

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118783
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358442
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Peskett
Headteacher	Jacqui Wright
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers and held meetings with staff, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, the School Improvement Partner's reports, minutes of meetings of the governing body, policies and data about pupils' attainment and progress. The team analysed the responses to 76 questionnaires returned by parents and carers in addition to those completed by 99 pupils and 21 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, and in writing and mathematics across the school.
- The progress of groups of pupils, including the gifted and talented, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and girls
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring progress and driving up pupils' attainment
- The effectiveness of marking and assessment.

Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. Pupils come from the local area. Most pupils are from White British families and most pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average but the number of those with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory but improving school. Clear-sighted leadership is focused at all levels on raising standards. Very effective care, guidance and support are areas of strength. As one parent stated, 'I am extremely happy with the high level of care and attention towards the children's needs and learning as well as safety'. Good behaviour is accompanied by increasing opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community.

Pupils settle in well when they join the school. They make the expected progress as a result of focused teaching which is improving in quality because of the efforts put in by leaders to ensure higher standards. Progress has been quickest at Key Stage 2 but is now improving at Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to sharper planning and assessment procedures. Girls generally make faster progress than boys but the gap is narrowing because the resources and approaches used have increased boys' engagement with their learning and with writing. Curriculum enrichment offers some opportunities for pupils to explore subjects in depth but requires further development in linking different subjects and incorporating materials related to pupils' actual life experiences and interests. One pupil said, 'I like mathematics because learning is fun' but this approach has yet to be spread across other subjects. Gifted and talented pupils are reaching high levels in mathematics due to effective setting arrangements in the final key stage. Different levels of work are insufficiently developed to enable all pupils to be fully challenged and so reach their maximum potential. Assessment procedures have improved but are not always frequent or rigorous enough to ensure their use addresses areas of pupil weakness, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Clear targets are set but pupils are not always aware of how their learning is taking them to the next levels. Strategies used to ensure improvement in mathematics results and in reading skills are being applied to the development of writing skills. Where opportunities are provided for pupils to make extended oral contributions, written work is of a higher quality. Teaching assistants are used effectively to assist pupils with their learning. A range of support strategies, within and outside the classroom, ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make steady progress.

Pupils participate well in a range of sports and extra-curricular activities and are enthusiastic in seeking to support those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils take the lead in assemblies and reflective activities and have a good understanding of spiritual, social, moral and cultural issues. They enjoy school because they are confident that there is always an adult to speak with if they have any concerns. Behaviour is good

The headteacher and her senior team are clear about the areas in which the school needs to move forward. They have focused on the development of teaching and monitoring across the school through the use of more rigorous procedures. As a result, standards in mathematics have risen. Key Stage leaders have ensured consistency of procedures. The

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school has improved since the last inspection because self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. A well-informed governing body, which brings a range of experience to its efforts, is working closely with the headteacher and her colleagues to ensure standards continue to rise. Outcomes, including pupil progress, are now improving as remaining gaps are more methodically addressed. As a result, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment across the school by the end of this academic year by:
 - ensuring lessons are fully adapted to the needs of all pupils
 - increasing the level of challenge for high-ability pupils
 - developing the creative curriculum and increasing cross-curricular links to reinforce provision in all subjects. ♦
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 to ensure that the rate of progress increases by:
 - using regular and rigorous assessment procedures ♦
 - linking teaching more closely to children's own experiences
 - ensuring that teacher planning always links prior learning with the next steps.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Most pupils in Year 6 reach or come close to meeting the national expectations for their age in English and mathematics. More pupils are reaching higher levels in reading and mathematics. Writing, which is a school focus, is improving but less quickly. Progress has been slower at Key Stage 1 because expectations have not always been high enough and interim assessments have not been frequent enough to quickly address areas of difficulty. The school is now successfully working to improve these by increased expectations and challenge, especially lower down the school. Good behaviour contributes to classroom progress and is emphasised from the earliest stages upwards. Pupils' satisfactory skills in literacy, information and communication technology and mathematics help them to prepare satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and future life.

Pupils understand the need for safety. Older children help to ensure that younger pupils are safe. Pupils are always prepared to help. They are ready to take the lead in activities such as readings and presentations, helping them to increase their development of speech and language. They have well-developed opinions on the importance of exercise, food and healthiness. The school's efforts have been recognised through the award of Healthy Schools status. Pupils are keenly aware of the needs of their own and other communities and are inventive in their approaches to fundraising.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and is improving as a result of focused monitoring by senior and Key Stage leaders and clearer understanding of expectations. Questioning is frequently used to ensure pupil understanding. In a good Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, questioning was used to test pupils' understanding and to make them reflect independently about how they might take their work forward. Questions were put in such a way that both boys and girls were eager to respond. Best practice is not yet sufficiently shared across the school to ensure that the rate of progress is always high and teacher planning does not allow all abilities to move on as quickly as possible. Teachers have good subject knowledge but planning and marking do not always link present learning with prior efforts so pupils are not always clear about where their learning is taking them. Teaching assistants are used effectively and help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make steady progress by the close attention paid to individual needs and willingness to provide further help whenever necessary.

