

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104678
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377109
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Williams HMI

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Michelle Beard
Headteacher	Mrs Paula Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. During the inspection 19 lessons were visited with inspectors observing each teacher at least once. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the learning mentor, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. In addition, a telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to the achievement of pupils and safeguarding and also examples of pupils' work completed in the previous academic year. Inspectors also took into account the inspection questionnaires totalling 28 from parents and carers, 103 from pupils and 35 from staff.

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

- The trend of learning and progress for pupils since the previous inspection and whether or not their progress is even across the school.
- Whether or not improvements in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment have raised standards and in particular increased the achievement of the more-able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- What is the impact of the school's procedures for care, guidance and support on pupils' well-being?
- Whether or not leaders in the Early Years Foundation Stage are clear about children's skills and abilities on entry, the progress children make, and the quality of provision.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, in improving outcomes for pupils in terms of their achievement and well-being.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average. At the time of this inspection, building work was taking place to re-house the Early Years Foundation Stage and complete the outdoor area. In addition, there have been some significant changes in staffing and governance since the previous inspection, including the appointment of the headteacher 18 months ago. The school holds a number of awards including Health Promoting 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

2

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of this improving school is satisfactory. At the heart of all it does lie good quality care, guidance and support. This quality enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily in their learning and develop mainly good attitudes and attributes in their personal development. The school is a caring community and benefits from an open, honest and reflective leadership team and governing body, which has an accurate view of the strengths and areas of development of the school. The determination of all in the school to bring about improvement and their success in doing so, has resulted in the better rates of progress that pupils are making and demonstrates why the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Children enter school with skills that are generally well below those expected for their age. The achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching are satisfactory. Both, nonetheless, are improving and lead to the very large majority of pupils making at least satisfactory progress in their learning. This progress is, however, variable across the school. This is because the quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment are also variable. On occasions, lessons do not engage or challenge fully pupils in their learning, the more able in particular. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in class in line with their peers. This progress accelerates and is at least good when they are targeted for individual and small group support, in numeracy for example.

Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. The one relative weakness in otherwise good personal development is their attendance. While improving because of good work by the learning mentor, it is low. The good quality care, guidance and support provided by the school contribute well to pupils' good personal development. The well-attended breakfast club, for example, gets pupils off to a good start to the day. Another contributory factor is the good quality curriculum and particularly the wide range of clubs and enrichment opportunities provided.

Also good is the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises the Nursery and Reception Class in one unit. As a result children make good progress in their learning and development. At the time of this inspection the children and staff had been in their new unit for one week and staff were getting to grips with new working arrangements and shared practice. Despite work on the outdoor area not yet being completed, relationships between children and adults are good and the children are settling down to routines well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the progress pupils make in their learning by:
 - ensuring such progress is more even across the school
 - improving the quality of teaching further so that it is consistently good and that it engages and challenges pupils, particularly the more able, at all times
 - ensuring teachers make better use of the assessments they make of what pupils can or cannot do so that planning and teaching meet the needs of all pupils fully.
- Continue to improve the overall good quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage by quickly embedding the culture of sharing practice across the team.
- Build on the good efforts to secure recent improvements in attendance to improve it further to at least average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School display good attitudes and attributes in their personal development. They behave well in lessons and at play and are keenly aware how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils, for example, understand that the taking of medicines affects people in different ways and they appreciate the importance of regular exercise. This was highlighted by over 40 pupils swinging hoops around their waists to music before school began. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as standing for election to the school council or applying for the post of peer advocate. The school council helps school leaders to make important decisions, for example, relating to school security. Pupils are also keen to develop entrepreneurial skills through projects where they make and market ideas. While this aspect of developing workplace and other skills is good, pupils' improving but still low attendance coupled with the unevenness of progress they make in their learning makes this area satisfactory overall. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory although school leaders and the learning mentor are taking well thought out steps to improve this aspect. The good spirituality of pupils is demonstrated by some excellent pieces of work in art reflecting special places.

Such positive features of personal development impact well on the improving picture of pupils' achievement. For example, Year 6 pupils, after reaching low standards in English and mathematics in 2009, have in both 2010 and 2011 reached broadly average levels of attainment. The school's strong focus on writing has paid dividends and, in their topic work, pupils have good opportunities to write in different ways. The standards now attained consistently by pupils in the national tests and in their work, represent satisfactory progress for the very large majority of pupils. The reason why achievement is not yet good, given the very low starting points of pupils, is that the progress made is too variable across the school and teaching does not consistently challenge pupils, the more able in particular, to do their best. Pupils with

special educational needs and/or disabilities however, while making satisfactory progress overall, do particularly well when provided with targeted support.

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	2
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The strongest aspect of provision in the school is the quality of care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. The learning mentor plays a key role in this, engaging the support of external agencies well. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are identified quickly and effective support put into place. This has resulted in improvements in individual pupils' achievement, behaviour and self-confidence. Activities such as the free breakfast club are well attended and ensure pupils of all ages get off to a good start each day. Such support is appreciated by both pupils and individual families. Even though attendance is low, the good efforts of the learning mentor in organising support for families have ensured a rise on last year's figures.

