

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112339
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357085
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Hughie Stamper
Headteacher	Mrs Celia Holder
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the work of eight teachers during visits to 11 lessons. They examined a variety of pupils' written work. Inspectors held meetings with a member of the governing body, teachers and groups of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, information about the curriculum, development plans, records of pupils' progress and minutes of the governing body meetings. They analysed 61 questionnaires from parents and carers and 92 from pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- Whether pupils' attainment, in writing in particular, has improved since the last inspection.
- The extent to which consistently good or better teaching is supporting pupils in making as much progress as they can throughout the school.
- The extent to which pupils have sufficient information on how to improve their work.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are White British. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Sports Activemark. Extended care provision operates on the school site; it is managed externally and is not subject to this inspection.

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. It is a warm and stimulating learning community, where pupils feel safe and have every confidence in the adults who care for them. Parents, carers, pupils and staff are rightly proud of the school. The effective Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education. Children join the Nursery class mostly with abilities well below those expected for their age and make good progress through the school. Pupils' attainment is average at the end of Year 6. It is slightly higher in mathematics than in English. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are helped well to do their best and, as a result, they achieve well.

Pupils are polite, courteous and say that they enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and are considerate. They talk informatively about diet, enjoy exercise and understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils happily take responsibility within the school and make a good contribution to school life and the local community. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development stems from many opportunities pupils have for reflection, to consider the rights and views of others, to work together and to find out about their own and other people's cultural heritage.

In the good quality lessons, teachers and teaching assistants engage pupils' interest and successfully encourage them to contribute. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, however, because of missed opportunities to give pupils information on how to improve, particularly in writing. The curriculum of good quality is planned effectively to improve pupils' basic skills, although insufficient attention is given to widening their application of writing. Productive partnerships enrich pupils' experience and foster community cohesion well. Good quality care, guidance and support ensure extra help for pupils when needed. Due to strenuous efforts by the school, including building supportive partnerships with parents and carers, attendance is average and improving.

School leaders, including the governing body, accurately evaluate their work and provide a focused agenda for improvement. They have raised pupils' attainment from the last inspection and have secured pupils' good progress. Development planning is effective and focuses on raising attainment and continuing to improve the quality of teaching. Good improvements since the last inspection and effective management ensure that capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing, by:
 - making sure that pupils have specific information on the next small steps in their learning and how to improve their work

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- consistently giving pupils sufficient time in lessons to act on oral and written feedback from teachers
- creating further opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in writing in as many subjects as possible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils take part enthusiastically in lessons where they are keen to answer questions and often give clear explanations of their thinking. They quickly become involved in activities where they work responsibly on their own, in small groups or within the whole class. Due to a school-wide focus on improving pupils' skills in speaking and listening, pupils develop confidence and handle well discussions with adults and classmates.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress overall from their starting points. Children join the Nursery class with abilities that are much lower than those expected for their age, particularly in aspects of their language and mathematical calculation skills. They enter Year 1 at levels below those typical for their age. Pupils' good progress enables them to leave Year 6 with average attainment overall, although attainment in writing is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics. Attainment in English and mathematics shows steady improvement over time. School leaders introduced a range of activities to help girls develop more confidence in mathematics, and these are ensuring that girls now make as much progress in this subject as boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may have made them vulnerable also make good progress.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility within the school. Older pupils take great pride in looking after their younger friends and there is a real family atmosphere. Pupils are reflective. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, show respect for other people's feelings and beliefs and are developing an awareness of different cultures. Pupils say that bullying is very rare, and any incidents are swiftly dealt with by adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through helping to organise a variety of fund-raising events for local and national charities. Additionally, they take part in a variety of local events, including sports tournaments and music and drama activities.

Pupils leave the school as effective problem solvers and confident learners with the ability to reflect critically on the effect of their own and others' ideas and actions. These qualities prepare them well for their next stage of education.

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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	3
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	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?

Good quality teaching enables pupils to learn well and make good progress. Since the last inspection, the implementation of a range of programmes and initiatives to accelerate pupils' progress has improved the quality of learning and of teaching. An effective combination of clear learning intentions shared with pupils, well-planned activities based on secure assessments of prior learning, lively questioning and opportunities taken to reinforce learning lie at the heart of teaching at its best. In such lessons, teachers encourage pupils to be actively involved and as a result, pupils work with enthusiasm. Most lessons move on at a brisk pace and no time is wasted. Teachers' marking of written work is regular but does not consistently provide enough information for pupils on the next small steps in their learning. Furthermore, when teachers give helpful advice on improvement, they do not routinely allow time in lessons for pupils to act on teachers' comments and this sometimes reduces the impact of marking on pupils' learning and progress.

