



# Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

26<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Ms Frances Topa  
Headteacher  
St Gregory's Catholic Middle School  
Biddenham Turn  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire MK40 4AT

**Assessment Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012**

## **Summary**

St Gregory's Catholic Middle School (SGCMS) is an inclusive school which fully reflects the mission of 'Living, learning and growing together with Jesus'. Pupils of all faiths and of no faith are welcomed and totally included in the life of the school. One pupil when describing the school as 'inclusive' said 'I am not Catholic but I am treated the same'. Another pupil described the school as 'multi-cultural and although Catholic includes other faiths.' SGCMS has high aspirations for and expectations of everyone in the school community. It is very good at identifying pupils' needs at an early stage. The progress of every pupil is effectively tracked and monitored in order to identify those who are not making the required progress and may need additional support. Staff know the pupils very well and throughout the school pupils make good progress including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Developing each pupil's positive self-image and raising their self-esteem is embedded in all that the school does. There is a clear focus on celebrating the achievements of each and every pupil. Leadership is excellent and the Headteacher and her staff are accessible, approachable, encouraging and actively listen to the pupils. As one pupil said 'They are always there to help'. Pupils are learning how to work independently and collaboratively and their behaviour around the school is very good. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well indeed. There is structured monitoring and observation of teaching and learning and scrutiny of planning, marking and of pupils' work. Pupils are also consulted about their lessons and how their learning experiences can be improved. The staff induction programme is very well planned and includes training for staff new to the school. Newly qualified teachers are also very well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants work collaboratively and co-operatively together and say that they receive regular praise for their work.

The school's comprehensive accessibility plan clearly identifies planned improvements for physical and curricular access. Classroom and corridor displays are colourful, attractive, interesting and endorse the message that the school is clearly focussed on learning. Faith displays consistently convey the ethos that everyone is part of one big family. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and know classroom routines and expectations. They describe their learning as 'fun' saying that they 'learn in fun ways'. Marking encourages and informs pupils about what they have done well. Pupils are praised and as in the title of the song sung in the Key Stage 2 assembly they are encouraged to 'Reach for the Stars'! The school is well

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resourced with good quality teaching and learning materials and pupils were seen to be able to access all of the resources which they needed for their learning.

Parents/carers say that their children are very happy at SGCMS and that their children love coming to school. They say that staff are very accessible and that any issues or concerns are managed in a caring way and are very quickly addressed. Parents/carers acknowledge the kindness, help and support given to them and their children. They love the multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects of the school and say that everyone is welcomed and treated as part of the school family. The governors at SGCMS are very clear that the school is an inclusive school. They are enthusiastic and their aspirations for what all pupils can achieve couldn't be higher. SGCMS works in partnership with a range of support services and external agencies and the school's family support worker signposts parents/carers to community services, undertakes home visits when necessary and supports vulnerable families and children.

The school has good links with other schools, with colleges and universities and with the local and the wider community. Members of the community also come into school to contribute to pupils' learning. Pupils also go on educational visits to for example, the Euro Space Centre in Belgium and closer to home to Holdenby House in Northamptonshire. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and have raised funds for example, for a local charity for the homeless and for a charity in El Salvador which diverts young people from becoming involved with gangs. SGCMS is working hard to broaden pupils' experience and view of the world.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

**Assessor:** Graham Matthews

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**



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Joe McCann MBA NPQH  
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

<b>Name of School:</b>	St Gregory's Catholic Middle School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Ms Frances Topa
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2012
<b>Final assessor/s:</b>	Graham Matthews
<b>Successful:</b>	Yes

### Context of the School and Sources of Data

Sources of Data:

- IQM Tracking Document.
- School Improvement Plan.
- School Self-Evaluation Form 2011 on-going.
- Ofsted Inspection Report (19-20 May 2010).
- Ofsted Monitoring Letter (14 December 2011).
- Section 48 Report of Denominational Character. &  
Religious Education (16-17 June 2010)
- School/Department Improvement Plan 2011-12.
- School Policies including safeguarding, community cohesion, behaviour & discipline, and anti-bullying.
- Governors Support & Improvement Group Report March & January 2012  
& Inclusion Committee Minutes.
- Senior Leadership Meeting Minutes & Senior Leadership PSHE Review Minutes.
- Key Stage 2 Data File.
- Key Stage 3 Data File.
- Teaching Assistant Monitoring Folder.
- Sample of pupils' workbooks.
- Special Educational Needs Executive Group Minutes.
- Accessibility Policy 2011 and Accessibility Plan 2012-2015.
- Tracking Document & Planning File.
- Focus Weeks File.
- 'Thank You' File.
- Parent/carer survey December 2011.
- Year 7 Annual Pupil Report.
- Sample of Newsletters.
- Interview with Headteacher and IQM Co-ordinator/SENCo.
- Interview and telephone conference with Assistant Headteachers.
- Interview with lead teachers, subject lead teachers and middle leaders.
- Interview with office staff.
- Interview with teaching assistants & higher level teaching assistant.
- Interview with Newly Qualified Teacher & Mentor.
- Interview with Family Support Worker.

