

St Gregory's RC Primary School

Presto Street, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 8AJ

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics and writing through the school.
- The most able pupils, particularly in writing lessons, are not sufficiently challenged or given enough time to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Pupils' progress slows when they are unsure of how to complete tasks and when they find work either too easy or too hard. Marking does not do enough to help pupils improve their work.
- Some pupils find it hard to pay attention to the teacher or to their tasks.
- Procedures for checking pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching have not been systematic or thorough enough to support improvements.
- Plans for school improvement do not always indicate how school leaders can measure success.
- Leaders do not make the best use of information on pupils' progress to provide targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The governing body has not always provided adequate challenge for school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well, make good progress and are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and are predicted to reach standards above average in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 this year.
- Pupils are polite, happy and feel safe. They wear their school uniform with pride.
- Christian values underpin the highly motivating and varied range of social, moral, spiritual and cultural activities that support pupils' development.
- The acting headteacher and governors have a clear view of how successful the school can be. School leaders have improved the quality of teaching, particularly in reading and in information and communication technology.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or part lessons, including two joint observations with the acting headteacher. They observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunchtime and around the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher and middle leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the diocese. Inspectors talked to many pupils from all year groups and held a formal discussion with pupils from Years 3, 4 and 6. Inspectors talked to a number of parents and listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, 61 parental views expressed in a recent questionnaire, one letter from a parent and questionnaire responses from nine members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school at work. They scrutinised the school development plan and the self-evaluation undertaken by the school. Inspectors reviewed documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance as well as the standards pupils achieved over time and those predicted for this year.
- Inspectors examined pupils' work, minutes of governing body meetings, performance management records and a range of reports from external agencies.

Inspection team

Fiona Dixon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding allocated to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The nurture group at the 'Forward Centre' in Bolton is used by the school to support the emotional, social and behavioural needs of a small number of pupils one to two days each week.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was led by the acting headteacher. There have been many changes to staffing since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve teaching and the rate at which pupils make progress so that their achievement is raised, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - making sure pupils know how to complete their work and are provided with tasks at the right level of difficulty for them in mathematics and writing
 - making sure that teachers' marking makes it crystal clear how pupils can improve their work and they have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and move their learning on more rapidly, especially in writing
 - making better use of existing high-calibre teaching in the school and in local schools to exemplify the wide range of learning activities that sustain pupils' interests and accelerate their progress
 - making sure that the most able pupils are always challenged to do their best and providing more opportunities for these pupils to extend their knowledge and skills especially in writing.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, so the school improves rapidly by:
 - making sure that all action plans for school improvement have realistic and measurable targets which clearly show whether or not pupils have made enough progress
 - developing more thorough and regular checks, by all school leaders, on the quality of teaching and its impact on the learning of pupils, so that teaching and learning are consistently good or better
 - developing all leaders' use of information showing pupils' progress to provide prompt support for individuals and groups of pupils in order to increase the progress they make, especially in writing and mathematics.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement as pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has reflected inconsistencies in pupils' progress. Over the past four years, standards have varied from being below average, to broadly similar to national averages.
- At the end of Year 6, attainment this year is predicted to be above average in reading, similar to the average in mathematics and below average in writing.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils typically make the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics but fewer make this progress in writing. The most able pupils in Key Stage 1 regularly make better progress than expected in reading but not in mathematics and especially not in writing.
- In Key Stage 2, most pupils make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that this year, too few pupils will make better progress than expected in writing.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged to reach the higher levels of attainment across the school, especially in writing. There has been some improvement and inspection evidence shows that a small number of the most able pupils will attain the highest Level 6 in reading and mathematics this year.
- The gap between how well pupils supported through the pupil premium are achieving and their classmates is closing over time. In 2013, the gap in attainment had narrowed so that eligible pupils were about one year behind in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that this gap will close further this year, to about one term behind in writing and two terms in reading.
- Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. The varied and exciting opportunities to play, explore, learn and use their imaginations mean that nearly every child develops at a good pace and most are ready for the step up to Year 1 by the end of the Reception year.
- The very small number of pupils who attend the nurture group benefit from teaching that develops the skills needed to enable them to enjoy learning and make progress in school. Along with the support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, this reflects the school's determination to tackle all discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress from their individual starting points as the support they receive closely matches their needs.
- A love of reading, both fiction and non-fiction texts, is promoted across the school through special events, like World Book Day and World Culture Day, and reading aloud in assembly. Older pupils regularly act as reading 'buddies' for younger pupils and every classroom has a welcoming and comfortable book corner. A mathematics club and real-life mathematics investigation days enhance pupils' enjoyment and skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not yet consistently good across the school. Pupils' learning slows when they are unsure of what they have to do to complete the task they have been set, and when work is either too easy or too hard for them in writing and mathematics.
- Marking of work is regular in all subjects. However, it does not tell pupils clearly what they need to do to improve learning. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and improve their work, especially in writing.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged to do their best and make rapid progress. They say they are sometimes bored as they wait for the teacher to explain the task to the rest of the class when they already know what to do, especially in writing. Sometimes, in mathematics,

pupils repeat calculations they can already do and this slows progress.

