

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111327
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378278
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Tolley

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Mauro
Headteacher	John Daley
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2009
School address	Albert Road Bollington Macclesfield SK10 5HS
Telephone number	01625 572037
Fax number	Not applicable
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Tolley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 11 lessons, including joint observations with the headteacher, taught by five different teachers. The inspector also made short visits to phonics (letters and their sounds) lessons and guided reading sessions across the school, led by teachers and trained assistants. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspector scrutinised pupils' work, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan and the school's analysis of pupils' progress. She also analysed 53 parents' and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is much smaller than average. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average but varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average. The school meets current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a number of awards including Activemark, Healthy Schools status and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is high and in writing and mathematics it is above average. Pupils’ achievement from their starting points is good. Pupils enjoy reading and most read with fluency and understanding. Spelling and punctuation in pupils’ writing is comparatively weak. Although pupils apply their knowledge of letters and their sounds (phonics) very effectively in their reading, this knowledge is not applied accurately enough in their spelling. The school is not yet outstanding because there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In some lessons opportunities are missed to meet precisely the needs of pupils of differing ability and accelerate their progress.
- Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress in developing their language, communication and social skills. Opportunities are missed to promote their learning effectively in other areas through play.
- Teaching is good. The school provides very effectively for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Assessment information is not always used precisely enough, so that some pupils find work too difficult. Marking is regular but its quality is inconsistent, so that some pupils are unsure about how to improve.
- Behaviour is good. Attendance is high. Pupils have very positive attitudes, are keen to take responsibility and are courteous and polite. They say that learning is fun and that they feel safe.
- Teaching and other aspects of the school’s work are monitored closely to provide clear direction. Action to address weaknesses and raise attainment has proved successful and indicates the school’s good capacity to improve further. The curriculum is adapted to promote pupils’ basic skills effectively as they move through the school and the systematic teaching of phonics has had a positive impact upon pupils’ reading.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing further by:
 - improving pupils' accuracy in spelling and punctuation
 - improving the quality and consistency of the written guidance pupils receive so that they know exactly how to improve their work
 - involving pupils themselves in deciding the next steps they can take for improvement.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to that of the best by:
 - using assessment information more effectively in lesson planning to meet the needs of groups of differing ability within classes more precisely
 - increasing the opportunities pupils have to work independently and collaboratively with others to solve problems.
- Accelerate the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage by increasing opportunities for them to learn purposefully through play.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers consider that pupils achieve well. The inspection found that achievement is good. Many pupils join the school with attainment which is broadly average in relation to that expected for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage they make satisfactory progress overall. They make particularly good progress in developing their communication and personal and social skills because teachers take every opportunity to engage them in conversation. Their development in other aspects of learning does not always build on the potential opportunities through play and in informal activities. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school in relation to their starting points. By the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve equally well and there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups. As a result of well-tailored intervention programmes and individual support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, these pupils also make good progress and are able to participate fully in activities alongside their classmates.

By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is above average and in writing it is average. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is well above average and in other aspects of English and in mathematics it is above average. Most pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with understanding. They skim and scan for information and write successfully for a variety of purposes. However, pupils' performance in writing is hampered by inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation and by the quality of their handwriting. As a result of the emphasis on speaking and collaborative working with a partner, most pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their ideas and explaining their views. Most apply their mathematical skills confidently to solve problems.

In lessons learning is good and pupils participate enthusiastically in activities, especially when working with a partner to explore ideas and solve problems. In a Year 1 and 2 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils displayed interest and enthusiasm, working with a

