

St Gregory's Catholic Science College

Donnington Road, Kenton, HA3 0NB

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 17-18 October 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The content of classroom religious education meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. In particular, the schemes of work are interpreted in a very creative way at the level of lesson delivery.
- The religious education department is a flagship department at St Gregory's, there is a habit of pupils achieving excellence. The external examinations from pupils at both GCSE and A level demonstrate that the religious education teachers work hard to get exceptional results.
- The religious education lessons across all years are characterised by being consistently strong; this outstanding practice is worthy of further promotion within the diocese. Teaching is creative and inspiring.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, teaching challenging lessons that support all learners. Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong and as a result, pupils benefit from accurate and nuanced lessons that stimulate their interest.
- Pupils' books are consistently well marked, and pupils engage expertly with their written feedback. Pupils' exercise books are a source of pride for not only pupils but teachers as well.
- The vision for the department of the head of religious education is grounded in a strong understanding and appreciation of the nuanced task of religious education in the Catholic school. There is a consistent drive for excellence in all aspects of the department's work.
- A pupil said, 'Our teachers really enjoy teaching us and want us to do our best so that makes us want to learn.' The department is exceptionally well led and as a result is a very strong department.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The headteacher values the religious education department to a very high degree. It is evident to pupils and parents that this department is the core of the curriculum, many pupils regard it as the best in the school.
- Prayer and worship are a central aspect of the pupils' experience in school. Liturgical events such as Masses and assemblies clearly reflect the cycle of the Church's liturgical calendar. Pupils pray in their tutor groups consistently and with dedication.
- The chaplain is very effective in supporting the prayer life of the school. The chapel is utilised very well, a pupil referred to the chapel as the heart of the school.
- The school's commitment to the Common Good permeates throughout the school. Through a well-developed system, pupils and staff work together to raise money for their main house charities. Pupils have a very good understanding of the theological underpinning for their service and commitment to social justice.
- Parental support is a real strength of the school. Parents were highly complementary of the transition process, chaplaincy support and the quality of teaching that their children experienced in religious education lessons.
- The headteacher is fully committed to the Church's mission in education and for example demonstrates this through his highly visible presence in the school, encouraging staff and pupils.
- Pupils, parents and staff are very proud of their school, and rightly so. This is an outstanding, vibrant Catholic school in which staff work hard to give the best educational experience to pupils.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the last diocesan inspection, the religious education (RE) department was given the target to 'maintain the outstanding practice in religious education by ensuring that sufficient teachers are confident in teaching A level as the uptake increases'. This target has been fully met. Some members of the RE department have become A level examiners, sharing their insights through internal moderation of student work at A level.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education meets all the requirements of the Bishop's Conference Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012). In particular, the schemes of work are interpreted in a very creative way at the level of lesson delivery. During the inspection, several engaging and imaginative activities developed curriculum content in exciting ways. For example, in a lesson on the hierarchy of the Church, a game of 'guess who I am?' led to pupils to successfully consolidate their understanding. In a lesson on Mark's Gospel, the parable of the sower was acted out in a vibrant way that accelerated pupil learning. There is a wide range of evidence to demonstrate how topics in the curriculum are challenging and lead to progression from year to year. To meet the needs of pupils living in the borough of Brent, a borough with a significant minority of Muslims and Hindus, the school's religious education curriculum would benefit from a discrete topic on Hinduism. The fact that there is a Hindu mandir very close to the school will aid the development of this topic. The recent decision to teach core RE in the sixth form with many non-specialist RE teachers will need to be closely reviewed in order to ensure that the high standards achieved in the GCSE are continued and that students have their religious literacy enhanced.

Student achievement in religious education is outstanding

The RE department is a flagship department at St Gregory's; there is a habit of pupils achieving excellence. The external examinations from pupils at both GCSE and A level demonstrate that the RE teachers work hard to get exceptional results. The RE department's results are significantly better than other core subjects with many pupils taking GCSE attaining their top grade in RE. In RE GCSE the school regularly gets 50% of pupils attaining the top grades 9-7. The progress of pupils at GCSE is significantly strong; last year 77% of pupils achieved above expectation. Different groups of pupils make excellent progress in RE. At A level, there is a similar pattern of students consistently achieving excellent results; this demonstrates that students make exceptional progress in their studies. A significant strength of the department is assessment, in particular, there a clear focus on getting standardisation right within the department. Assessment procedures are very well established and to avoid any sense of complacency, the department is committed to a cycle of review and improvement with regard to the assessment activity set for pupils.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

