



St Gregory's Catholic Academy

Ragpath Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 9AD

School Unique Reference Number: **139492**

Inspection dates:	08 – 09 June 2015
Lead inspector:	Denise Kendall

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Gregory's Catholic Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because leaders and managers have given this the highest priority and have a clear vision of excellence. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the many and varied opportunities available to them. Effective monitoring is in place and this ensures that there is a continued focus on improvement.
 - The quality of prayer and Collective Worship is outstanding because the school community move 'Forward Together in the love of Christ' ensuring prayer is at the heart of the school. Pupils are reverent and respectful and are keen to plan and lead both class prayers and Collective Worship.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Learning and progress is good overall however there are some inconsistencies in meeting the learning needs of all pupils through the teaching and learning opportunities provided. Not all pupils benefit from the differentiated work which can be seen in high quality lessons, therefore not all pupils are able to experience high quality activities for learning.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Gregory's Catholic Academy is an average sized primary school.
- The school converted to an academy on 1 April 2013.
- The school is a member of Carmel Education Trust. The trust is governed by a board of directors. St Gregory's Catholic Academy has its own governing body. The chair of governors is a director of the trust.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils – eligible for support through pupil premium is higher than the national average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the provision for the Catholic Life of the school by:

Reviewing and further developing the sex and relationships policy so that teaching and learning programmes are fully in line with diocesan guidance.

- Raise standards in Religious Education by:

- Planning differentiated tasks that are sufficiently challenging and engaging for pupils to attain the higher levels
- Ensuring that marking is fully focussed on pupil achievement and clearly identifies to pupils how to improve their work and the next steps in learning.
- Pupils should have more opportunities to respond to constructive feedback after marking.
- Improving teachers' own knowledge and understanding in Religious Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils are proud of their school and clearly know and follow the School's Mission statement, 'Forward Together in the Love of Christ'. They are able to describe what this means to them and how they use this as a prayer each day.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils demonstrate both in the classroom and the playground, that they are fully aware of the needs of others. They support one another, showing respect and care and as a result each one benefits from the nurturing environment of the school.
- Pupils contribute to developing the Catholic character of the school through fundraising in different ways for a variety of charities including Cafod and Butterwick hospice. They also share in the liturgical life of the parish – particularly by welcoming parishioners to the First Friday Mass which is celebrated in school.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They care for and support each other and clearly know and understand how important this is so that everyone in their school can feel safe and happy. It is clearly evident that they understand what it means to live by Gospel values and belong to a Catholic school by the way in which they play and work together.
- Pupils understand that people have different faiths and beliefs and that these are important. They spoke proudly of how pupils of different faiths share their own beliefs as part of the learning in class and how this has helped them develop their understanding of world religions.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- It is evident as soon as you enter St Gregory's that this is a Catholic school. Displays throughout the school reflect the school's mission and Catholic character, ensuring a stimulating and spiritual environment. Pupils clearly know and understand what it means to be part of a community with the love of Christ at the centre.
- The school's mission statement is clearly displayed and is an integral part of the prayer life of the school. A strong sense of community exists. Parents and parishioners contribute significantly to the Catholic Life of the school through their participation in prayer worship and the celebration of Mass.