- Meet with parents/carers.
- Interviews with Governors including Chair of Governors & Executive Principal.
- Meeting with Head Girl & Boy, their deputies and representative of the School Council.
- Informal conversations with children around the school.
- Tour of the School and learning walks with observations of displays, classroom activities, playground activities and lunchtime arrangements.
- Afternoon charity event activities organised by all pupils.
- Key Stage 2 briefing, Key Stage 2 Assembly and Mass.
- Examples of pupils' work.

### Context of the School:

St Gregory's Catholic Middle School (SGCMS) is an oversubscribed Roman Catholic voluntary aided comprehensive school which provides education for girls and boys aged between the ages of nine and thirteen years. Some 65% of pupils are from Roman Catholic backgrounds, 18% from other Christian backgrounds and 17% from other major religions the largest proportion being Islam. The school is situated to the west of Bedford town and has three hundred and sixty pupils on roll. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Some 70% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and of these 62% speak English as an additional language. The 1% of pupils with a statement of special educational need is slightly below the national average whereas the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above at 20%. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is just above the national average at 18%. Children enter the school at levels that are below those for their age and make rapid progress through Key Stages 2 and 3 so that their rates of progress exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress throughout their time at school. SGCMS belongs to the Bedford Catholic Federation which works closely with the three other schools in the Federation and the Executive Principal to ensure a seamless transition between the different phases of education. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Accreditation, Sports Mark, the Financial Standard Management in Schools, the Eco Bronze Award and the Governor Mark and is seeking the International Schools Award.

### Portfolio and Other Supporting Evidence

The tracking document is well organised and all ten elements of the standard are comprehensively covered. Evidence refers to a wide range of school documentation and activities and demonstrates the school's commitment to including everyone in the school community. The range of supporting evidence scrutinised and the meetings held is documented above in the 'Sources of Data' section of this report.

### **Element 1 - Learner Progress**

St Gregory's Catholic Middle School (SGCMS) is very good at identifying pupils' needs at an early stage. Through the transfer and transition project SGCMS is working with a partner lower school to identify blocks to learning and to ensure that there is continuity of learning and teaching strategies. At SGCMS the progress of every pupil is effectively tracked and monitored in order to identify those who are not making the required progress and may need additional support. Data is analysed each term for all groups of pupils and determines action points to address underachievement. Pupil progress meetings identify, target and monitor the progress of those pupils making slow progress. Staff know the pupils very well and pupils throughout the school make good progress including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. At SGCMS pupils make better progress given their starting points than pupils nationally. Pupils are able to describe what they have achieved and also what they need to do to improve.

#### Strengths:-

- All pupils make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the needs of the pupils very well indeed and set them challenging but achievable targets.
- Tracking and monitoring informs deployment of 1:1, group or in-class support.

#### Area for development:-

- Continue to develop provision mapping in order to further inform impact of interventions and assess value for money.

### **Element 2 - Learner Attitude, Values & Personal Development**

Developing each pupil's positive self-image and raising their self-esteem is embedded in all that the school does. There is a clear focus throughout SGCMS on celebrating the achievements of each and every pupil. Pupils in Year 5 are paired with trained pupil mentors from Year 8. Year 5 pupils said how they were able to talk with their mentor about any worries or concerns that they had and mentors were seen to demonstrate excellent listening skills during the mentoring session. As one mentee said of her mentor 'She is there for me'. The Headteacher and all staff are accessible, approachable, encouraging and actively listen to the pupils and as one pupil said 'They are always there to help'. Pupils are learning how to work independently and collaboratively and their behaviour around the school is very good. They greet visitors, smile and hold open doors. Pupils say that they are happy at school and attendance is excellent. Playtimes are well supervised and there are designated areas set aside for games, for pupils to 'let off steam' and for those pupils who want to sit quietly.

#### Strengths:-

- Pupils know where to go and who they can talk to if they have a problem or need help.
- Attendance is excellent and the vast majority of children enjoy coming to school.
- Behaviour around the school is very good with staff being excellent role models.

#### Areas for development:-

- Consider training pupils to act as 'playtime buddies' in order to better engage the few pupils who find it difficult to find friends to play with.
- Revisit with pupils how they can use the 'worry box' and where these are located in the school.

