

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104936
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	355661
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Freeman
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Albon
Date of previous school inspection	8 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by eight different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and they observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. Inspectors scrutinised the views of staff and pupils and analysed 116 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- Whether attainment targets are sufficiently challenging for all pupils and how involved senior leaders and the governing body are in setting and reviewing them.
- Whether all staff make the best use of marking to enable pupils to improve their work and achieve high levels of attainment.
- How well pupils develop and apply English and mathematics skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

Information about the school

This school is average in size compared with other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, whilst the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has gained Artsmark Silver, the Activemark, Eco Silver and Healthy School status.

The school runs a before-school club. This provision was inspected as part of the school's inspection. A privately run after-school club is situated within the school building. This provision was subject to a separate 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. Instrumental to its success is the relentless drive for improvement, which senior leaders and the governing body have made since the last inspection. Their actions have been a significant factor in the above-average and rapidly improving attainment of pupils and, in particular, those in Years 5 and 6 in English and mathematics. Furthermore, pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and community, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and their understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and ecologically friendly lifestyles is outstanding.

Pupils begin school with skills levels which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their current work and the school's own data show that rates of progress are good overall and are continuing to improve in English and mathematics in all year groups and for all pupils. The staff pay very close attention to pupils' personal needs and this contributes very effectively to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. As a result, pupils have high self-esteem, are eager to attend and behave well. The quality of teaching and learning and the use adults make of assessment information to set work which is challenging and matched to pupils' ages and abilities is good and occasionally outstanding. This is because of the precise way most teachers now use marking and assessment information to pinpoint what it is pupils need to do next to reach the high levels of attainment, or to identify and put in place additional support for individuals and groups as needed.

The good-quality curriculum, with an increased creative focus, is providing pupils with some memorable experiences and is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their English, mathematics and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills within other subjects of the curriculum.

The school's self-evaluation is incisive and accurate, whilst target setting is both challenging and aspirational. This means that senior staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. As a result, they have identified the right priorities for improvement and are working effectively to achieve them. The governing body provides good support and challenge in equal measure and ensures that the safeguarding of pupils is good. The school's impressive record of good improvements to the quality of learning and pupils' achievement indicates its good capacity to sustain improvements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress to outstanding within all year groups, by providing more opportunities for them to develop and apply their English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which are reflected in their above-average attendance and an eagerness to learn. They are keen to answer questions and to have 'a go' at trying things out, particularly when lessons are practical and involve them in having to make decisions. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils learnt at a fast rate when they were challenged to use thinking and reasoning skills to solve measurement problems. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not make enough use of what pupils know already to build on and extend learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the potentially more vulnerable make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants develops their self-esteem very effectively and has a positive impact on their learning. A concerted effort from all staff to strengthen pupils' calculation and writing skills has paid off and lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show standards in mathematics and English have improved rapidly as a result of these initiatives.

Pupils' achievement is good, they enjoy school and say school is a happy place where 'teachers really help you'. They say they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are rare. They say also any problems are sorted out quickly by teachers. Pupils' behaviour is good and often outstanding in class and around the school. However, occasionally, when lessons are not pitched to meet pupils' understanding or skills, a few pupils get over-excited and this has an impact on their learning.

Pupils are very proud of their school and take on an excellent range of responsibilities, such as buddies or prefects, in order to have an impact on the school and wider community. Those on the school council have been very active, for instance, in contributing to plans for improving safety on the roads near the school. They have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are able to talk about the dangers of drugs, smoking and using too much sugar or salt and are good at making sensible choices about food at lunchtime. They have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and are very thoughtful towards others. They respect others from different backgrounds and are genuinely interested in finding out about their beliefs and cultures. Projects, such as 'Tutti-Fruity,' in which pupils buy and sell healthy snacks, provide funds for local charities and projects within developing countries and extend pupils' economic awareness and their concern for others effectively, whilst preparing them well for secondary school.

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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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

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?

Most teachers adopt a consistent approach in the classroom, setting out clear lesson objectives and success criteria which mean that pupils know what is expected of them. There is also a whole-school approach to marking, to which most staff adhere, so that pupils know clearly what they need to do to improve their work. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and teachers set high expectations for behaviour. Most teachers keep up a good pace in lessons and, in the few lessons which are outstanding, challenge pupils extremely well to use their speaking, listening, writing and mathematics skills to produce high-quality work. Additional adults in the classroom are usually deployed well to lead work for different ability groups.

All pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum, which in order to raise attainment, has focused on English and mathematics. The school is currently extending existing links between the different subjects and provides some outstanding specialist provision, for example, in music and in the arts. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their English, mathematics and ICT skills across the curriculum. They enjoy a wealth of new experiences and the chance to develop new skills and interests through the good range of enrichment activities provided by visits, visitors and clubs.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who may be potentially vulnerable, is outstanding. The school monitors pupils' circumstances carefully,

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in order to tackle any barriers to learning they may have. Staff are able to call on and use the services of specialist outside agencies in order to help pupils and their families.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team combines a determination to drive up standards with a commitment to develop every pupil as a well-rounded individual. Other staff with leadership responsibilities have varying degrees of experience in their roles, but all have a clear understanding of how to improve the areas for which they are responsible and an enthusiasm to make a difference. The governing body has been involved fully in the drive to raise standards in English and mathematics and in monitoring whether the targets set are sufficiently challenging. This good level of challenge is supported by good attention to safeguarding pupils. All the required checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are carried out and risk assessments are thorough. Procedures for child protection are rigorous and staff training is up to date.

The school works well to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination. As a result, the school is a harmonious and inclusive community. This is exemplified by the full participation in school life of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the potentially more vulnerable. Racist behaviour or harassment of any form is not tolerated. The ethos of a 'listening school' is firmly established and promotes good equality for all. The school keeps parents and carers well informed about their children's education and events at the school. It provides good levels of support by providing good provision before school in the well-attended breakfast club.

Links with parents and carers are good and this is borne out by the high number of positive responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire. Partnerships that attend to pupils' pastoral needs are outstanding. Those focusing on extending pupils' academic development are good, as reflected in pupils' good progress. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school understands the local community well. Pupils' experiences and knowledge of other cultures and lifestyles both nationally and globally are good. The school is beginning to monitor the impact these have on pupils' attitudes.

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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 get off to a good start to their learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are happy, confident and are developing into independent learners. This is because staff make good links with parents and carers before and whilst the children are in the Nursery and Reception classes. 'Magic moments' and 'stay and read' sessions are examples of this effective partnership. Outstanding care and attention is paid to children's personal well-being. As a result, children settle quickly into school and make good progress in all areas of learning, within a stimulating and interesting environment. Planning is based around children's interests and focuses on enriching their life experiences. For instance, adults provide the children with opportunities to grow their own vegetables, which subsequently they cook and eat. Good use of visits and visitors, for example, to the museum or from the 'bug man', extends children's knowledge, interests and enjoyment of school well. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend children's learning by providing them with further time to talk about what they have learnt and to plan the next steps in their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader, through effective monitoring and evaluation, knows the strengths and areas for development and is leading the drive to improve the quality and consistency of provision. Children make good progress and finish the Reception Year well on the way to, or, for a few, achieving the goals expected at this age.

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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

A high proportion of parents and carers, over 60%, responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority were highly positive in their responses. Inspectors endorse these positive views. A few feel that the school does not meet their children's particular needs, inform them of their children's progress or deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors followed up these issues and found that behaviour is managed well and particularly for those pupils with specific learning and behavioural needs. The learning needs of each pupil are carefully met and reported to parents and carers termly.

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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	70	32	28	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	73	27	23	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	58	50	52	45	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	59	37	32	7	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	77	66	36	31	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	55	42	36	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	57	43	37	4	3	1	1
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)	60	52	47	41	1	1	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	57	39	34	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	39	49	42	9	8	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	42	45	39	6	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	62	53	42	36	7	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	64	39	34	0	0	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L31 2LB

Thank you for talking to the inspection team and helping us when we visited your school. The inspectors were impressed by how friendly you are and with your good behaviour. Most of your parents and carers we heard from in the questionnaire are pleased with everything about the school and say you are happy there.

St Gregory's is a good school. It has good teaching and it is well run. The Nursery and Reception classes give you a good start to your education. You enjoy learning, work hard and are keen to try everything. You make good progress in your learning and reach levels that are above average by the time you leave in Year 6. You enjoy having responsibilities, such as being school councillors. The staff provide outstanding care for each one of you and especially those who need extra help. You say you feel safe in school and know extremely well how to lead healthy lifestyles.

The school leaders want you to achieve well and are always looking to make the school even better, so I have asked them to give you more opportunities to practise your English, mathematics and ICT skills across the range of subjects you study. I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Henderson

Lead Inspector

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