- Teachers insist on work being presented well and a scrutiny of pupils' books shows work is neat and always completed.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children rapidly develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Adults know exactly what the children can do and how to best offer what they need to learn next. This was seen when a group of children, working with the teacher on which animal in the zoo would be the heaviest and which the lightest, developed their descriptive language and skills of predicting in mathematics.
- Progress in reading is improving as Key Stage 1 pupils are absorbed in their learning of letters and sounds through stimulating activities, like 'Find a partner for this word' game. This good learning continues through the school in structured reading sessions that reflect pupils' interests and meet their individual needs.
- When pupils learn effectively they are fully involved and confident in their tasks. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were able to write grammatically complex sentence openers as they were interested by the topic and their use of 'spooky' vocabulary showed a clear understanding of what was expected of them.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught through all the subjects. For example, in the Year 4 topic on the Second World War, pupils had to work out the amount of food that could be purchased using ration coupons and write about different aspects of life in wartime Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils find it hard to pay attention to the teacher or to the tasks, especially when the work is too easy or too hard. This slows learning and leads to some pupils becoming restless and occasional misbehaviour.
- Around the school, pupils are polite, well mannered and wear their uniform with pride. They are very welcoming to visitors and express how happy and safe they feel at school. They enjoy the wide variety of opportunities the school offers for developing their interests in before- and after-school activities and in 'Golden Time'.
- Pupils are proud to be Eco Warriors, with weeding and the creation of a bee-friendly environment being the current priority. Pupils say their voice is heard through the active school council, which is looking to purchase rainwear for Reception class children so they can learn outside whatever the weather.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are actively taught about all forms of bullying and say that bullying is rare. Pupils say they sometimes have 'fall-outs' but know how to make friends again. The school makes use of the e-safety character 'Hector the dolphin' across the school as a means of showing that visitors are 'safe' and on the computer to close down anything that concerns a pupil.
- Parents strongly agree that their children are kept safe, behave well, feel cared for and that bullying, if it does occur, is effectively and quickly dealt with.
- Attendance has improved but remains slightly below the national average. The school actively works to continually improve attendance. Punctuality is exemplary.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement, as there has not been enough time since the acting headteacher came into post for current decisive actions to have brought about sustained improvements.
- The school's procedures for improving the quality of teaching have not been as systematic or thorough as they need to be to ensure teaching is at least good. New systems are in place and inspection evidence shows that there have been recent improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Plans for school improvement have not always shown precise ways in which school leaders can

measure success. The school leaders are working with the local authority and diocese to plan school improvement with clear measures of success, especially for raising attainment and increasing the progress of pupils.

- School leaders do not make the best use of information that shows how well pupils are making progress. School leaders are aware that support has been put into place only when progress has already slowed. They are now developing more frequent, thorough checks on pupils' progress and a wider range of ways to promote pupils' learning, including additional help for pupils who receive support through the pupil premium.
- The acting headteacher 'has a clarity of purpose that enables positive change to happen quickly,' says the governing body. Inspection evidence supports this view. Staff are fully behind the new initiatives and morale is good.
- Middle leaders are highly motivated to bring about improvements in their subject areas. There have been improvements in the teaching of reading, that of information and communication technology and in the use of tablet technology in a wide range of subjects. Currently, middle leaders do not effectively share exemplary practice and are not actively monitoring the quality of teaching in their subject area.
- Performance management of teachers is being developed with the support of the local authority to make sure that it has a clear focus on pupils' learning and is linked to teachers' salaries.
- Pupils enjoy an exciting curriculum which includes special days like World Culture Day, trips and visitors to enhance learning. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are outstanding; every pupil feels special and cared for.
- The primary school sport funding has been used well to increase the number of pupils who regularly take part in a wide range of physical activities, including dance and golf. The school regularly participates in local tournaments and talented pupils are given the opportunity to join specialist clubs. This increased participation is having a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority has increased its support for the school and is actively working with the school leaders to improve the quality of teaching, developing the performance management of teachers and the systems that check the progress of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are dedicated to improving the school. They have worked to develop the strong Catholic character of the school and the many links with the local community. Governors have relied on school leaders to give them information about progress and attainment so they have not always provided adequate challenge for school improvement, but this is changing. The governing body has undertaken an audit of skills and has a clear plan for training; governors are now challenging and supporting the acting headteacher to bring about rapid improvements.
 - Governors are actively working with the local authority to ensure that teachers' pay is linked to how well teachers perform. They have a good understanding of the school's finances, including the use of the pupil premium funding; however, they have not evaluated the impact of this funding on pupils' progress. Governors are fully aware of the use of the primary school sport funding and the legacy of increased participation in many forms of physical activity. Governors ensure that the school fully meets all statutory duties, including those for safeguarding.

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

Unique reference number	105244
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	443868

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean Greenhalgh
Acting headteacher	Caroline Grundy
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2010
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