### Element 3 - Leadership & Management

The Headteacher, staff and governors are committed to the inclusion of all pupils. SGCMS is a multicultural school and includes pupils of different faiths and pupils who have no faith at all. As one pupil said 'I am not Catholic but I am treated the same'. Clear identification of pupils' needs is ensuring their successful inclusion in all learning and social activities. Performance management is in place and staff say that this is informing their continuing professional development and that the school is very supportive of their on-going training to meet both their personal training needs and the needs of the school. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well indeed. There is structured monitoring and observation of teaching and learning and scrutiny of planning, marking and of pupils' work. Pupils are also consulted about their lessons for example, with some pupils asking for a variety of ways to record their work other than in writing. Excellent provision is made to support pupils who have suffered loss for example through bereavement or parental separation and for the most vulnerable pupils.

#### Strengths:-

- The school has a 'How can We?' philosophy to inclusion.
- The Headteacher, staff, governors and other members of the school community are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils achieve and are included in all that the school does.
- There is an ethos of trust among the staff who are always seeking out the best ways to improve pupils' learning.

#### Area for development:-

- There is no significant area for development.

### Element 4 - Staffing System & Organisation

SGCMS has sought assessment for the Inclusion Quality Mark as a way to recognise and celebrate its inclusive culture and to celebrate its inclusive practice. It is made very clear to anyone considering applying to work at SGCMS that it is a school clearly focussed on raising the educational achievements of all pupils. The staff induction programme is very well planned and includes training for staff new to the school on for example, special educational needs, English as an additional language and the needs of the gifted and talented. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported with such support described as 'Brilliant!'. Teaching assistants have undertaken training on for example, autism, behaviour management and safeguarding. They say that the school makes good use of the talents that they bring to their work. There is clearly a team approach within the school with teachers and teaching assistants working collaboratively and co-operatively together. All say that they receive regular praise for their work.

#### Strengths:-

- Staff new to the school are very well supported.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together as a team and value each other.
- Staff are enthusiastic and work very hard to include all pupils.

#### Area for development:-

- There is no significant area for development.



### **Element 5 - The Learning Environment**

The main school building has two floors. There is a lift which provides access to the first floor classrooms. The school's comprehensive accessibility plan clearly identifies planned improvements needed for physical access for example, improvements to the music room which is entered via steps. It also identifies improvements for curricular access through for example, the auditing of resources to ensure the needs of all pupils and staff are met. There is a marked disabled parking space near to reception and there are disabled toilet facilities. Wide doors provide access to the reception area and corridors are wide and free of clutter. Classroom and corridor displays are colourful, attractive, interesting and endorse the message that the school is clearly focussed on learning. All displays show a consistently high quality of layout and design. Religious displays consistently convey the ethos that everyone is part of one big family. Outside, the school has extensive grass and hard areas which are very well used by pupils for both learning and play. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs from football after school to knitting club at lunchtime.

#### Strengths:-

- Displays of annotated pupils' work in classrooms and corridors celebrate and value their achievements.
- Accommodation which meets the needs for whole class, small group and 1:1 tuition.
- Accessibility plan clearly identifying areas for development.

#### Area for development:-

- Ensure that the surface of the car parking area is of the same high standard as the hard surfaces found elsewhere.

### **Element 6 - Teaching & Learning**

There is excellent communication between teachers and teaching assistants and teaching assistants are effectively deployed throughout the school. Teaching assistants contribute to assessment and attend and contribute to pupil reviews including annual reviews of statements of special educational needs. Pupils and their parents/carers know the targets which have been set and these are readily available at the front of pupils' workbooks. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and know classroom routines and expectations. Non negotiable rules, the consequence staircase and steps to success are clearly displayed in classrooms and pupils are able to say what these are and what they mean. Pupils describe their learning as 'fun' saying that they 'learn in fun ways'. Marking encourages and informs pupils about what they have done well. Pupils say that it also tells them what they need to do next to improve but this was not clearly evident in the sample of workbooks scrutinised. Pupils are praised and as in the title of the song sung in the Key Stage 2 assembly they are encouraged to 'Reach for the Stars'!

#### Strengths:-

- High quality teaching and skilled support makes learning fun.
- A whole school ethos which focuses on everyone learning and achieving.
- Clear classroom rules and expectations which are understood by pupils.

#### Area for development:-

- There is no significant area for development.

### **Element 7 - Resources & ICT**

Each classroom has an interactive smartboard as does the staffroom where it is used for example, for training presentations. There is a timetabled ICT Suite with a sufficient number of computers for each pupil to have access. In addition there are networked computers in classrooms and a laptop trolley is available. The library is also very well equipped with a bank of networked computers which pupils use. All teachers have laptops. Pupils and teachers were seen making regular use of ICT in their classrooms. Support is available from both the ICT technician and subject leader and children are being taught skills to use across the curriculum. The school is aware of pupils who do not have access to a computer at home and access is provided to computers in school for example, for pupils to complete homework. A range of software is available for pupils to use. The school is well resourced with good quality teaching and learning materials and pupils were seen to be able to access all of the resources which they needed for their learning. Staff are aware of the resources that they have and need.

