

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122038
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359156
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernie Behan
Headteacher	Eamonn McMorrow
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 37 lessons and observed 15 teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school evaluation and development plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, and a sample of pupils' work. They also analysed questionnaires completed by staff and 96 parents and carers.

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

- The progress being made by all groups of pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language.
- The effectiveness of teaching in engaging pupils so that they make at least satisfactory progress in lessons.
- The effectiveness of the strategies used by the school to improve the overall attendance of pupils.
- The effectiveness of the leadership and management in supporting improvements in the school.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. It is situated in the Eastfield district in the northern part of Northampton and takes pupils from across the town. Over 60% of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with a significant number of African, Asian and East European heritage. Just under 40% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average and the most common first languages spoken are Polish, Malayalam and Yoruba. Demographic changes in the town are leading to increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds being admitted to the school. The proportion of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised through the Nursery and two Reception classes. The breakfast club is run by the school and formed part of this inspection. There was a high level of staff absence due to sickness during the previous academic year. The school has received the International Schools Award and holds National Healthy Schools status.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St. Gregory's Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good and outstanding features. Strong tradition supports the very positive ethos in the school and the development of the good personal development of the pupils. The school is fully inclusive in integrating pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds including a significant number of pupils from Eastern Europe and Africa who speak English as an additional language. The school engages well with parents and carers, who speak highly of the school. One wrote: 'The school has a very friendly atmosphere and the staff are very supportive and helpful.'

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the well-planned provision, high quality of care and the consistently good teaching. On leaving in Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress overall given their broadly average starting points and average attainment. The school has been active in accelerating pupils' progress this year in order to make up for some underachievement in the previous year, which was partly due to a higher than normal rate of staff illness. Assessment records for the present year indicate that more pupils are now making good progress in all year groups. However, insufficient numbers of pupils gain the higher levels in English and mathematics and many pupils have not fully developed their skills in writing and mathematical calculation. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, make the same progress as the White British pupils in their classes, particularly when they gain confidence in their language skills. The developing tracking system identifies underachieving pupils, who then receive appropriate support through a range of intervention strategies. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to prompt good progress.

The good quality of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the strong personal development of the pupils. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good and this contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils feel very safe in the school and have a good awareness of issues relating to safety. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent and reflects the school ethos of developing a 'caring Christian environment'. The multicultural nature of the school enables the pupils to have a very good insight, based on first hand experience, into the similarities and differences between their own and others' cultures. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and the wider community. The school also makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils made satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the lessons observed during the inspection. In some lessons, teachers are not consistently using assessment information to inform planning and learning. Teaching does not always ensure that activities fully engage pupils or encourage pupils to take more

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responsibility for their own learning. Teachers work well in year teams but there is insufficient sharing of best practice in teaching and learning across the school. Curriculum provision is satisfactory; the school is developing a more creative and practical approach to increase pupils' motivation and progress.

The school has good partnerships which make a strong contribution to the development of the pupils. The school development plan sets challenging targets aimed at raising standards. Governors are increasingly monitoring progress although they are not fully involved in strategic planning for school improvement. Members of the senior management team are developing well as leaders and are effectively supporting the headteacher. However, the headteacher is not fully delegating responsibility to the team members or extending their monitoring roles in the school. Senior leaders are not sufficiently involved in the regular moderation of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the clear leadership of the headteacher, the developing systems to track pupils' progress and the evident indications of improvements in pupils' progress show the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment and achievement of pupils throughout the school, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - further developing tracking systems to identify and provide additional support for underachieving pupils
 - further developing pupils' abilities and confidence in writing, and their skills in mathematical calculation
 - ensuring that staff and pupils are working to achieve challenging progress and attainment targets based on pupils' previous performance.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers:
 - use assessment information more consistently to inform planning and learning
 - provide a range of activities which fully engage all pupils in lessons and encourage pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning
 - share the best practice in teaching and learning across the school in order to accelerate the progress of the pupils.
- Improve the consistency of leadership and management and its impact by:
 - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team and extending their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities
 - ensuring that senior leaders are fully involved in the moderation of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress
 - ensuring that the governing body develops the skills it needs to be fully effective in supporting school improvements.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress. A growing number of pupils are making good progress due to effective teaching which is focused clearly on learning. For example, Year 2 pupils made good progress in a well-structured lesson in numeracy when working on a range of ability-related tasks, developing their skills in the use of number bonds to support mathematical calculation. Gender differences in achievement vary between the year groups and the school is presently providing additional support for boys in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. Higher ability pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate but some of them do not always reach the higher levels they should. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are adequately supported by teaching assistants so that they make satisfactory progress, in line with others. Many are now making good progress in mathematics and reading because the individual tuition and extra support in classes help them gain confidence in their work. East European pupils are well supported by specialist Polish speaking teachers who provide additional classes in speaking and writing, which accelerate the pupils' language development and general progress in school.

