff and pupils to have a space for reflection during the day.
- The weekly Friday Service of the Word with Communion is voluntarily attended by parish members, staff, pupils and governors.
- Monitoring is effective. Good practice is shared through the in-service provision. Senior leadership and heads of year ensure good practice. Monitoring is also included on the agenda for governors Catholic Ethos and Mission Committee.
- Collective Worship provides a major contribution to spiritual and moral development. A key example has been the introduction of sacred spaces into every form room. Pupils maintain and add their own aspirations to this space. It has assisted their clearer understanding of the Church's mission in daily life. It has also provided impetus for pupils to demonstrate creatively their own spiritual aspirations.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church.
- Since September the head of Religious Education, who is also an assistant headteacher, has been given responsibility for directing Catholic Ethos and Spirituality. The post is a formalisation of a role already developed. The executive head and school head have joined the driving force that ensures this role directs Catholic life.
- The Catholic Ethos and Mission governing body committee meet every half-term to receive departmental reports on every sphere of Catholic life and to plan its further enrichment. Evidence of success is contained within the Section 48 Self-Evaluation document, Catholic Life and Religious Education School Evaluation document and the School Improvement Plan.
- Parents' evenings have been used as a means of sharing the aims and values of Catholic life. This is part of an on-going commitment to extend communications with parents.
- The Mission Statement is known, owned and understood in a practical sense by the school community. The content forms the integral basis for the school's commitment to social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL).

- There are two lay-chaplains (one full-time and one part-time). This provision has been increased in the last academic year. They are accountable to governors and senior leadership through the line management of the director of Catholic Ethos and Spirituality. They too have their own robust development plan which is reviewed frequently. Their joint ministry is of immeasurable value and impact in implementing Catholic life. They are available for the whole community in the form of pastoral ministry. They share in the co-ordination and resourcing of Collective Worship. Their outreach with the wider community is fruitful beyond measure. Together they implement numerous national and global social projects that bring alive in a practical sense the school's commitment to the Gospel. In particular they network with local clergy who in turn make conscientious efforts to be involved in chaplaincy with school and to form a vital link with local parishes.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers provide outstanding monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. Together they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- More recently, senior leadership has ensured that the head of Religious Education is an active member of the Core Department group. This is to ensure that Religious Education remains pivotal to Catholic life and in turn reinforces the impact of the departmental head's joint role in directing Catholic Ethos and Spirituality. For this reason membership must remain in-situ.
- Religious Education is exhaustively monitored. This is evident within the Section 48 Self-Evaluation document, Catholic Life and Religious Education School Evaluation Form, Departmental Development Plan and School Improvement Plan. Progress is identified in detail. Plans for progress are itemised and accompanied by on-going, measurable targets. Progress is monitored regularly.
- The head of department is committed, established, respected and fully innovative. Consequently Religious Education remains extremely well led and managed.
- Data is effectively used to monitor pupil progress and to target according to need.
- There is a full programme of continued professional development focused both on teaching and learning, together with contributions to Catholic life.
- Members of the department share commitment and professional expertise. Their skills in the provision of outstanding teaching and learning were fully endorsed by lesson observations and judgements by inspectors. This is further evident in the overall standard of pupil achievement and attainment.
- In the last inspection Religious Education was judged to be outstanding. Its provision has continued to improve and meet the demands of a higher benchmark.
- Religious Education remains a lead department in the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Maintain pupils outstanding achievement and attainment in Key Stage 3 by:
 - Consistent provision of rigorous individual targets for improvement.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate