

St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124757
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359763
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Ford-Platt
Headteacher	Phil Knowles
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, other staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, for example, that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation, pupils' work and the information used to track pupils' progress. The 103 questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed, as were the responses of staff and pupils to their own questionnaires.

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

- The speed of pupils' progress in different aspects of learning and consistency over time.
- How far the good assessment practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage as reported by the school has filtered up through the school.
- In view of staff changes, how skilled and successful the senior leaders and subject leaders are at this juncture in moving the school forward, developing teaching quality and raising attainment.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school with ten classes, including the Nursery which children attend part-time. Two classes are of mixed age, one for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and one for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Children mostly begin the Nursery the term following their third birthday. Progression to the Reception class usually occurs at the start of the term in which the children become five. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than in most schools. The percentage of pupils designated as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is around the national average, although the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Additionally, the school has two special classes known as the Special Support Centre managed by the school, one class in each key stage, which cater for pupils who have complex moderate learning difficulties. These classes educate 14 pupils currently. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is around the national average. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools, and Activemark. The school manages its own breakfast club.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well. It is a well-led school which has improved markedly since its last inspection due to the hard work of the headteacher and staff. This has resulted in improving rates of progress and increasing levels of attainment which are now above expectations by the end of Year 4, especially in English. Staff have particular strengths in teaching English. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is not as good as in English, however, but the school recognises this and is working hard to raise attainment in mathematics. Parents and carers have confidence in the school and are very pleased that their children attend it. As one parent wrote, 'I continue to be extremely impressed with St Gregory's, both academically and in its pastoral care of pupils. My child's difficulties have been dealt with firmly and with sensitivity.'

Pupils develop a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles, seen in the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. The pupils also develop good personal qualities, such as thoughtfulness, kindness and politeness because the well planned curriculum includes content that encourages values and concern for others. The Christian ethos is clearly apparent in the relationships among all who work and learn in the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They enjoy school and have confidence in their teachers.

Good teaching, some of it outstanding, keeps the pupils interested in their learning. Staff and pupils use new information technology equipment confidently and successfully which provides a visual approach and helps to maintain pupils' interest. The pupils are well cared for. The good ratio of adult support for the pupils in the Special Support Centre helps them to do their best. They are included well in the school and they make good progress in both Special Support Centre classes because of the individual planning for their specific needs.

The children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage overall from their starting points, although the activities undertaken in the Reception Class in the outdoor environment do not always match the quality of those undertaken inside.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest and includes the views of staff and governors. This is a school with a good capacity to improve because the staff are deeply committed and hard working, the staff work as a team and they want to improve even more. Improvements made have been sustained and the governing body is interested and involved.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics so that it is nearer to the attainment made in English by:

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- using the increased rigour of tracking pupils' progress to identify pupils who are not making as much progress as others in mathematics and provide additional support to close any gaps in their learning
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematics and to investigate number
 - extending the more-able pupils more effectively so that more of them reach higher standards.
- Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Reception class so that it becomes a better extension to the classroom, supports the children's independence and stimulates the children's imaginations more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Attainment on entry is slightly below expectations overall but the pupils, including those from ethnic minorities, make good progress in reaching above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 4. Their progress is especially good in reading and writing because of the teachers' particular skills in these elements. Teachers adopt lots of successful strategies to remind the pupils about the good choice of vocabulary, punctuation and sentence openers so that their writing is both grammatically correct and interesting. Classroom walls are full of attractively displayed helpful reminders to support the accuracy and quality of their work.

The school is working hard to tackle improvements in mathematics. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were challenged to work out the cost of a Chinese meal they were choosing for themselves and accompanying friends from an actual menu. They tackled the task with a real interest and adopted calculation strategies successfully that they had recently learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the pupils in the Special Support Centre, make good progress because of the well-written and effective individual plans which are tailored for each individual's personal learning needs. Pupils show good skills in information and communication technology. In a Year 4 class they confidently chose their own background, font, colour and shape when writing their own poems.

Pupils enjoy school a great deal and feel safe in school, 'because the teachers are nice'. They show a good understanding of keeping themselves safe when out and about, for example, by being wary of strangers and obeying the rules for crossing busy roads. They show a good appreciation of healthy living and many take up the opportunities in extra-curricular sport. They follow the advice about eating fruit and vegetables 'five a day' and eat healthily at lunchtime. They behave well in school and show good attitudes to their learning. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. They fulfil their roles effectively as school council members, class monitors and in general duties around the school. They are proud of their links with a mission in Thailand supporting orphaned Burmese children. Pupils develop good workplace skills and are well prepared for their future education and attend school regularly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They get along well together, learn to consider and respect others and write their own class rules. Assemblies assist pupils' spiritual development because there is a sense of occasion and reverence. The breakfast club contributes well to the pupils' social development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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 good, including that in the Special Support Centre, with a little that is outstanding. Staff prepare their lessons well. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support those pupils who need more individual help. Teachers manage the pupils well and the good relationships foster a respectful atmosphere for learning. Teachers evidence good subject knowledge although, with a few exceptions, are less confident in making mathematics teaching as exciting as they do English and in providing for more-able pupils in this subject. They provide good opportunities for pupils to draft and refine their written work. Pupils refer to the criteria which have been drawn up for different styles of writing and this helps to improve the quality. Pupils listen well to the teachers' clear explanations. Marking is good and up to date. The written comments help the pupils to improve the quality of their work. In the Special Support Centre, well-labelled drawers and boxes around the room modelling the shape of mathematical words enable pupils to develop independence when collecting items or equipment and returning them to the correct place. In the Special Support Centre, staff seize every opportunity, including the use of sign language, to take the learning to the next stage.