A range of after-school activities, well-developed outdoor learning spaces and increasing opportunities for topic work ensure effective curriculum provision. The school has recognised the need to expand cross-curricular links and creative work to engage pupils further with their learning. Setting arrangements at Key Stage 2 have helped to improve pupil outcomes providing a faster pace and more challenge. For example, in a mathematics lesson, boys and girls vied with each other to secure the most accurate

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results possible. Challenge is increasing in English but not so high in writing because the school has been slower in engaging boys with their work. The outdoor learning settings have been used to stimulate learning and the school is considering how to make maximum use of these areas.

Good care, guidance and support from all staff, often in small groups and on a one-to-one basis, help all pupils feel valued and safe and that their needs are increasingly understood. Pupils are confident that adults care about them. As a result, relationships between adults and children are very good. The school has expanded its pastoral care through the work of a full-time family liaison officer who works closely with parents and carers to ensure an effective response to family needs. Transition arrangements are good and parents are appreciative of the arrangements made to settle their children quickly. The school works very closely with outside agencies to meet the needs of pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. Pupils, parents and carers feel that school is enjoyable because careful attention ensures that it is a safe place to be.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement well, enabling them to focus on raising standards. The headteacher has developed the roles and responsibilities of middle managers as phase leaders, increased training for all staff and made them accountable for the progress of their groups. Rigorous monitoring and tracking systems are now in place to support pupil progress. Interim monitoring is still developing as a means of more quickly ensuring faster progress in learning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Recording is well developed and the quality of teachers' planning is rising. As a result of focused work in mathematics, achievement of the most able has increased and the lessons learned through this procedure are now being applied to other areas. Leaders tackle discrimination consistently and take every opportunity to promote equal opportunities.

The committed governing body brings a wealth of different experiences to its work. The Chair of the Governing Body meets weekly with the headteacher to provide effective challenge and support. Other governors know the school well because of their programme of regular visits and because they are clear about the priorities for improvement in the school development plan. Safeguarding is good. Members of the governing body and all staff are well trained, with training continually updated. Good partnerships between the school, external agencies and local providers are taking the school forward because they provide facilities which the school could not offer by itself. The school is making progress

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with the development of community cohesion. The school is now reaching out to others following effective work locally and in raising money for a range of charities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make steady progress from starting points below expectations to reach standards closer to national averages by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Increasingly rigorous assessment on entry, beginning with the Nursery, means outcomes are now rising because learning concerns are identified earlier. Sharper assessment and tracking procedures are improving throughout this stage. Nursery and Reception activities, resources and innovative adult-child interaction, like a planned play afternoon with parents, now engage pupils with purposeful learning. Provision is also improving because adults have increased knowledge of the children and their needs. Increased levels of support, especially for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those with speech and language difficulties, ensure that children work and play with more independence and cooperation between them. Outdoor area provision has been developed to encourage active play. Children play safely and are encouraged to eat healthy food. The modified curriculum ensures that boys are now able to take their learning forward at the same rate as girls, especially in writing. Leadership and management are good because a strong vision is shared with teachers and support staff and planning is now more focused. The impact of clear strategies is beginning to show in greater pace and challenge for all activities. There are good links with a range of outside agencies whose strengths are being used to raise attainment. Best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is being shared with Key Stage 1 to ensure more rapid and continuous pupil development.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are positive about the school. They are particularly pleased that their children are kept safe, have a healthy lifestyle and enjoy school. The inspection team also found this to be the case. A few parents and carers expressed individual concerns relating to the progress of their children and a small minority felt the school did not take full account of their suggestions and concerns. These concerns were investigated. The inspection team found that the school provides good information for parents about pupils' progress and is looking at ways of increasing the frequency of this information sharing as well as developing communication with parents and carers, especially those difficult to reach.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	62	26	34	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	57	29	38	3	4	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	42	32	42	11	14	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	39	36	47	7	9	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	34	45	33	43	6	8	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	42	32	42	9	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	45	36	47	4	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	37	31	41	6	8	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	42	31	41	8	11	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	41	34	45	6	8	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	38	30	39	11	14	5	7
The school is led and managed effectively	32	42	32	42	3	4	5	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	54	26	34	6	8	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate, CT9 4BU

I was very pleased to visit your school recently with two other inspectors to look at its work and to see the progress you are making. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and for telling us about your school. These are the best things we found:

- you enjoy school and want to help those who are less fortunate than yourselves
- you are polite and well-behaved
- the staff look after you well and always try to guide and support you
- the headteacher and her colleagues know what needs to be done to improve results.

These are the things we have asked your school to do to make it better:

- make sure lessons contain enough challenge for the most able pupils so that activities allow everyone to move at the right pace and help you to make links between subjects.
- link teaching to your own experiences, ensure that teachers' planning lets you see where you are going and provides opportunities to more regularly let you know how you are getting along.

Thank you again for letting us share your work and for telling us about the school and how you help it. All of you can help your school to improve by doing your very best in everything you do.

We wish you every success with your activities.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Lead Inspector

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