



St Gregory's Catholic Science College

Donnington Road, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 0NB

Date of inspection: 22 and 23 October 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade I*

Classroom religious education is outstanding in this school. Pupils' achievement in religious education is outstanding; the progress of pupils is excellent and sustained. At GCSE, the results demonstrate that almost all groups of pupils make progress which is well above average given their varied starting points. At A Level, both Year 12 and Year 13 students achieve extremely well, compared with national performance in the subject. The content of the classroom religious education is outstanding. The schemes of work are very thorough and specify in detail the implementation of the Curriculum Directory at all stages. Overall, teaching is excellent and lessons are imaginative and creative, enabling all pupils to engage and to succeed. Teachers have consistently high expectations, strong subject knowledge, very good relationships with their pupils and confidence which inspires. Pupils are provided with outstanding written and oral feedback across the whole department and know how to improve. The leadership and management of the religious education department is outstanding. The head of department has a vibrant vision for religious education and works in a collaborative way with well qualified staff to ensure pupils achieve their best.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade I*

St Gregory's Catholic Science College is an outstanding Catholic school. The vision of the headteacher, school leadership and governors, supported by local clergy, are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced. The school is highly effective in maintaining and developing its Catholic identity, and in impressively fostering pupils' growing awareness of their Catholic faith and their understanding of how to live this out in their lives. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. They have very many opportunities to develop personal responsibility and engage in action to support those in need locally and in the wider world. There is an appreciation of being part of the local deanery and Diocese of Westminster. Governors offer strong support in developing and reviewing the quality of the Catholic life of the school. Relationships within the school community are outstanding as is the pastoral care provided to support individual needs.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent 2 days in school, visited 17 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 11 interviews 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.

The Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Science College, Kenton was carried out under the requirements of Canon 806 and the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Mrs Jane Goring	Lead Inspector
Ms Niamh Brady	Associate Inspector
Mrs Louise Gammage	Associate Inspector

Description of School

The school is a six form entry in the LA of Brent and the locality of Kenton. The school serves several parishes including All Saints, Kenton and St Erconwald's, Wembley.

The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 89.5%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 9.5% and from other Faiths 1%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 65%.

There are 1075 pupils on roll, with 26 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals. Three hundred and four pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	304/5406
URN Number:	101563

Headteacher:	Mr Andrew Prindiville
Chair of Governors:	Mr Alloysius Frederick
Date of previous inspection:	22 October 2009

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The department has developed very effective methods of responding to pupil feedback which has broadened the variety of learning activity and improved the learning dialogue between pupils and teachers. This has led to increased motivation and engagement and given all pupils the confidence to flourish irrespective of their starting points.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 1*

The religious education curriculum throughout all key stages meets the requirements of the curriculum directory in an exceptional way. The core content is mapped to the Curriculum Directory, supplementing where necessary with other resources, resulting in programmes of study which are imaginative and aid both long term and short term planning. Examples of very good planning were seen in all lessons and there is evidence to show progression and depth of provision in the pupils' books. All schemes of work reflect a systematic study of God, the life and teachings of Jesus and the Church, and the central beliefs of the Catholic faith. The delivery of the curriculum is creative and engaging. The department converses with pupils to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are catered for. The departmental team strives constantly through its resources to offer pupils as many opportunities as possible to develop their spiritual lives, building on their academic successes.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 1*

Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are generally in line with the national average. The religious education department skilfully promotes their progress so that pupil achievement is outstanding. Pupils typically achieve highly in religious education at each Key Stage, and their attainment equals or exceeds key thresholds in core subjects across all Key Stages. Those post-16 students following Level 3 courses in Religious Studies do exceptionally well in both A2 and AS examinations and student uptake of the subject has grown impressively. At Key Stage 3, regular in-house assessments provide ample opportunities for all pupils to flourish. Pupils and students in every Key Stage are very aware of their target grades and how to reach them. They are confident and enthusiastic learners, aware of their progress within lessons and over time and readily demonstrate high levels of religious literacy. Baseline assessment tasks at Key Stage 3 are carefully linked to and tracked against diocesan attainment targets and demonstrate outstanding progress over time. Work is very carefully moderated and the school takes seriously its target setting and tracking of religious education, and monitors the progress of all pupils rigorously. As a result of robust tracking and accurate intervention, predictions for attainment and progress are very strong in each Key Stage.

