

# St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Nash Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 4BU

**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers do not always plan lessons that take account of what pupils have already learned or that contain activities which motivate and challenge all pupils.
- Attainment in mathematics has remained too low in Key Stage 1 for the last three years. Younger pupils in particular have not had enough opportunities to develop skills in investigating and problem solving.
- Progress in reading is not as fast as it is in many schools.
- The school's self-evaluation has not identified all areas which require improvement and some of the key areas identified for development have not been tackled quickly enough by senior leaders.
- Subject leaders who are new to their roles have not had enough training in analysing data to identify where pupils are not making sufficient progress. This means that they do not contribute fully to the school's development.
- Governors have not sufficiently questioned why pupils have not made enough progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of the curriculum are strong.
- School leaders and staff have high expectations for behaviour so pupils are polite at all times. Their behaviour and kindness to each other in and around school show the school to be a caring community.
- Those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those who join the school at other than usual times are supported effectively.
- The school has been successful in raising levels of attendance so that it is now above average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, eight of which were joint observations with the headteacher and both assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons to look at the quality of teaching and behaviour and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, subject coordinators for English and mathematics, pupils in the school council, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at different times of the school day and took account of a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys, 33 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 30 questionnaires from members of staff.
- A range of documentation was reviewed. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's data for tracking of pupils' progress, the work pupils were doing in their books, and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Neil McDonough, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julie Sackett	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school. The number of pupils who join and leave the school at the usual times is less than in other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium, the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those with a parent in the armed forces, is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is lower than that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also lower than is found in other schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that all pupils make at least good progress by ensuring that all staff:
  - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that challenges them to think hard
  - plan reading lessons that take full account of pupils' skills
  - review their lesson plans effectively and adapt learning activities so that they build well on previous learning
  - recognise that some pupils work more quickly than others and adapt the pace of learning as necessary
  - mark work constructively with comments that help pupils to fully understand how they can improve the quality of their work
  - insist that pupils present their work neatly, form letters correctly and, in older classes, regularly join their letters when writing.
- Raise achievement by:
  - helping younger pupils to improve their skills in mathematics by providing more opportunities to practise investigative and problem solving activities in other subjects
  - assisting older pupils, especially weaker boy readers, to acquire a variety of ways to tackle unfamiliar words and gain full understanding of the texts they are reading.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring self-evaluation leads to swift action to tackle weaknesses
  - developing the role of subject leaders so they hold colleagues to account in their area of responsibility, for the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
  - developing the role of the governing body to ensure it is able to challenge the school's leadership effectively and secure improved standards
  - undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is similar to the national average. However, although there is an increasing amount of good progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2, it is still too slow at Key Stage 1 and pupils need to make up considerable ground in as they move through the school. Pupils' attainment in English is below average at the end of Year 6 and their achievement in reading requires improvement.
- Recent improvements to the curriculum have provided boys with more appropriate reading texts and this is raising the rate at which they make progress. However, their attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 and their overall achievement in English are not as good as those of girls.
- Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below the national average for the last three years. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills to solve problems and carry out investigations.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. Pupils in Year 1 attained better than pupils nationally in the phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check at the end of last summer. This is because a structured programme is used to teach letters and sounds and this is presented in a way that appeals to the pupils and motivates them to learn.
- Children enter the Nursery class with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication skills, although there is some variation from year to year.
- In recent years, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made too little progress in developing their early mathematical skills. Through improved teaching, this trend has now been halted and children's mathematical skills are now broadly average.
- The attainment of all groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, who benefit from the pupil premium has improved. Average points scores show that although the gap between these pupils and their classmates is narrowing in English, it is not closing quickly enough in mathematics. In 2012, the gap between pupils supported by pupil premium in English was under six months but it was almost 12 months in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.

### The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven. The teaching of reading is better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 and mathematics teaching is more effective in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not always take account of pupils' skills when planning reading lessons or adapt activities so they build on what pupils have already learned. Teachers do not always use lesson time well enough to make sure all pupils have time to undertake challenging tasks.
- The pace of learning slows when pupils are sitting on the carpet for too long while the teacher explains a task. In these situations, pupils become fidgety and are not fully focused on their learning.
- Where teaching requires improvement in Key Stage 2, there are particular weaknesses in the teaching of guided reading. Introductions to phonics activities are slow and do not include everyone, pupils show a lack of interest in the planned learning activities and they have limited opportunities to practise and develop their skills.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school. The work of the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 is completed and regularly marked but with others it is unfinished. Comments do not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance about how to make improvements, particularly with handwriting practice. In Key Stage 2, work is regularly marked but teachers do not always check that pupils have made the required improvements.

