

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115731
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	363836
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Febery
Headteacher	Sharon Aston
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and all teachers were observed. Twelve lesson observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority. The team observed the schools work, looked at pupils books, and scrutinised the data the school has collected on pupils progress, school documentation, including school improvement plans, policies and safeguarding procedures. Inspectors also considered 144 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, along with 29 questionnaires received from staff and 82 from pupils.

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

The quality of teaching, assessment and marking across the school.

How the curriculum supports pupils learning.

Whether the actions taken by leaders and managers since the last inspection have been sufficient to raise standards and rectify weaknesses.

Information about the school

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Independently managed breakfast and after-school clubs are provided for pupils.

At the last inspection the school was given a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required in relation to levels of attainment in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, there have been changes in staff. In November 2010, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors made a monitoring visit and was of the opinion that the school was making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Since the last inspection, the work of staff and governors to address the areas for improvement has been outstanding. In the last year, the school has gone from strength to strength in providing its pupils with an excellent education. One of the reasons the school is outstanding is because the leaders and governing body have not changed. Through exceptionally strong leadership, leaders and managers have ensured that pupils are now making outstanding progress. The inspirational leadership team has, as one governor put it when referring to staff development, let everyone grow. Parents and carers are hugely supportive of the school, even running sessions to enhance the curriculum, such as a forensic workshop, which challenged pupils' scientific skills. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. At the time of the monitoring visit, Her Majesty's Inspector reported that the way the school looks after its pupils is second to none. The care and guidance afforded to pupils and their families are outstanding. All parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire reported that their children feel safe in school and were overwhelmingly positive about the progress they make. One parent summed up the feelings of many by saying, I am really grateful my child is at this school.

The school's data show that performance has far exceeded the targets set for this year's Key Stage 2 national tests. Attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The standard of work in books is high, although the quality of pupils' handwriting is variable and, occasionally, written work is not always as well presented as it could be. There is strong evidence, from the school's excellent tracking systems, that pupils of all abilities are making accelerated progress. This is as a result of significant improvements in teaching and learning, which are now outstanding. A testament to the work of the school is that teaching and learning, a key area for improvement from the previous inspection report, have improved significantly not only in Key Stage 2 but across the whole school.

Saint Gregory's prides itself on the Catholic principles which underpin all its work. The school community is made up of a diverse mix of families and backgrounds, with a number of pupils at the early stages of learning English. Children begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of experience and skill below those typically seen. In the Reception Year, they make outstanding progress and continue to do so throughout the school; this applies to all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that achievement overall is outstanding.

Governors, senior leaders and staff are passionate about continuing to make improvements and school data show the performance of pupils is securely set to rise further. All members of the staff team have an excellent understanding of accountability and are committed to ensuring that every pupil is given the opportunity to flourish. School

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leaders recognise and support the talents of their staff, such as the exceptional contribution made by middle leaders to school improvement. Self-evaluation is sharply defined and the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the presentation of pupils written work to ensure letters are of an appropriate size, even, correctly formed and orientated, with appropriate capital letters and lower case letters, and, for older pupils, consistently joined.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achievement is outstanding. In lessons, pupils are extremely diligent and hard-working. They cooperate well when set challenges by the teacher. In a mathematics lesson for older pupils, a group became the teachers and presented work on moving geometrical shapes. They answered questions posed by the rest of the class, showing a good understanding of translating shapes. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning and how it has improved. Many told inspectors how their levels in English and mathematics had risen this year. Some higher-ability pupils are currently working at levels well ahead of expectations for their age, for example in mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of individualised and timely interventions. The success of these interventions means that some pupils contribute their thoughts to staff training, about dyslexia for example. The way they help to support younger pupils is much appreciated by parents and carers.

Pupils behave very well and are extremely polite. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. They are thoughtful and spontaneously care for one another. A new pupil was given the confidence to receive a certificate in assembly by being escorted to the front of the hall by another pupil, without prompts from the teacher. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners and understand the achievements of others, so that they clap the successes of their classmates. Pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they have a worry or concern. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They promote safe practices in others, such as working as traffic cops with the police, to ensure parents and carers park safely outside school. Pupils take part in a range of sporting activities and represent the school at local events. They are secure in their knowledge of how to lead healthy lives. The inclusive and diverse nature of the school community means that pupils have a very good, first-hand understanding of other faiths and cultures.

The school council is representative of different groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupil voice has a high profile. In a lesson looking at aspects of tourism in the locality, pupils decided whether they wanted to accept or reject tasks. Everyone accepted the challenge and showed how they can apply their good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to projects. Pupils contribute to the wider community through contact with local organisations. For example, they showed very good respect for each other when playing sport led by members of the local constabulary with a focus on kick against racism.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

Highly effective and inspiring teaching creates challenges for pupils in lessons, and these engage them well. Younger pupils were captivated in a literacy lesson about report writing by asking questions of the teacher who, dressed as a ladybird, was a witness to a crime scene where a flower pot was destroyed. The teacher constantly focused the pupils attention on the difference between making a statement and using the question words displayed and they made very good progress. The pace of lessons is brisk. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons, and teachers use assessment strategies throughout lessons to assess how well the pupils are doing. These assessment strategies are applied throughout the school in ways that suit each age group. Teachers planning is consistently thorough and tasks are very well adapted to suit the needs of groups and individuals. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to supporting pupils through excellent questioning which extends pupils understanding. They are exceptionally well briefed by teachers and their feedback on pupils learning helps teachers plan subsequent tasks. Marking is of high quality, giving pupils advice and further challenge.