partner to explain symmetry in photographs. Pupils confidently explained their conclusions to the rest of the class, having discussed their ideas with a partner. However, opportunities for them to do this are sometimes missed.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say that teaching is good. Inspection findings endorse this view although there remain some inconsistencies across the school. Teachers give clear demonstrations and explanations so that pupils rapidly understand new ideas. They use information and communication technology effectively to engage pupils' interest. For instance in a Year 5 English lesson pupils' attention was immediately caught by a video clip showing how a journalist set about improving his writing in a report on BMX bike trials. Pupils were then keen to apply this to their own writing. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilful in their use of questioning to support and extend pupils' thinking in group work and when they monitor pupils' progress during tasks. Opportunities for pupils to explore ideas with a partner effectively develop their speaking and listening skills and promote their respect for the views of others, as well as their confidence and independence as learners. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development and the approach that teachers take with these areas of learning is effective.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to place pupils in teaching groups and to plan pupils' next steps. In the most effective lessons, they plan in detail for groups of differing ability within classes. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils made swift progress interpreting transitions and transformations on grids because of the way tasks and resources were provided to meet the needs of different groups precisely. However, on occasions, some pupils find work too difficult; resources provided lack the guidance some lower-attaining pupils need so that their progress is slowed. Marking is regular but does not always give pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve their work, particularly their spelling and punctuation.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good. Parents, carers and pupils are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly. Pupils say lessons are fun and are enthusiastic about their learning and their reading. They enjoy school and attendance is high. They have very good relationships with each other and are courteous and polite. Pupils display high levels of concentration and, when working in pairs or groups, organise themselves quickly and effectively. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school. Pupils say they enjoy extra-curricular activities, including dance, drama, sport, swimming and gardening, and they know the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, including disparaging reference to individuals' personal style, and inappropriate use of messaging systems. Incidences of bullying are rare and parents, carers and pupils express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with such occurrences. Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. They take responsibilities seriously, for instance, as school councillors, members of the Eco Committee, Road Safety Officers and as buddies for younger children.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides very clear educational direction, based firmly on a rigorous analysis of pupils' progress, close monitoring and an accurate evaluation of the school's work. Members of the governing body play an active part in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement-planning processes and are becoming increasingly involved in the day to day life of the school. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching, such as joint planning across year groups, have proved successful in sharing good practice. Subject specialists use their expertise to good effect in helping to plan the curriculum and in spreading the best practice in their subjects across the school, although this is at the early stages of development. As a result inconsistencies in teaching remain. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements, policies are regularly reviewed by the governing body and staff are kept up to date with training. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully.

The curriculum is good and ensures a balance of activities. Although in lessons there are some inconsistencies in matching work to ability, overall the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Intervention and support programmes are regularly reviewed and adapted to meet changing needs. As a result the promotion of equality of opportunity for success is good. The focus on problem solving and pair work has had a positive impact upon pupils' progress as well as on their independence as learners. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise their writing and reading in a variety of contexts. Visitors and visits, as well as after-school clubs and the opportunity to learn French and Mandarin are all greatly valued by pupils and enrich the taught curriculum. The school takes a firm stand on any suggestion of discrimination and pupils learn to reflect and appreciate their own skills and the skills of others. This, together with collaborative work, is very successful in increasing pupils' confidence and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 5HS

I would like to thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you all and hearing your views. Your school is a good one. Your behaviour in lessons is good and I was impressed by how courteous and polite you were. You do a lot to help improve the school, for instance, through the school council and as buddies for younger children. I was also very impressed by the way you are all working hard to improve the school grounds and grow vegetables.

You make good progress and you reach higher standards than other pupils nationally. You do particularly well with your reading and you all told me how much you enjoy it. I did notice that some of you sometimes found tasks too difficult, so I have asked the teachers to make sure you always get the right amount of support you need to make sure you can all complete tasks successfully. Some of you struggle with spelling and punctuation and this prevents you from doing your best in your writing. I have asked the school to put this right and to give you more help with this. You work really well with a partner and in small groups to solve problems. I was impressed at how confident you were in exploring new ideas and explaining your own ideas clearly to others. Teachers plan your work carefully for different lessons and we noticed how much you enjoyed solving problems. I have asked them to work together to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. Although some of you get good guidance about how to improve your work, this is not always the case, so I have asked your teachers to make sure you all get good advice. You can all help by deciding how to improve your work yourselves. Younger children in the Reception class make good progress in developing their reading and speaking but make slower progress in other areas. I have asked the teachers to make sure they make the most of their play activities to help them learn.

The headteacher and staff are working to make your school even better. You can all help by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley
Lead inspector

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