- There is a clear commitment to the pastoral care of both pupils and families – particularly those in most need resulting in a happy caring community where witness to the love of Christ is at the heart of the school.
- Developing the 'whole child' is clearly an expectation and responsibility accepted by all staff and this ensures the needs of all are met. Parents and carers spoke highly of the efforts made by school leaders to ensure that those experiencing difficulties are very well supported by both staff and external agencies.
- The school chaplain contributes to the work of the school through the many and varied prayer and worship opportunities that are provided. She inspires the children to go 'Forward Together in the Love of Christ' and to work together for the common good.
- Pupils are well supported in making good choices and are encouraged to be responsible for their actions. They are aware of the needs of others within and beyond the school. The behaviour policy reflects Gospel values
- The sex and relationships policy is based upon Catholic teachings and principles, however it does not fully reflect diocesan policy and should therefore be reviewed to ensure that all requirements are fully met.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers have high expectations and a shared vision with a clear focus on the school's Catholic mission and ethos.
- The acting headteacher together with school governors and directors of the academy trust have a very clear understanding of Catholic education and of the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the church. They lead by example and have a strong vision and high expectations for the promotion of the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors and directors of the academy trust are fully informed of the school's strengths and areas for development. A well written action plan is in place resulting in targeted planning and actions which ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The Catholic Life of the school is well monitored by school leaders through the effective use of questionnaires and through talking to pupils and parents. High expectations are clearly evident and the Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of school life.
- Parents are fully supportive of the school. They welcome the positive guidance the Catholic ethos has on their children and value the impact this has on both the children and their families.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Pupils are deeply reverent and respectful during Collective Worship. They are reflective and focused during prayer and sing with enthusiasm. This contributes significantly to the spiritual atmosphere which is experienced by all those gathered together in prayer.
- Pupils understand the purpose of worship and the different forms it can take including, Mass, whole school and class Collective Worship, praying the rosary and private prayer.
- Pupils in all classes develop skills according to their age and understanding in planning and leading prayer. They speak highly of the different ways they pray in school and are able to outline how they plan, contribute to and lead Collective Worship and prayer. Excellent systems are in place to support pupils in developing these skills resulting in year six pupils being able to plan and lead liturgies confidently, choosing appropriate scripture and music. Pupils can clearly use a Collective Worship planner and as a result ensure that all the elements expected in liturgy are included.
- Collective Worship contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of pupils as evidenced through their excellent understanding of prayer and worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Through the provision of a range and variety of prayer opportunities it is clearly evident that prayer and worship is at the heart of St Gregory's Academy. These different experiences include staff prayer, voluntary prayer and opportunities for parents to support their children in planning and leading prayer.
- Collective Worship and prayer is inclusive and reflective. Staff clearly demonstrate an understanding of the liturgical year and ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to share in this. As a result pupils respond well to all that is provided for them.
- Understanding of the liturgical year is clearly visible within the school and evident during prayer and worship. Appropriate themes are chosen to ensure pupils develop a deep understanding of the importance of prayer and worship in their lives. It is evident that all pupils are encouraged to have a special relationship with God through prayer.
- Focal points are evident throughout the school with well thought out resources. These all contribute to the quality of prayer and provide outstanding support and stimulus for reflection.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for worship and prayer in school. They monitor and evaluate the provision through talking to children and parents, Governor visits and the use of parental questionnaires and as a result ongoing development is clearly evident
- All staff model best practice when leading and supporting pupils in Collective Worship thus ensuring this has an outstanding impact on the school community.
- Collective Worship is delivered well by school staff including the chaplain and as a result it has meaning and relevance in their lives. Children clearly learn from the positive examples they see and as a result model this best practice in their own planning and delivery of worship.
- Professional development in leading and supporting pupils in the planning of prayer and liturgy has been given high priority and as a result the confidence and reflectiveness of staff is outstanding.
- Excellent resources are available for Collective Worship and prayer. Plans indicate that resources will continue to be available to ensure worship and prayer continue to be a high priority within the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- The majority of pupils are focused and engaged during Religious Education lessons demonstrating enjoyment and interest in their learning. They work well in lessons, demonstrating positive attitudes and good behaviour for learning.
- Most pupils enter school with starting points well below the national average. Evidence available during inspection and school tracking systems now show pupils in all key stages making at least expected progress over time.
- Evidence from work scrutiny and lesson observations clearly indicates that all pupils are becoming religiously literate and that most have knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their ages.
- Due to the state of transition in level expectations across all diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks. No judgement therefore will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teaching and assessment is good with evidence of outstanding features in some lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Teachers in all key stages have high expectations with some demonstrating strong subject knowledge.
- Some teachers plan interesting interactive activities which are well differentiated to meet the different learning needs of all pupils thus stimulating learning and capturing pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However this is not consistent throughout the school and all pupils would benefit from the provision of differentiated work which can be seen in high quality lessons in order that all pupils are able to experience high quality activities for learning matched to their individual needs.
- Questioning is used effectively to assess understanding, to monitor progress, to challenge pupils and to build on previous learning. As a result pupils demonstrate good levels of engagement and positive attitudes to their learning.
- Work in Religious Education is consistently marked and a planned system is in place to allow pupils to reflect on their learning and respond to the marking. However written feedback does not always respond to the learning objective and it does not consistently provide sufficient guidance to help the pupils know how to move on in their learning in Religious Education.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- Religious Education is given high priority by all leaders and managers. It is clearly evident that this is a core subject within the school. Resources are made available on an annual basis to ensure that the quality of the provision is maintained to a high standard.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is good. The acting headteacher, Religious Education subject leader, school governors and directors of the academy trust have effective strategies in place to evaluate provision in order to ensure the continued development of Religious Education as a core subject .
- Governors have a good knowledge of the school and have been instrumental in making decisions which have enabled the school to improve. They monitor the strengths of the school and support the acting headteacher in identifying areas for improvement through regular visits, participation in school activities and governing body meetings. Governors are supportive and confident in providing challenge. They discharge their canonical and statutory duties well.
- The curriculum is well planned using diocesan guidance. Good use is made of the support available through the diocesan Religious Education team. The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Sacramental preparation is recognised as both a parish and school responsibility. Teachers and catechist work together to ensure that pupils are well prepared for this part of their faith journey.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Gregory's Catholic Academy
Unique reference number	139492
Local authority	Stockton
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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CEO of Carmel Education Trust	Maura Regan
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