

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Avenue Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6UZ

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in all groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated in the last twelve months and has been rapid in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and have good subject knowledge in a wide variety of activities which interest pupils.
- Pupils behave well. They are keen to learn, and show care and respect for each other and others less fortunate than themselves.
- Children have a fine start to school in Reception which provides well for the improvement of their skills and is led effectively.
- The school is led decisively by the headteacher, aided by other enthusiastic leaders, who have been rigorous in promoting better teaching. This has had a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- The governing body is supportive and challenging to school leaders and has an accurate view of the school. Governors take an active role in the performance management of staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not yet as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always give pupils opportunities to use their writing skills when they are learning about other subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers' marking of pupils' written work does not focus sufficiently well on pupils' punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- A minority of parents feel that they do not receive sufficient information about school changes, and believe that leaders pay insufficient attention to their concerns.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons. Three of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, two governors, an adviser from the local authority and an educational consultant to the school.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked about their reading experiences with them.
- There were 84 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors examined responses from the parents to the school's own survey of their views from last autumn. They examined six letters and four emails received during the inspection. They also spoke to a number of parents in the playground. The inspectors considered 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan and analysis of pupils' achievement and progress, safeguarding arrangements, school policies, and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a Reception class and six other single-age classes.
- A large majority of pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club, and a number of after-school activities.
- In the last two years, there have been many changes of staff, including senior leaders. The present headteacher took up the post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, especially in writing, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide pupils with clear and precise feedback, when marking their written work, about how they can improve their spelling, punctuation and how words are used to write sentences
 - give pupils opportunities to use their writing skills when they are learning about other subjects
 - share the best practice that already exists within the school and beyond.
- Strengthen and develop the present partnership with parents by:
 - enabling all parents to have a clear understanding of the reasons for changes and the school's priorities for improvement
 - taking steps to ensure that all parents know how to bring their concerns or issues to the attention of leaders, staff and governors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception class with levels of skills and experience typically seen for their age. They make good progress in their speaking and mathematical skills and in the development of independence and self-confidence.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, and pupils achieve well. Although some pupils are clearly reaching above-average levels in Year 2 now in reading, writing and mathematics, and nearly all the remainder are reaching expected levels, this has not always been the case. In 2013, for example, fewer pupils reached above-average levels in any subject. This was partly because assessments of pupils' work were not as accurate as they could have been.
- The rigorous checks on pupils' progress in place now mean teachers have a more precise idea of what pupils already know and can do. Current data, evidence in lessons and work in pupils' books indicate that the number of pupils reaching higher levels in Key Stage 1 is rising rapidly. They also reach above-average standards in the national phonics check (letters and the sounds they make).
- Progress dipped in Years 3 to 6 in 2013, when standards were below average in mathematics and writing, and average in reading. However swift action taken by the new leadership means that progress has accelerated considerably in the last twelve months.
- The vast majority of pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are making good progress, with a rising number reaching above-average standards. Standards and progress in reading and mathematics have much improved throughout the school. Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that the improvement already evident in writing continues to gain in momentum through the school.
- Good and sometimes better achievement by pupils is evident in other subjects such as physical education and sporting activities, art and French.
- All groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. More-able pupils are now challenged more consistently at higher levels, which is leading to their improved achievement.
- In 2013, there were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual children. However the few pupils supported by this extra funding make progress similar to that of other pupils, and there is no significant gap currently between the two groups.
- Pupils are very keen readers and read widely. They read regularly to adults in school and are well-supported at home. They talk enthusiastically about the books they have read such as *Romeo and Juliet* ('they loved each other so much'), and *Lord of The Flies* ('an intriguing book'), They have a wide range of favourite books and authors including teen fiction, books with a girl as the main character, history books and 'giant' books (those with many pages and small print).

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school. New staff have quickly settled in and already

know their pupils' needs well. The more rigorous collection of information about pupils' levels and progress has aided this and helped promote pupils' improved progress. Evidence of this progress was seen in pupils' books and displays of their work, in many lessons and in the detailed records of pupils' progress. The regular rigorous monitoring of teaching by leaders and advisers to the school also confirms the good teaching and its improvement.