The curriculum is planned well on a two-year cycle so that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not repeat work. The themes link subjects together effectively so that learning is purposeful and knowledge is cross fertilised. In the theme 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark', pupils study not only the literature concerned but nocturnal animals in science and

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materials that block light and cause shadows. Careful attention has been paid to ensuring that the breadth of the National Curriculum is covered in this way. The good programme for personal, social and health education supports the pupils' good attitudes to one another and the high level of respect. Pupils' healthy lifestyles benefit well from the good range of after-school activities which a good number attend and supported further by opportunities in physical education including swimming in Key Stage 2. Good attention is given to basic skills and to science.

Staff provide good care for the pupils and a warm and welcoming learning environment. The school has good links with other professionals, who assist in the support of the pupils who have specific learning or medical difficulties. Induction arrangements are good and home visiting before the children begin school helps the children settle quickly. Transition arrangements between classes and to the next stage of their education are well managed and help the continuity of pupils' learning. Care at the breakfast club is good. This is a caring school that knows its pupils and their families well. Child protection arrangements are managed well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The new senior leadership team works very effectively as a team and is embedding ambition and driving improvement further through modelling good practice and well-focused monitoring of teaching and learning. It is also being achieved through alerting pupils and staff to the essentials that sustain good learning for pupils such as perseverance and effort and sharing these values with pupils. Attainment has improved consistently since the last inspection because the headteacher has set realistic yet challenging targets.

The governing body discharges its statutory duties well, has a good range of expertise and is now more systematically involved in evaluating the work of the school through class links and regular visits. It is also following up priorities on the school development plan which is a well-written and effective document. Members are now more confident in challenging the school and holding the school to account. Partnerships with other schools are strong and the process of different staffs working together and sharing ideas is promoting development. Key staff also share their expertise by providing advice to other schools. Links with local churches are strong as they are with the parents and carers. These partnerships support pupils' learning and well-being effectively.

The school has worked hard to develop community cohesion. It has worked hard and successfully to foster in pupils an understanding of different parts of the world and

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different cultures. The school's support for the Thailand mission gives the pupils an understanding of the needs of others and widens the pupils' cultural understanding. Equal opportunities through the various activities and extra opportunities are promoted well. There is no evidence of discrimination. Leadership of the special needs provision is outstanding. The management of the breakfast club is good. Safeguarding is good. There is good attention to health and safety matters and risk assessments are thorough.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their attainment is generally in line with expectations when they reach the end of the Reception class. Teaching is good overall with some outstanding elements in the Nursery. The children benefit more from the outdoor learning in the Nursery than in the Reception class because it is used more effectively as an extension to the classroom to develop the children's learning. They also have a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is quite new but already providing good leadership of the provision. The intake pattern complicates the teaching and organisation in the Reception class because the children enter termly and some only spend a term in the Reception class. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage staff use a uniform record system so that the children's learning is carefully monitored. Relationships are good throughout. The children are motivated and interested. When they choose activities, they do so responsibly. In the Nursery, children were given good opportunities to create stories about castles with small play characters and objects, to dress up as characters in the role-play area and build castles with large bricks outdoors. The Nursery staff incorporate the children's ideas successfully into the activities. Children who attended in the morning were

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interested in making porridge after hearing the story of Goldilocks while afternoon children focused more on their interest in the three bears. The teaching of basic skills in the Reception class is undertaken well, for example, when the children learned how to sequence a story, and good attention is given to teaching letter sounds which supports the children’s early reading skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A larger than usual proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive in their views of the school. They praise particularly the care taken of their children and their children's enjoyment of school, and also the school's provision for pupils to lead healthy lifestyles. Overwhelmingly, and rightly, the parents and carers think that the school is led and managed well. Some parents and carers feel that they would like more information about what their children are studying and information about progress. The school feels that parents and carers are welcome at any time in addition to the formal meetings to discuss their children's progress but will look again at this and also the information it currently provides about the pupils' work. There was no overlying theme to the written comments that were less positive. A small number of concerns were raised about the mixed-age classes and equality of provision, early identification of learning difficulties and very able pupils not being challenged enough. It was clear from observations that in the majority of cases the work matched the pupils' needs well in most respects, but in some classes work in mathematics could challenge the more-able pupils better. The staff are quick to pick up on pupils who are not making expected progress through the much improved tracking system.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	55	44	43	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	67	34	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	34	55	53	12	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	43	50	49	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	48	50	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	41	54	52	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	46	53	51	0	0	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)	34	33	56	54	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	43	48	47	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	37	57	55	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	36	56	54	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	44	53	51	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	55	43	42	1	1	0	0

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Sudbury, CO10 2BJ

Thank you so much for your help when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit. You attend a good school and the staff have worked hard together to improve the school since it was last inspected. Both your progress and the level you reach in your work have improved. Your parents and carers are really pleased that you attend St Gregory's C of E VC Primary School. The staff take good care of you and make your lessons really interesting. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy school so much. We found you to be well behaved and polite and you take a lot of interest in your lessons. We were very interested to learn of your support for the orphanage in Thailand.

We have just two suggestions to make the school even better. We noticed that on the whole you do better in English than mathematics and we would like the staff to help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English. You can help by learning your tables and the younger ones the numbers which add to ten and then twenty so that you can give quick answers. In the Reception class, we would like the outside area to be used better for learning to match the good activities that take place inside.

Thank you once again for your help and support. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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