Pupils are very proud to be part of the school and they develop into friendly and confident young people. The large majority of pupils have a good understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles as acknowledged by the National Healthy Schools status. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility such as acting as prefects, members of the school council and playground rangers. The Pupil Voice takes an active part in the discussions on the developing curriculum. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community by taking part in parish events, singing at local residential homes and raising money for a range of charities. Although overall attendance is now average, the poor attendance of a very few pupils, particularly those taken on extended holidays during term time, is adversely affecting their progress and experience of school. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for secondary education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

The Warm relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that there is a positive environment for learning in lessons. Classrooms are attractive learning areas with good examples of pupils' work on display. In the best lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities which motivate and engage the pupils in their learning. As a result, they display enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. A number of teachers are particularly good at encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning. However, in a number of lessons, pupils lose concentration when teachers' expectations of work are too low or the tasks are insufficiently challenging. Teachers are not always using assessment information about pupils' progress to inform their planning of lessons and to ensure that the activities meet the different learning needs of all pupils.

The emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy is gradually raising standards across the school. The new creative and more practically-based curriculum is bringing learning to life but it is too early to evaluate the full impact of the changes on pupils' motivation and progress. Teachers are developing resources and activities to meet the different learning need of the pupils. All pupils have lessons in information and communication technology at least once a week which develops their computer skills adequately. Physical education is supported effectively through the Sports Partnership and specialist coaches. There is a strong emphasis on the creative arts with additional opportunities for singing and playing a musical instrument. The residential visit

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to Norfolk for Year 6 pupils and various educational trips enrich the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which greatly enhance pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

Pupils are well known as individuals and they told inspectors that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have a problem. The chaplain and parent link worker make a strong contribution to the welfare of pupils. There are effective systems of individual support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well supported so that they settle quickly into the school. Good working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective programmes. The breakfast club provides a good standard of care for the pupils. The school is diligent in monitoring absences and encouraging better attendance, although a significant number of parents and carers continue to take their children on extended holidays during term time. In other respects, the school is very effective in working with parents and carers so that they can fully support the development of their children. Good arrangements are in place to support a smooth transition to the local secondary schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides supportive leadership so that staff work together on the continuous improvement of the school. He recognises the need to delegate more of his responsibilities. He has managed the changing profile of the school population to ensure that St Gregory's has become an integrated and harmonious multicultural school. He is very aware of the areas for development and is supporting the staff in raising standards. The effectiveness of the governing body is reduced by their limited involvement in strategic planning. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's caring approach. There is a very clear commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all, which ensures that the school is inclusive in integrating pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds and in tackling discrimination.

Parents and carers are given regular information about school events and the progress of their children. There is a high rate of parental participation in consultation evenings and school activities. The school has good partnerships with a range of external services, the local network of schools and Northampton University, which support the improving achievement and well-being of the pupils. The school works very closely with the families from minority ethnic communities to welcome them into the community of the school and

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the church. The International Schools Award recognises the significant amount of fund-raising for charities and the national and international partnerships. The partnerships with schools in Nigeria and Kenya provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the global community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a secure and welcoming environment where children learn quickly and happily. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal development but also in their speaking and listening skills. A good range of structured activities is having a significantly positive impact on their personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills. They are developing independence and confidence as well as learning to share and cooperate with each other. Children who speak English as an additional language settle quickly and gradually develop new vocabulary and understanding.

Teachers keep detailed records of children's skills and use this information to match the activities well to the full range of learning needs. The calm and purposeful atmosphere reflects good organisation and leadership. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together so that there are clear expectations of the children. There is a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities. The spacious indoor and outdoor accommodation is well resourced and is used effectively to support the learning of the children. Good procedures ensure a smooth transition to Year 1.

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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

Most parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's learning. Responses to the questionnaire included a number of detailed comments emphasising the positive atmosphere in the school and the caring approach of staff towards their children. A very small minority of respondents suggested the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found clear evidence that the school deals effectively with the very few pupils who display challenging behaviour. A few respondents suggested the school does not take into account suggestions and concerns from parents and carers. Inspectors found that there are regular meetings with staff and clear opportunities to contact members of the governing body which specifically encourage all parents and carers to raise concerns and suggest ways to improve the school further. Overall, the vast majority of parents' and carers' views reflect inspection findings.

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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 400 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	64	35	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	75	24	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	48	48	50	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	48	48	50	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	53	42	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	47	48	50	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	55	40	42	3	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)	44	46	48	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	49	45	47	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	38	53	55	3	3	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	29	53	55	9	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	63	34	35	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	70	28	29	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	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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Northampton, NN3 2AX

Thank you for making us so welcome and for sharing your views during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you during playtime and lunch. We were very impressed by the standard of your singing in the assemblies. Your school is overall a satisfactory school. It has some good and outstanding features. There are many positive things about your school.

You try hard in lessons and want to do well.

You are friendly, well behaved and get on with each other.

You welcome and support new pupils from different countries and backgrounds.

You have a good understanding of issues related to safety and healthy lifestyles.

You enjoy the opportunities for taking responsibility in the school.

You collect large amounts of money for charity.

The teachers and the support staff care greatly for you as individuals.

The headteacher is making improvements in the school.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to make the school even better.

Help all of you make better progress in English and mathematics.

Support your teachers in sharing good practice so that you understand the work and make good progress in all lessons.

Ensure that the senior teachers and governors are regularly checking your progress and are fully involved in school improvements.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and enjoying the many good things in your school.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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