

St Gregory's Catholic High School

URN: 111454

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

24–25 September 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

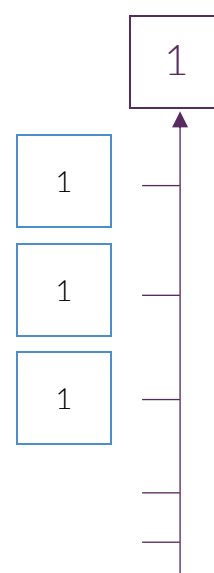
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

- St. Gregory's Catholic High School is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan archbishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection undertaken in February 2019.

What the school does well

- The leadership and vision of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are inspirational; they are outstanding witnesses to the gospel in their direction of the school.
- Saint Gregory's Catholic High School has a strong sense of community and inclusivity among all stakeholders based on their mission statement, school charisms and living out the values of Catholic social teaching.
- The religious education department has well-qualified teachers who allow students to experience considered discernment, and prudent planning of a meaningful and spiritual curriculum.
- Prayer is woven into the fabric of school life and leads students and staff to a deeper understanding of their Christian faith.

What the school needs to improve

- Standardise the format of all school policies to include the mission statement.
- Provide greater diversity in planned classroom tasks and additional enrichment activities within and beyond curriculum time in both key stages.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

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

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



St Gregory's is an outstanding example of how a school community can embrace the distinctive Catholic identity, charisms and mission of a Catholic school. Students are passionate in upholding the charism of the school and demonstrate Catholic social teaching principles in their daily lives through groups such as the chaplaincy team, St Vincent de Paul and Faith in Action group. Students contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of Catholic life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it. They engage enthusiastically in charitable acts such as food parcels for the local family of parishes supporting St Joseph's Welfare. Students can clearly articulate an excellent understanding of how they are valued and cared for as unique persons, made in the image and likeness of God. They state that, "The support they (staff) give us helps us grow and shine through any of life's obstacles." Students show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others therefore behaviour is exemplary in lessons and throughout the school. Students seek out chaplaincy leadership roles and actively participate in and contribute to opportunities provided by the school.

The mission statement is a clear expression of the Church and of this school's particular charism. The mission statement is lived and witnessed throughout the school and one member of staff stated, "Every conversation begins with the lens of our mission statement." As a result, it has a transformational impact on the lives of staff and students because they take their school vocation into ministries in parish life. A member of staff shared that, "Working at St Gregory's has supported my own formation." Staff embrace the mission statement and readily implement it across the curriculum with department patron saints and prayers. There is an exemplary spirit of hospitality and welcome, including students of other faiths and none. Pastoral care for students is exceptional because, 'everyone is treated with affection and respect, and those most

vulnerable are supported by school in a variety of ways both academically and pastorally'. The school environment reflects its mission and identity through explicit signs and symbols of the school's Catholic character. The full-time lay-chaplain provides significant support in enriching and fulfilling the life and mission of this school. The programme for relationships, sex, and health education meets all statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are exceptional in their articulation of the Church's mission in education and thorough in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school, setting high ambitions for it. A governor stated, "The faith of our leaders is the golden thread permeating all areas of our school and pervades all major decisions of the school's mission." Partnerships with the family of parishes are exemplary and reciprocal. One parent claimed, "This school is grounded in faith." Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic social teaching in their direction of the school. The headteacher is a visible presence in the local parish, exemplifying further witness to families of the school. Leaders of different subject areas work together to plan collaborative opportunities that will further enhance this religious dimension of school life. The school's self-evaluation of Catholic life and mission results in targeted professional development. Consequently, leaders have developed effective and focused induction programmes to inspire all staff to participate actively in, and contribute to, the superior Catholic life and mission of St Gregory's. The staff survey testified that 100% of adults enjoy working at this school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

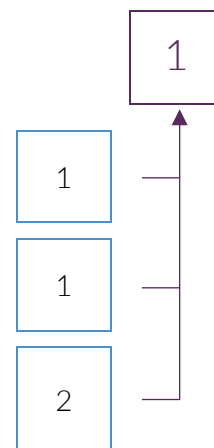
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Students clearly enjoy religious education and were fully engaged in lessons visited. One student stated, "RE opens up our minds to God." In a school video created by the department, all participants spoke of this enjoyment and engagement as they praised their teachers and teaching. Students are developing excellent subject knowledge in lessons, with key focusses on religious literacy and linking understanding with faith in action. Skills are being strategically developed and embedded, allowing students to be aware of the progress they are making, and need to make, to reach their full potential. Students were able to talk confidently about what they were studying in class and one pupil voiced that, "RE allows me to dive deeply and be more curious about life." Instances of this were significantly more evident at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. There is an incremental upward trend in outcomes for religious education. Students take exceptional pride in their books and the presentation of work (including examples from the previous academic year) is excellent. Students work well independently; especially on Key Piece extended writing tasks. In lessons they seek guidance from their teachers because they are ambitious to achieve. A student stated, "Our motto is 'we are one family, inspired to learn' and this feels real in our school."