The quality of teaching

Grade 1*

In line with the department's own evaluation, the quality of teaching is outstanding. A collaborative and supportive approach, in addition to robust monitoring and evaluation, all contribute to sustaining teaching that is consistently of the highest standards. High expectations, challenging tasks, effective differentiation and a consistent focus on progress made, encourage pupils and students to reflect independently on their faith and to think critically. All teachers impart a deep knowledge of the Catholic faith and teach with an infectious enthusiasm and confidence. Their informed understanding of how to challenge students to do as well as they possibly can in religious education lessons drives learning forward at every level. They have high expectations of students in terms of academic work, their personal development and behaviour. Teachers plan exceptionally well and, in response to pupil feedback, use a wide range of resources which capture pupils' enthusiasm. In the best of lessons, teaching is characterised by a wide range of stimulating activities, with tasks well matched to individual abilities and punctuated by opportunities to reflect on learning. At the heart of pupil progress are very effective strategies in peer and self-assessment which permeate lessons. Teachers also mark and assess students' work regularly, thoroughly and constructively, identifying clear targets for improvement. As a result, most students know how to improve their work, are able to respond actively to feedback, and avail of opportunities to advance their skills and knowledge.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1*

The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. The subject leader's ambition and enthusiasm for the subject inspires her team and there is a vibrant vision for religious education in which achieving the best for pupils is at the centre. The department is a cohesive, strong, supportive team where the sharing of best practice as well as resources is key, making the department a beacon of excellence within the school. There are effective systems to regularly monitor and track pupil progress and excellent assessment ensures that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress and usually beyond this. There is a relentless drive to ensure that teaching in the department is of the highest quality and the department should now ensure that there are sufficient teachers confident in teaching at A Level as the uptake at this level increases. The subject leader has an excellent understanding of both the strengths and areas for development in religious education and there is extensive pupil feedback which is acted upon as appropriate; this results in engaged pupils who feel valued and want to be successful. Senior leaders, including governors, work tirelessly together with the departmental team and all appreciate the centrality and importance of religious education in the mission of the Church and the formation of the students.

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

- Maintain the outstanding practice in religious education by ensuring that sufficient teachers are confident in teaching A level as the uptake increases.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no specific areas of improvement for the Catholic life of the school identified in the last inspection.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade 1*

The school meets the requirements for curriculum time in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. Pupils spend 10% of the available curricular time in religious education in the main school. At Key Stage 5, students receive 5% of curricular time from the timetabled allocation. Across the school, this provision is enriched by a wide range of related activities that promote the Catholic life of the school. The religious education department has a generous budget, one which surpasses that of other core subjects. The religious education department is well staffed with subject specialists and has dedicated classrooms, all of which provide a vibrant learning environment. The Chaplaincy area also offers an excellent resource to support the ministry of the Chaplain as well as providing space for liturgy and group work. The governors and head teacher offer outstanding guidance in developing and reviewing religious education and chaplaincy within the school.