The school judged this area to be outstanding and inspectors concurred with this judgement. In joint lesson observations between inspectors and school staff, there was clear agreement about what was seen, demonstrating that the school's judgements about the quality of teaching in RE are secure. The RE lessons across all years are characterised by being consistently strong, and this outstanding practice is worthy of further promotion within the diocese. Teaching is creative and inspiring. In a very successful lesson on roles in the Church, pupils enjoyed a game of 'guess who I am?' that skilfully scaffolded their learning. Teachers consistently craft their lessons well to enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in their learning. For example, in a lesson that focused on the Anointing at Bethany from Mark's Gospel, highly developed questioning was used to stretch and

challenge pupils' understanding that made links to contemporary life in modern Britain. Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong and, as a result, pupils benefit from accurate and nuanced lessons that stimulate their interest. In a Year 11 lesson on Catholic duty to the most vulnerable, pupils were eager to engage in exploring Catholic Social Teaching. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, teaching challenging lessons that support all learners. RE classrooms are characterised by very useful displays that celebrate pupil work and encourage a climate of self-reflective learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils who require extra support. Pupils' books are consistently well marked, and pupils engage expertly with the written feedback that they receive. Pupils' exercise books are a source of pride for not only pupils but teachers as well. The relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent; behaviour for learning is very well developed. As a result of the excellent teaching in RE, pupils thrive in their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

is outstanding

The vision for the department of the head of RE is grounded in a strong understanding and appreciation of the nuanced task of RE in the Catholic school. There is a consistent drive for excellence in all aspects of the department's work. This is clearly demonstrated in the department meeting minutes which have a focus on improving teaching and learning, as well as the regular surveys of pupils' experience in RE. The systems for quality assurance within the department are very strong and as a result there are high levels of consistency, for example the head of RE rigorously has spot checks on pupil exercise books. The head of RE models the pursuit of excellence through a highly developed collegial style of distributed leadership. The department's shared area on the school's intranet is used effectively to share resources and develop teamwork in the department. The head of RE has created a positive culture of evaluation, in which RE teachers are committed to taking seriously pupil voice as a tool to improve teaching and learning, as seen in the regular online pupil surveys as well as pupil feedback in lessons. Another strength of the department is the work that they do with their partner primary schools. This has led to a deep collaboration on assessment and engagement with effective progression as soon as pupils enter the school in Year 7. The department engages in effective staff training that again demonstrates the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. A pupil said, 'Our teachers really enjoy teaching us and want us to do our best so that makes us want to learn.' The governors alongside the leadership team provide outstanding support to the department in encouraging and guiding the RE team. The RE department is exceptionally well led and as a result is a very strong department.

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

- Review the Key Stage 3 curriculum so that Hinduism may be taught as a discrete topic.
- Given the changes to core RE in the sixth form, where a significant number of non-specialists teach the programme, ensure that high standards of religious literacy are maintained.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the last inspection, the school was given the target to 'consider ways in which they might 'succession plan' to ensure that the chaplaincy continues to flourish'. This has been met.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The headteacher, leadership and governors value the RE department to a very high degree. The high status of RE is reflected in the staffing, budget and good accommodation. It is evident to pupils and parents that the RE department is the core of the curriculum; many pupils regard the RE department as the best in the school.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are a central aspect of the pupils' experience in school. Liturgical events such as Masses and assemblies clearly reflect the cycle of the Church's liturgical calendar. In an assembly on the theme of thanksgiving, the previous Sunday's readings were skilfully linked to a whole school curriculum project on remembrance. Pupils pray in their tutor groups. There is some excellent practice that gives pupils the opportunity to prepare and lead prayer with their peers; there is scope for staff development that cascades exemplary prayer time across the school. In addition to the tutor time prayer, the chaplain and chaplaincy team of sixth formers, have regular '2 minutes for Jesus' in the school chapel during breaktime. This is well attended and mainly student led. The chaplain is very effective in supporting the prayer life of the school. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their participation in the liturgical life of the school, in preparing and leading assemblies, through various ministries such as singing in Maranatha Choir and the abundance of chaplaincy groups (Ignite, Youth Alpha, Life in the Spirit and Proclaimers). The chapel is utilised very well, a pupil referred to the chapel as the heart of the school. Pupils strongly welcome the time available for reflection in the chapel and are very appreciative of support they receive from the chaplain. Pupils receive an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, however there is scope for this to be enhanced significantly. The school has a strong commitment to day retreats and some overnight for pupils that is fully appreciated by the pupils themselves as well as parents.