Teachers are confident of their subject knowledge in religious education, and several staff are currently studying for Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies accreditation and undertake work for exam boards. In many lessons, teachers demonstrate good use of modelling by utilising their professional experience as examiners. There is a collaborative planning approach within the religious education department. Over the last year, some very effective practice to recall learning has been implemented and resources such as K-S-I (Knowledge, Source and Impact) tasks are employed in most lessons. Teachers use strategic questioning that allows students to reflect and increase engagement. Department assessment, marking and feedback are consistent with

whole school policy, increasing in frequency and depth as students travel through the key stages. Assessment in Year 11 informs targeted intervention for improved exam outcomes. The Religious Education Directory is implemented across Key Stage 3, with all staff receiving comprehensive training, metacognition workshops, and updates on both formative and summative assessments. One teacher of religious education commented, "The headteacher encourages but also holds us to high expectations." All lessons recognise the achievement of students with regular use of celebratory language which leads to increased motivation and stronger relationships between staff and students.

All religious education rooms are named after religious pathways (e.g. Via Dolorosa) to link with the concept that all learning pathways in St Gregory's are undertaken as journeys of faith. There have been significant steps made to improve outcomes in religious education over the last three years, and the subject leader should be praised for her ambition, commitment and vision. This is evident in the continuing improvements of outcomes for students with special educational needs. A robust staff training programme is in place within the department built on the foundations of GRACE (Grounded in faith; Realising potential; Achieving progress; Challenging thinking; Engaging all). Staff in the department feel confident and believe they have flourished with the empowerment they are offered by their subject leader. The subject leader, recently appointed to the role, is ambitious to achieve success, not yet fully realised, regarding student attainment which continues its developmental and improvement journey supported by senior leaders. The subject leader is aware of the need for targeted raising of Level 3 grades and offering learners of different abilities and needs, more wide-ranging resources. Students would benefit from increased diversity of planned classroom tasks (in both key stages) as well as additional enrichment activities within and beyond curriculum time.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

The school provides outstanding opportunities for students to engage in prayer and worship. The communal hymn singing at the beginning of celebration of the word, led by the music department, is a significant strength and students enthusiastically partake in all the hymns since they have had the opportunity to select them. The school lay chaplain, students and others work well together to prepare thoroughly and often creatively, for form and whole school Masses as well as other religious celebrations. Students are involved in evaluating collective worship (regular feedback is completed on celebration of the word) and staff give credence to this feedback, proactively planning and implementing appropriate creative ideas. Students are unanimous in describing prayer as central to the spiritual life of their school. They particularly enjoy writing their own prayers as they feel this gives them the opportunity to make the prayer relevant to their own lives. Students from all key stages talk passionately about how prayer and liturgy make a difference to their lives and one student shared that because of their time at the school they have, "the values and faith to go forward with the rest of their adult life."

St Gregory's is an outstanding worshipping community. School life is based around the Church's liturgical calendar. All major feasts are celebrated with a Mass (or celebration of the word if a priest is not available). All meetings begin in prayer and the school days open and close with a communal prayer. Each form room has its prayer symbols (used by staff and students) and is an outstanding feature of the school. Inspectors observed an inspirational assembly by a senior leader, in collaboration with the safeguarding team and students, linking the topic of safeguarding with scripture, Catholic social teaching and the school's charism. Masses and other religious services are planned in ways that enrich whole school staff formation. Staff at St Gregory's are exemplary models of best practice particularly the headteacher. There is a wide selection of Christian art, bespoke art and iconography around the school. There is a dedicated

chapel, and a further dedicated indoor prayer space for staff and students of other faiths is being planned. Primary school pupils from Year 5 are invited annually for Discovery Days which the school believes is the beginning of St Gregory's formation journey. The parents value this early link and view transition into St Gregory's as a privilege. The parent survey testified that 85% agreed, 'the school supports my child's spiritual and moral development'.

The policy on prayer and worship has been carefully formulated, and the lay chaplain creates a dedicated liturgical plan for the year. The lay chaplain also provides high quality whole school resources for daily worship at form time, thereby creating consistency through all year groups. Not only senior leaders, but all staff and governors demonstrate an exceptional knowledge of the Catholic tradition, and this is consistently articulated in the spiritual life of this unique community. One governor commented that, "the mission statement and the delivery of religious education needs perseverance to pursue something bigger beyond a written content, that is why it is important to get faith experiences right." Leaders strive to make this school community 'spiritually healthy' and to 'link life experiences to faith outcomes.' One group of Catholic primary headteachers described St Gregory's as a school that is both 'self-critical and self-reflective' in its planning of faith experiences. As a result, prayer and liturgy is delivered in an exceptional manner and without any doubt is central to the school's life and mission. There is absolutely no doubt that St Gregory's is a school that fully lives out its Catholicity.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gregory's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	111454
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8774622
Full postal address of the school	St Gregory's Catholic High School, Cromwell Avenue, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 1HG
School phone number	001925574888
Headteacher	Edward McGlinchey
Chair of governors	Roger Harrison
School Website	http://www.stgregoryshigh.com
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Mrs A Corless	Lead
Mrs L Conway	Team
Mrs L Corrigan	Team
Mr A Pontifex	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