The very well-structured and exciting curriculum provides opportunities to link subjects together. In mathematics, pupils used their number and measuring skills together with their design and technology skills to plan and make a lunchbox of the correct size for their sandwiches. Visitors in school and visits out, including residential visits, support all aspects

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of the curriculum including communication and life skills. For example, pupils visited the local magistrates court to take part in mock trials. Sport and the arts enrich the curriculum. Pupils put on musical performances and plays which are well supported by parents and carers. One parent summed up these performances as heavenly.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided mean that adults know pupils and their families very well. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have detailed programmes that are carefully monitored and evaluated. Those whose first language is not English are very well supported in lessons by the adults and other pupils in the class. As a result, their confidence in speaking grows quickly. Parents and carers report that behaviour is well managed and that the staff have high expectations in this area. They are comfortable in approaching the school and say that any concerns are dealt with swiftly and fairly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has steered the school with relentless vigour in the last year, so that it has made outstanding improvements which are now firmly established. A pivotal part of the schools success is the very strong teamwork and the way in which leaders and managers have developed the accountability of all staff. Governors have an extremely sharp understanding of their role, which they carry out exceptionally well. They have managed a rigorous recruitment procedure to select new staff and there is a very comprehensive and highly successful programme of professional development in place.

The regular monitoring of teaching and learning, including the scrutiny of planning and pupils work, has been extensive. The staff team has created a booklet of non-negotiable elements to be included in every lesson. These relate to planning, assessment and teachers expectations, and have had a direct impact on establishing consistently high-quality teaching and learning. Governors are routinely involved in monitoring policies into practice, such as ensuring the homework policy is implemented across the school.

Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Families new to the school report feeling very welcomed. Newsletters, an open-door policy, information about targets and school work, as well as formal consultations, mean that parents and carers are well informed about their childrens progress.

The school is rigorous in ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are firmly embedded in all its work. Governors and staff take their responsibilities very seriously and training is regularly reviewed and updated. There are excellent procedures

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to ensure very effective multi-agency working, and all work in this area is carefully monitored and reviewed. The school ensures that the progress of different groups is monitored leading to all groups achieving very well and an absence of discrimination. Community cohesion is strong, and the school benefits from partnerships with a range of groups, such as the diocese, a local university and community groups; there are also links abroad. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life locally and in a national and international community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage benefits from outstanding leadership and an inspirational curriculum which means children make exceptional progress. During the inspection, the launch of the aliens created an exciting focus for writing and opportunities for children to play together; children used their communication skills well when reporting alien sightings to one another. Children at the early stages of learning English quickly gain in confidence because of the excellent support they receive. From the comprehensive induction, through to the end of the Reception Year, children's progress is carefully tracked. Observations form part of children's learning diaries and are shared with parents and carers. The excellent teaching ensures that planning is regularly adjusted in the light of children's developing skills, and is particularly successful in creating learning that is personalised for each individual. The dynamic Early Years Foundation Stage team has an excellent understanding of the provisions strengths and the priorities for future development, such as continuing to build on opportunities for children to review their own progress.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaires indicate that the overwhelming majority of parents and carers are happy with how their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A number of parents and carers made comments about the school, particularly about the excellent leadership of the headteacher and the dedication and hard work of all the staff in bringing about the improvements since the last inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 366 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	67	42	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	110	76	30	21	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	86	60	47	33	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	51	62	43	3	2	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	86	60	51	35	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	51	56	39	7	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	54	59	41	3	2	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)	68	47	59	41	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	56	53	37	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	47	66	46	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	48	66	46	3	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	83	58	50	35	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	93	65	41	28	4	3	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	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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great, Cheltenham, GL50 3QG

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team on our recent visit. We were interested to hear your views. You told us how much you enjoy all the exciting activities at school. We enjoyed your green aliens in the Early Years Foundation Stage! Your parents and carers said how much your school has improved and how pleased they are with your progress. This letter is to tell you what we found.

Your school gives you an outstanding education. These are some of the reasons.

The headteacher, staff and governors lead your school exceptionally well.

The way the school cares for you is outstanding and you feel very safe there.

Your behaviour is excellent.

The outstanding teaching means that you all do very well in English and mathematics, including those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities or at the early stages of learning English.

The inspiring curriculum helps you to apply your good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in different subjects.

You get along very well together, value each others skills and talents, and show a high level of respect for different religions and cultures.

Your attendance is above average.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to help you improve the presentation of your written work by reminding you to form your letters correctly, evenly spaced and the right size, to use capital letters and small letters appropriately, and to do joined handwriting when you can.

I am confident all of you will do all you can to help by working hard and continuing to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

Her Majestys Inspector

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