Strengths in the curriculum lie in the many activities that broaden pupils' experience in subjects and in all aspects of their personal development, for example through taking part in the local 'Rock Challenge' music and drama project. Additionally, pupils confidently use information and communication technology as an everyday tool to support and enhance their learning. The structure of the curriculum has improved and teachers increasingly make links between a range of different subjects and experiences. Even so, this does not

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always give pupils extra opportunities to practice their skills in writing and raise their attainment in this subject. Pupils learn to speak French and enjoy taking part in a broad range of physical and sporting activities during the school day and through a variety of after-school clubs. Older pupils appreciate the opportunity of taking part in residential visits focusing on raising aspirations and exploring the outdoors.

Parents and carers appreciate the school's caring ethos and the good support that their children receive. Teachers and support staff know each pupil individually and provide effective pastoral support, in particular for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable children. Careful tracking of pupils' work enables individual support programmes to be initiated for those pupils in danger of falling behind. The school draws well on the expertise of external agencies to work collaboratively upon programmes for those pupils with more complex needs and keeps in close contact with parents and carers about how well their children are progressing. Good transition arrangements mean that pupils are confident in moving between key stages in the school and ultimately on to secondary education. The school provides further support for families through a breakfast club which offers a range of activities appropriate to the needs of the pupils attending.

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 headteacher provides strong leadership and has very effectively developed the skills of other senior leaders to ensure a sustained drive for improvement. At the centre of the school's development there is a simple and clearly articulated vision for pupils to achieve as much as they can academically while they also develop the confidence and self-esteem which will support them in leading happy and successful lives. Leaders and managers are effective in ensuring all groups of pupils have equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination. Links with parents and carers are strong and there are good links with other schools and outside agencies to support pupils' learning and development. The school promotes community cohesion well, and this has a positive impact in developing pupils' understanding of the local, national and global communities.

School leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching and provide effective guidance to enable teachers to improve their skills. Effective use of tracking procedures ensures that information on individual pupils' progress is easily available and potential underachievement is swiftly identified and addressed.

The school has good procedures in place for safeguarding and all staff receive regular and relevant training. Resources are deployed well. The governing body is well informed, supportive and challenging of the school and secures good value for money.

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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

Children form good, caring and trusting relationships with each other and with adults. They are excited and motivated to learn and are confident to try new activities and to speak in a large familiar group. Behaviour is good and children work well together with high levels of independence. The consistent use of praise and encouragement helps children to develop positive self-esteem.

Skilled teaching makes effective use of the indoor and outdoor facilities to provide a supportive environment in which children feel safe, develop confidence and learn at a good rate. A good, carefully planned balance of well-arranged activities in all areas of learning stimulates children's imagination and enjoyment. Children learn in a carefully managed way that blends adult support with activities that they choose for themselves. Arrangements to promote children's health and safety are robust, and all welfare requirements are met, which ensures that children feel safe and are happy in school. Parents and carers are welcomed into school and have a good range of information about their children's progress and the school's welfare arrangements.

In this well led and managed stage of children's education, all staff work and plan together well as a coherent team. Effective assessment procedures enable a careful match of activities and expectations to children's particular needs. They are used day-to-day to tailor activities and learning to individual children. Adults have accurate knowledge of children's progress and interests and help them to develop further. Together, these arrangements lead to the good progress and achievement children make throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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

Just under a third of parents and carers replied to the questionnaire. Of these, the overwhelming majority are very happy with the quality of education and care provided at the school. They typically comment that they feel welcome in school and have many opportunities to talk to staff. During the inspection the inspectors observed this at first hand. A very few parents and carers raised an issue about health and safety and also concerns that the school favoured the interests of some pupils above those of others. The inspectors looked very carefully at these aspects and found nothing untoward. Inspectors found that the school maintains a welcoming and inclusive environment and that school leaders and managers very effectively promote equality of opportunity for all pupils.

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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	66	19	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	66	18	30	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	49	25	41	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	51	25	41	2	3	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	36	59	22	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	52	26	43	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	52	25	41	2	3	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)	30	49	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	49	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	44	28	46	6	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	46	29	48	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	48	29	48	1	2	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	57	22	36	2	3	1	2

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.



26 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Workington, CA14 3PD

Thank you for your warm welcome when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. We were very impressed with your good manners, sensible behaviour and the way in which you treat one another with respect and kindness. Thank you to those of you who gave up your time to talk to us about the things you enjoy doing and the ways in which you contribute to your school and the wider community.

I am very pleased to report that your school gives you a good education and prepares you well for your future life. All the adults look after you well and make sure that you are safe and happy. The quality of teaching is good and learning is interesting so that you make good progress and achieve well. You told us how much you appreciate the way in which teachers are always willing to help you and to explain things again if you have not quite understood the first time around.

I have asked the school to help you to make even more progress, particularly in writing, by making sure that when teachers mark your work they give you more information on how to improve it. I have also asked them to give you some time in lessons to read their comments and then try to correct or improve your work in the ways they have suggested. Finally, I have asked teachers to make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to practise writing in a range of different subjects and topics.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, following your teacher's marking and trying very hard with your writing.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Janette Corlett

Lead inspector

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