- Where teaching is good or better, there are high expectations for pupils' progress and teachers are very clear about what the pupils need to do to be successful. Where teaching is inadequate, there are low expectations of pupils' achievement and consequently, planned work is not challenging enough and leads to pupils making limited progress.
- There is good teaching in the Nursery class and the teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have good subject knowledge and expectations of what the children should achieve. They plan a wide range of interesting learning activities which are a mixture of teaching and play and help to prepare the children well for Key Stage 1.
- Planning which includes questions to challenge all pupils and the effective deployment of teaching assistants are common features where teaching is good. In the good lessons, teachers use a variety of resources to engage and stimulate pupils' interest. In a good science lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to examine and dissect a variety of flowers to understand how plants grow.
- The pupil premium has been used appropriately to increase staffing levels to provide small group learning activities to help support learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their learning but there is still some way to go to ensure the gap between these pupils and others in school is closed sufficiently, particularly in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified early and provided with targeted extra support, usually from teaching assistants, which enables them to make progress towards their targets.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are polite and respectful at all times. They enjoy school and are proud to attend. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is good because governors, school leaders and staff have high expectations at all times.
- The school has been successful in raising levels of attendance so that it is now above average. The school family liaison officer works closely with parents and the school uses a range of rewards to help maintain its attendance levels.
- In lessons, behaviour is generally good, especially when pupils are engaged and interested in the learning activity.
- Pupils understand well what bullying is and the different forms it might take such as name calling or e-bullying. They say they feel safe and are provided with good information about how to keep themselves safe.
- Instances of all kinds of bullying and disruptive behaviour are rare. When they do occur, pupils say they are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly both in the classroom and in the organisation of the outside areas.
- Of the parents that responded to the online questionnaire, the vast majority state that their children feel safe at school and that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and discrimination is not tolerated. The school has a number of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable who join throughout the school year. These children are effectively supported by all the school community and quickly made to feel 'at home'.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because although there is a clear and shared sense of purpose across the school, self-evaluation is not sufficiently robust in identifying key areas for improvement. The school's actions do not focus carefully enough on tackling all the issues relating to pupil achievement.
- The headteacher, governors, senior and subject leaders share a clear vision for the school as

one which has a caring and positive atmosphere where 'the child is at the centre of everything'.

- The headteacher and governors have taken steps to improve the quality of teaching by taking firm action to tackle weaknesses and the most recent appointments are helping to strengthen provision.
  - Senior and phase leaders monitor pupil progress regularly but subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in identifying the progress of individual pupils and taking appropriate action to ensure all pupils make good progress in their subjects and areas of responsibility.
  - The local authority has challenged the school effectively in the past but recently it has reduced its level of support because teaching began to improve. Senior leaders continue to seek support from other professionals to improve its effectiveness further.
  - Strategies introduced by leaders have not yet led to consistently good teaching across the school. The school has new performance management procedures in place, which hold teachers responsible for tracking and measuring pupil progress. However, these are yet to have a full impact on raising overall achievement
  - The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures and the social, moral, spiritual and cultural elements of the curriculum are a strength of the school. It promotes positive behaviour well and fully supports pupils' understanding of staying safe.
  - Statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are effectively met.
  - The governance of the school:
    - The governing body has taken action to strengthen performance management procedures. These focus on teacher standards and are designed to hold teachers to account for the quality of their teaching and pupil performance. The new procedures have not yet resulted in consistently good teaching. Governors are aware how the pupil premium is being allocated but have not yet fully evaluated its impact on achievement. Governors visit the school regularly to carry out a range of monitoring and evaluation responsibilities, although these are not undertaken by all governors and consequently governors are not fully aware of the quality of teaching. Governors question and challenge senior leaders about school performance but not all have received sufficient training to enable them to ask the right questions to determine whether pupils have made the progress of which they are capable. The governing body is very committed to seeing the school improve and supports staff and pupils well in all their social functions. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118783
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	405818

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	336
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fay Shuttle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqui Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–11 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 221896
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