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

is outstanding

The school's commitment to the Common Good permeates throughout the school. Through a well-developed system pupils and staff work together to raise money for their main house charities (Brent Foodbank; St Joseph's Pastoral Centre, Hendon; St Luke's Hospice Harrow; The Passage; Lourdes; Cafod). Pupils have a very good understanding of the theological underpinning for their service and commitment to social justice. Pupils understand that there are many ways to support others. For example, to support the Ealing soup kitchen, pupils grow the vegetables and make the soup which is taken to the soup kitchen. Pupils continue to demonstrate their understanding of stewardship with their commitment to recycling which is led by the Year 8. The focus of fundraising and active service ensure pupils develop an appreciation of the needs of others locally, nationally and globally. Staff also model the importance of service to the Common Good by donating money as an alternative to sending Christmas cards to pay for Christmas hampers for families in need. There is a long tradition of supporting HCPT with students and staff acting as helpers in Lourdes. Pupils were able to articulate the reasons for their engagement in service for others. One Year 11 pupil

explained that 'we have an obligation as Catholics to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves as we are called to keep the commandment to love others as we love ourselves'. Pupils are presented with a range of ways to use their gifts for the good of the community, for example through singing, music and maintaining the eco-garden.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

Parental support is a real strength of the school. The returned inspection questionnaires demonstrated overwhelmingly support for the work of the school. Parents were highly complementary of the transition process, chaplaincy support and the quality of teaching that their children experienced in RE lessons. One parent said that they were delighted with the Catholic ethos and their child's progress and another said that they were given real care and support dealing with a bereavement in the family. A strength of the school is the relationship with local feeder primary schools, for instance staff go to the primary schools to teach taster lessons and have regular meetings with primary teaching colleagues to examine pupil work in order to raise standards. These partnerships with primary schools have moved to a deeper, meaningful level where they are having a positive impact on classroom learning. Parish links have been strong. The school works well with the diocese, there is engagement with the services offered by the Westminster Education Service. The headteacher has a national role in promoting Catholic education through various activities and as such is at service to the diocese.

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

is outstanding

The school's mission is summarised effectively in the school motto 'Pro Deo, for God - the Best and the Greatest'. Pupils are fully aware of the expectation to be the best and with the support of staff are encouraged to achieve this end. The headteacher is fully committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrates this through his highly visible presence in the school, encouraging staff and pupils. Staff speak about the effective support that they receive from the leadership team, in particular the headteacher, who in their view, models servant leadership; they feel he really cares about their wellbeing. Through the many examples of faith in action, the leadership team provide the driving force of the school's commitment to the education of young people with a vision of discipleship for life. The governing body provide a strong support in maintaining as well as developing the Catholic life of the school. Governors act as effective critical friends to the school, aware of their role in supporting the strategic direction of the school as a Catholic school. The school environment has strong images that reinforce the Catholic nature of the school. The award-winning garden demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the spiritual dimension of pupil learning. Pupils, parents and staff are very proud of their school, and rightly so. This is an outstanding, vibrant Catholic school in which staff work hard to give the best educational experience to pupils.

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

- The liturgical life of the school could be enhanced by offering authentic opportunities for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in both Advent and Lent.

Information about this school

- The school is a 6 form entry Catholic Voluntary Aided school in the locality of Brent
- The school serves the parishes of All Saints, Kenton; St Erconwald's, Wembley; St Sebastian & St Pancras, Kingsbury; St Joseph's, Wembley; Five Precious Wounds, Stonebridge Park; Our Lady of Willesden; St Joseph's, Harrow and Wealdstone and St Mary Magdalene, Willesden.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 94%
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 4.2 % and from other faiths is 0.7 %. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 54%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 8.
- There are 11% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 28 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average
- There is below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 168 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (15 %).

Department for Education Number	304/5406
Unique Reference Number	101563
Local Authority	Brent

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary Aided Academy
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	1134
The appropriate authority	The governing body and academy trust
Chair	Mr Aloysius Frederick
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Prindiville
Telephone number	020 8907 8828
Website	www.stgregorys.harrow.sch.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stgregorys.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22-23 October 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Outstanding
The Catholic life of the school	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, headteacher, staff, students and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 14 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended two assemblies and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, students and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of student's work, observation of students in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr Matthew Dell	Lead Inspector
Miss Susan Grace	Associate Inspector
Mrs Bernadette O'Hanlon	Associate Inspector
Miss Deirdre McHugh	Associate Inspector
Miss Anne Moloney	Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:
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