School leaders have correctly assessed both the quality of teaching and the use of assessment as satisfactory and improving. The proportion of good teaching is increasing and in such lessons, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, this good quality is not yet consistent throughout the school and, as a result, lessons do not always challenge or engage pupils as well as they might. Nonetheless, where teaching is good and indeed better, engagement and challenge are more than evident. Two examples illustrate this. First, in an outstanding geography lesson in Year 5, the teacher and the teaching assistant very effectively and regularly questioned the pupils about their understanding of the vocabulary of maps and atlases, including scale. As a result, the pupils were able to locate Egypt in a range of maps, name and locate geographical features of that country. Second, in a good English lesson in Year 2, carefully planned activities met the needs of pupils with different abilities well. Good opportunities for the pupils to discuss ideas together enabled them to assist the teacher in modelling the salient facts of a story. In both these lessons, teachers drew on the pupils' previous learning well.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The curriculum is of good quality. One pupil in Year 3 was so enthused at the prospect of creating information leaflets about pets she exclaimed, 'I won't be able to sleep tonight!' Further positive features include the themed weeks, such as art and the targeting of support for pupils who need particular help through interventions. Small groups of pupils, for example, receive good quality teaching to improve their basic skills in mathematics, particularly number. The result is they make at least good progress in their learning. Another feature of the good curriculum is the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities such as those in music and sport which are taken up by pupils with great enthusiasm.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management, including that of the headteacher, are good. Senior leaders and the governing body have a realistic and ambitious view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have been successful in ensuring their quest for improvement is shared and understood across the school. They have successfully brought about enhancements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, responding positively to good support from the local authority. While both remain satisfactory, they are improving. The governing body, in which many members are relatively new to the role, has rightly focused its attention on supporting the school's drive for improvement and holding it to account for its performance. Members are doing this well. They meet their all their statutory duties, including ensuring that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Leaders, as a result of their support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and ensuring that as many as possible receive opportunities for enrichment, promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well.

Leaders also ensure that the school is an integral part of the community. Partnerships with parents and carers and other agencies are good and leading to pupils demonstrating many positive features in their personal development. Community cohesion is promoted well with a number of local initiatives. These include paired work with a neighbouring special school and a joint bid with a local housing association to develop a green space for shared school and community use.

These are the grades for the 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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills, but generally, though, they are well below those typically found.

At the time of this inspection, the new unit comprising for the first time Nursery and Reception children together in one location was just one week old. Nevertheless, good leadership was ensuring the children were getting off to a good start in their new surroundings and settling into routines well.

Photographic evidence of the work of last year's Nursery and Reception children highlighted good, hands-on provision that allowed the children to explore and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all six areas of learning well. Photographs showed children who were happy, engaged and being cared for and guided by adults well. They also showed children who were developing good attitudes, establishing positive relationships and being sensitive to the needs of others. Importantly, such features were evident to inspectors during this inspection. For example, a Nursery-aged child asked politely the visiting inspector and the other children in the 'home area' to 'shush' because the baby doll was sleeping. Very sensitively, the other children lowered their voices and tip-toed around where the baby was sleeping. These features demonstrate the good arrangements in place for planning suitable activities and experiences for the children. Communications with parents and carers are good and the new unit is well placed to improve further.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Twenty-eight parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. While one or two respondents disagreed in some areas, around behaviour for example, inspectors found that the children behaved well. The picture painted by the responses is one of satisfaction with what the school is doing. Parents appreciate the care and support the school provides for their children. The inspectors' judgement of good capacity to improve supports this view.

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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	71	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	82	4	14	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	64	7	25	3	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	50	13	46	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	68	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	46	11	39	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	61	9	32	1	4	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)	12	43	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	61	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	46	12	43	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	43	14	50	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	50	13	46	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	61	10	36	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



Thursday 15 September 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L27 7AG

I am writing to thank you for welcoming so warmly the inspection team into your school and to let you know our findings. We enjoyed spending time with you and in your lessons. We could see that you enjoy school, behave well and are making satisfactory progress in your learning. Taking all this into account, we have judged your school to be satisfactory. To help the school to improve we have asked your leaders to do three things. First, we want them to continue to help you make better than satisfactory progress in your learning. We think they should do this by ensuring your teachers use what they know about you to plan and teach lessons that are consistently good at engaging and challenging you. Second, we would like adults in Nursery and Reception to continue to work hard to develop their team. Third, and this is really important for you, we want the school to build on the good work that has already taken place to improve your attendance.

I have already mentioned a number of features which are good about you and your school. You will not be surprised that we found more. These include your understanding of how to be safe and healthy and the considerate way you think about the needs of others, your lovely art work about special places, and the enjoyment you gain from the many activities the school puts on for you such as sport, music and residential visits to places such as Barmouth. We could also see that the school supports, guides and cares for you well, and this has helped you become good citizens. All this would not be positive without your good leaders, the work of the staff and the governing body and, of course, you. We hope you continue to be so positive.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