#### Strengths:-

- Pupils are able to access all of the resources which they need for their learning.
- Continuous monitoring and assessment of resources and seeking to obtain value for money.
- Pupils are taught the skills to use ICT across the curriculum.

#### Area for development:-

- Ensure that information on the school's website is relevant and current.

### Element 8 - Parents & Carers

Parents/Carers say that their children are very happy at SGCMS and that their children love coming to school. They say that staff are very accessible and that any issues or concerns are managed in a caring way and are very quickly addressed. Parents/carers acknowledge the kindness, help and support given to them and their children. They love the multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects of the school and say that everyone is welcomed and treated as part of the school family. Parents/carers say that they are kept very well informed about how well their children are achieving. The annual school report is positive and encouraging and clearly explains what their children know, understand and can do and what the next step is. They find the school newsletters informative and the contact with teachers through the homework/reading diaries very useful. They are delighted when they receive postcards through the mail celebrating their children's achievements. SGCMS provides workshops for parents for example, a mathematics workshop where parents learned about the written methods their children use in school. There is an active parent-teacher association which liaises closely with the school council before deciding on any new resources to provide for the school.

#### Strengths:-

- Parents/carers say that the staff are very accessible and that any concerns are addressed very quickly.
- Good, clear information is provided for parents/carers about both the achievements of their children and of the school.
- Parents/carers know that the school welcomes and includes everyone.

#### Area for development:-

- Consider setting up a Parent/Carers' Forum to further engage with parents/carers and empower them to raise matters about which they would like more information.

### **Element 9 - Governors, External Partners & Local Authority**

The governors at SGCMS are very clear that the school is an inclusive school. They have achieved the national standards for good governance and been awarded the Governor Mark in recognition of outstanding practice. Governors both challenge and support the school and have an excellent range of professional knowledge and expertise on which to draw. Governors are enthusiastic and their aspirations for what all pupils can achieve couldn't be higher. They know the school very well indeed and this knowledge is based on for example, data, links with subject leaders, briefings from senior leaders as well as from their first hand experiences in school. Governors are aware that parents/carers are not clear about who the school's governors are. Parents/carers say that they too are also unclear about who the governors are and the role that they play. SGCMS works in partnership with a range of support services and external agencies. For example, educational psychology contributing to staff training and a physiotherapist working with the school to support a pupil with a physical disability. The school's family support worker signposts parents/carers to community services, undertakes home visits when necessary and supports vulnerable families and children.

#### Strengths:-

- Governors effectively support and challenge the school.
- Governors' knowledge of the inclusive nature of the school and the needs of the pupils.
- The school actively engages with and welcomes the advice and support from outside professionals.

#### Area for development:-

- For governors to make themselves and their role better known to parents/carers.

### **Element 10 - The Community**

The school has good links with the local and the wider community and provides placements for students from for example, the University of Bedford and Northampton University. There is strong networking and support within the Bedford Catholic Federation family of schools. SGCMS has a clear partnership with other schools through for example sharing staff, through coaching and through the tracking of vulnerable pupils. Pupils make visits to the Sikh gurdwara, the mosque and local churches and celebrate different faith festivals such as Diwali. Members of the community also come into school to contribute to pupils' learning for example, retired local residents were interviewed by Year 7 pupils as part of their research of Shakespeare's *The Seven Ages of Man*. Pupils also go on educational visits to for example, the Euro Space Centre in Belgium and closer to home to Holdenby House for their studies of the Victorians. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and have raised funds for example, for a local charity for the homeless. They were also seen enthusiastically running a variety of enterprises in celebration of Oscar Romero day to raise funds for a charity in El Salvador which diverts young people from becoming involved with gangs. The parent-teacher association runs events for example, an Italian theme evening and is planning one with an Asian theme. Pupils compete successfully in local, district and national competitions.

#### Strengths:-

- Raising pupils' awareness of the needs of others and providing them with opportunities to help.
- Range of educational visits to extend learning.
- An outward looking school which engages with the wider community.

#### Area for development:-

- There is no significant area for development.

### Summary

St Gregory's Catholic Middle School (SGCMS) is an inclusive school which fully reflects the mission of 'Living, learning and growing together with Jesus'. Pupils of all faiths and of no faith are welcomed and totally included in the life of the school. One pupil when describing the school as 'inclusive' said 'I am not Catholic but I am treated the same'. Another pupil described the school as 'multi-cultural and although Catholic includes other faiths.' SGCMS has high aspirations for and expectations of everyone in the school community. It is very good at identifying pupils' needs at an early stage. The progress of every pupil is effectively tracked and monitored in order to identify those who are not making the required progress and may need additional support. Staff know the pupils very well and throughout the school pupils make good progress including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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Assessor: *Graham Matthews*

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