- Teachers are especially effective in encouraging pupils to discuss their learning with each other and in getting them to talk to the rest of the class about it. Pupils who have less confidence do this increasingly well because of the ways in which their self expression is supported by their teachers. Pupils' enthusiasm for giving opinions was seen in several classes as, for example, in Year 4, when they were learning about using interesting verbs in play scripts. This prompted some lengthy enthusiastic comments which helped the learning of all.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because adults take into consideration children's interests and provide lots of opportunities to help them develop their skills. Children's work is well organised and they are carefully supported to the next steps in their learning by an effective team of adults. For example, children were seen learning successfully about how money is used, and the value of some coins. They quickly learned the more advanced skills of calculation, especially of the change they could receive when buying items.
- Teachers work well with their teaching assistants in providing for individual needs, especially in supporting those in vulnerable circumstances.
- Literacy skills are generally well promoted through all subjects and particularly reading. This is because of the good quality of pupils' reading skills, which helps them to widen their knowledge through using library books or computers. In a few classes, chances for pupils to use their writing skills when they are learning about different subjects are more limited.
- Teachers encourage pupils to take care in the presentation of their work, which, as a result, is good. On the whole, pupils' work is carefully marked and teachers give them helpful guidance on how to improve as well as praise when it is deserved. In a few cases, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to correcting pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful and polite and always willing to talk confidently about their learning and school activities.
- Pupils derive great pleasure from coming to school and have enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Typically, they describe the school as 'awesome', 'fantastic' and 'loving'. They respond well to instructions from staff and almost all quickly settle to their learning.
- Parents and staff are virtually unanimous in saying that behaviour in the school is good and well managed.
- Pupils give many examples of what helps them to enjoy school. These include the sports facilities and clubs, the new school library, the school swimming pool, the large outside space and the 'really kind staff'. They are also pleased to offer their opinions on what else the school could provide for them such as a water machine, where they can refill their water bottles.
- A strength of pupils' attitudes to learning is the pride they have in the school and in the work

they do in their books, which is nearly always well-presented. These attitudes are encouraged through good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. This is also enhanced by pupils' regular efforts to raise money for charities in this country and around the world.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have great confidence that adults will look after them. The school also works effectively with external professionals in supporting pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Pupils say there is hardly any bullying, and that staff sort out any that occurs. They also take part in some peer mediation of their own and are keen to help others having disputes. They understand the dangers of cyber-bullying, and say that homophobic name calling is 'absolutely not acceptable'.
- Children in the Reception class learn routines quickly and know what is expected of them. They show a strong curiosity and zest for learning and work very well together.
- Attendance is well above average and continues to rise because school leaders work consistently to encourage this. Pupils are generally punctual for school and in arriving for lessons or external activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the governing body, has shown great determination in leading the school through many changes of staff, and in guiding school improvement so that achievement and teaching are now good.
- Improvements introduced by senior leaders since the last inspection include better provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and accurate and more detailed checks on pupils' progress. Teachers have also become more skilled in helping pupils to understand clearly what their learning targets are through discussion with them and helpful marking of their work.
- The school has developed a rigorous structure for the monitoring and improvement of teaching. This is ensuring that teachers' skills are constantly improving through well focused support and professional development.
- The school has worked effectively to develop the knowledge and understanding of its senior and other leaders, such as subject leaders and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has been welcomed with enthusiasm. These leaders now have greater responsibility and accountability for their areas and lead them well.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. All staff have a good understanding of how children learn, the skills children now need to develop and how they learn best. This is enabling children to make increasingly good progress.
- Leaders have greatly improved the checking and analysis of pupils' performance which is helping to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils. They are effectively using the pupil premium additional funding for the benefit of the small number of eligible pupils in the school.
- Leaders provide a good range of practical and stimulating learning opportunities and are constantly looking at ways to add to them or improve them. They use the new sports funding particularly well to give pupils many opportunities to develop their skills in a variety of sports,

and to increase their knowledge of healthy living.

- The school promotes equal opportunities and cooperation well. This results in no discrimination, and contributes positively to the good behaviour of pupils and good promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils, as a result, are respectful of others, take pride in what they do, work well together in teams and have a good preparation for their future lives.
 - The local authority works closely with the school, supports it on request, and recognises it as a good school with effective leadership.
 - The school has recently been delighted that a new parent teacher association (PTA) has been formed. A sizeable majority of parents indicate that they are very happy with the education that their children are receiving, and the changes introduced by the new leadership. One typical parental comment was, 'I have found the leadership at the school to be very responsive to the needs of parents and pupils, and the headteacher and her dedicated team are working extremely hard to raise standards.'
 - However, a minority of parents are concerned and unsettled by some changes, mainly because they feel they do not have sufficient information as to what is going on, especially regarding changes in staff. Inspectors found that leaders, including the governing body, are determined to improve this further and are rapidly taking steps to build a stronger partnership with the whole parent body.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The experienced Chair of the Governing Body leads a strong team of governors, who bring a wide variety of skills to the management of the school. They have a good knowledge of the school's performance, and of the changes and initiatives that have been introduced in recent times. The governors have been proactive in these decisions, and make themselves available to the school and its community whenever possible. They challenge school leaders rigorously about the performance of both pupils and teachers.
 - The governors have a good understanding of the link between staff performance and the progress of their pupils to inform pay decisions. Only those teachers who meet the targets set for them progress along the pay scales. They understand how the school spends extra funding for particular groups of pupils, and how these pupils are progressing as a result. They also have a good understanding of the use of the new sports funding. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fully met, that pupils are kept safe and that school policies are regularly reviewed.

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	125709
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	442644

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ana Palenciano
Headteacher	Jane McNally
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2011
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