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

Grade 1*

The school's provision for prayer and worship is outstanding and a key part of every school celebration. Prayer and worship are central to the daily life of the school through formal liturgy, class prayer times and assemblies. Staff and students are regularly invited to pray and to reflect upon their place in the world and the tradition of praying before each lesson is very well embedded as a daily experience for students. In tutor time, an over reliance on traditional 'said' prayers was observed, at the expense of more imaginative forms of prayer. However, there were some outstanding examples of tutor time prayer; in Year 9, students had written their own prayers in their planners, which revealed a deep and well developed spirituality. In addition, pupils spoke about the frequent opportunities for spiritual development through reflection which they experienced. Liturgies are creative and imaginative and students are engaged in the planning and preparation of worship, including writing their own prayers, choosing the readings and hymns. The Maranatha choir was often cited as one way in which the students could really engage in liturgy. Mass is central to the experience offered to the pupils; there is a programme of Masses throughout the year and every week there is a voluntary lunchtime Mass. Parents attend a variety of liturgical celebrations; for instance, during the inspection there was a Year 7 Mass of Welcome to which they had been invited. In assemblies, students experience high quality acts of worship; there are very clear links made between Scripture and everyday life. The Chaplain works

tirelessly with a wide variety of students to plan and evaluate the school's rich and vibrant liturgical life, making adjustments and looking for new ways to engage with the student population. The Chaplain is inspirational in the way he infects all areas of school life and the school would be wise to begin to consider succession planning so that this area of school life will continue to flourish. Students from other faith traditions are included and spoke with warmth about the inclusive nature of the provision for worship.

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

Grade I*

The school's commitment to action for social justice is outstanding. Students not only contribute exceptionally well to their own community but they extend this to a wider platform and also understand that their actions are rooted in Gospel values. This ethos underpins all that they do and is woven into every aspect of school life. Students volunteer, for example, as peer mentors, act as prefects and leaders, and offer support for school events and liturgies where they share their talents. They engage in a wide range of local, national and international charitable activities through the house structure, and as a consequence, have an appreciation of how fortunate they are and a real desire to help others less fortunate. The school's sustained and inspirational commitment to HCPT is an excellent example of this; both staff and students witness their faith by taking vulnerable people from the local community to Lourdes. All who work here share the vision that everyone is equal whatever their background and the students enjoy celebrating the richness and diversity of their community. The school works very hard to ensure that there is a common sense of belonging and students speak of their community with immense pride. Within school, effective systems support the value placed on community and relationships by staff and students. This is supported by an extensive and effective retreat programme run by the Chaplain. Opportunities to serve others are valued and respected. Across all key stages, students of all abilities are encouraged to take on positions of leadership and responsibility, and every opportunity is taken to encourage mutual respect for each other and the community.

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;

Grade I*

There is a very strong commitment among senior leaders and staff to the school's mission as a Catholic school within the Diocese of Westminster. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors are regularly involved in diocesan events and the Chaplain regularly attends diocesan chaplains' conferences. The priests from the local parish are invited into school to celebrate special events. Staff regularly attend diocesan training and the religious education adviser is a welcome visitor to the school. The school participates in deanery moderation meetings and has piloted the base line tests for the Education Service. St Gregory's puts itself at the service of the community to an impressive extent, maintaining the links with local businesses and organisations which were forged when the school had Specialist status; for instance, a group of local traders hold their meetings on the school premises and the environmental area is used by local primary schools. The parental

questionnaire showed that parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the contribution by the school for the continuing faith formation of their children. They strongly agreed that the school is both welcoming and supportive, whilst being very efficient and empathetic to their concerns or queries. There was also very strong agreement in how the school supports both the progress of their children and the quality of its provision as a Catholic school.

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

Grade 1*

The leadership of St Gregory's Catholic Science College is outstanding; the leadership team and governors have high aspirations for the school as a Catholic community and a passion for school improvement. They demonstrate this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral education at its heart. Catholic life is central to the work of the school and leaders, including the Chaplain, ensure that all aspects reflect the richness of a Christian way of life. The headteacher makes certain that all staff have the skills and opportunities to contribute to the Catholic life of the school and there are excellent systems in place to support staff. The Catholic ethos is woven throughout the whole school and manifests itself in shared vision of the leadership team; this then permeates the school community at all levels. The students have a strong sense of this ethos and feel that they are part of the community – all have a contribution to make and feel valued. The Governing body understands its strategic role and is effective in carrying out its duties.

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

- The school should consider ways in which they might 'succession plan' to ensure that the chaplaincy continues to flourish.