

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Eaves Green Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 3QG

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. From starting points that are below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress. Standards are rising and the current Year 6 pupils are working at levels above average.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan activities which captivate pupils' imagination and provide many opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom.
- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times. They show a deep love for learning and always try their best in lessons.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of environments, including when using the internet.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is ably supported by a capable deputy head and middle leaders. Their strengths underpin the many good features in teaching and the achievements made by the pupils in their academic and personal development.
- Governors provide highly effective support to the school. They know the school exceptionally well, and through their monitoring, ensure that the performance of the school continues to improve.
- A major strength of the school is the impressive promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This contributes extremely well to attitudes to learning. They take great pride in themselves and the school, making an excellent contribution to the school and wider community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough.
- Marking does not always identify errors in pupils' work and they are not given enough opportunities to correct their mistakes.
- Children do not always achieve as well as they can in early years, because activities planned for outdoors do not provide them with enough challenge for them to make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all years, including two observations carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 1 and 6 read.
- The inspectors carried out a review of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils as they arrived at school and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, members of the school governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Information from a range of school documentation was reviewed, including the school development plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, details relating to safeguarding and information held about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions during lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils.
- Eighty responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, alongside a letter from a parent. Eighteen responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Elisabeth Fenwick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is an average sized school.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The school offers breakfast- and after-school clubs which are run by the governing body.
- Early years provision is full time.
- The school is heavily oversubscribed, with families waiting for a place.
- The school is part of the Yarrow Teaching School Alliance.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress even more by:
 - sharing the strong practice in teaching in upper Key Stage 2 with all teachers
 - making sure that marking consistently identifies pupils' errors, provides clear guidance about how to improve their work as well as the time to correct mistakes, particularly in their writing
 - making sure that all teachers have consistently high expectations about what pupils can achieve and provide them with more challenging activities, particularly in lower Key Stage 2.
- Improve progress further in the early years by:
 - improving the quality of the learning experiences provided for children outdoors so that they are as engaging and purposeful as they are indoors.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by all leaders, underpins the drive and ambition of the school to bring about further improvements. The headteacher is passionate about bringing out the best in every pupil and this is clearly shared by all staff and governors.
- The middle leadership team is a strong and effective part of the school's leadership team. They play a full part in checking on the quality of teaching and learning through regular lesson observations, work scrutinies, discussions with pupils and learning walks. Leaders are aware of the many strengths in teaching in the school, although as yet these are not always shared to allow staff to learn from the best practice in school.
- All leaders play a part in tracking the performance of pupils meticulously. As a result, they quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind and put interventions in place to help them catch up.
- Rigorous evaluations of the school's performance identify precise priorities for improvement. Strategic planning provides precise actions with easy-to-measure targets. As a result, the impact of changes is clear to see and easily adjusted if monitoring identifies that the actions taken are not leading to the desired outcome.
- Information on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are linked closely to the management of the performance of staff. Teachers are set challenging targets and regular reviews of staff performance identify priorities for staff development. All staff are very positive about the range and quality of their training.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and for disadvantaged pupils is managed very well, so that the gap in achievement between those and other pupils is closing rapidly. The pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support the good achievement by disadvantaged pupils. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Pupils benefit from an outstanding curriculum which is enhanced by rich learning experiences beyond the school. Topics such as the recent whole-school theme about World War 1 capture their imagination. Music is a particular strength of the school, with pupils being given opportunities to learn a wide range of instruments and develop their singing skills. A wide range of clubs and after-school activities, including the homework club and educational visits, provide pupils with opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom and have wider experiences of life beyond school. Take-up of all these opportunities is exceptionally high.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely effective. Every opportunity is taken to teach pupils about life in modern Britain. Through a visit by the local MP and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons they have learnt about British democracy. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to take responsibility for their own actions and to value and respect others. They also have a good understanding of other cultures. They excitedly described their visits to other places of worship and how their understanding of other faiths has developed.
- Communication with parents is extremely important in the school. Parents are given a wealth of information about their children and about learning in school. Workshops are provided to inform parents about the latest developments in teaching and to explain to parents how they can help their children. Recently a parents' evening was held to explain to parents how the school is approaching the teaching of phonics. This was attended extremely well. Other workshops have involved pupils giving presentations about their learning.
- Highly effective use has been made of the primary sport funding to broaden sporting opportunities for pupils, as well as developing the expertise of staff. For example, pupils are given the opportunity to experience skiing and other snow sports at the Chill Factor in Manchester.
- The local authority provides effective light touch support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely effective. Governors bring with them a range of skills which enable them to carry out their duties to an exceptionally high standard. They monitor the work of the school very closely and this has given them a very good insight into all aspects of the school. Governors have an informed view of teaching gained through regular visits to classrooms and reports presented to them by subject leaders. They play a full part in the review of the performance of the headteacher. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher and these inform targets for the teachers. Targets are monitored on a regular basis. Governors review data and have an excellent understanding of pupils' achievement and how this compares to other schools nationally. This enables them to challenge senior and middle leaders effectively. They frequently monitor the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that

it is being used effectively. For example, they are given very thorough updates on pupils' progress at each governing body meeting. They manage the finances of the school exceptionally well, including additional funding, such as the primary sport funding and in doing so, ensure that they always achieve the best value they can. They are relentless in ensuring that every pupil and member of staff is kept safe in school and they regularly check the systems for keeping them safe. All governors understand the need for safeguarding and have ensured that they are all trained in child protection and safe recruitment practices.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite and respectful towards others. Relationships are exemplary and pupils show a caring attitude towards each other. For example, pupils in Year 6 take their reading buddy duties with the Reception children very seriously and love reading with them. They said, 'you need a lot of patience listening to them read but it is fun'.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View are unanimous in their opinion that pupils are well behaved in school. School records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and that these are dealt with quickly. The school is meticulous in its monitoring of behaviour.
- Pupils display a real love and thirst for learning. They are always ready to learn and do the very best they can. They work particularly well when working on a shared task, learning from each other and maturely handling the challenges they give to each other. One pupil said, 'you learn more when a friend helps you assess your work'.
- Pupils feel highly valued in school. The 'You've been noticed' board celebrates pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes and contributes to pupils' feeling of well-being and self-esteem.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. They are eager to take on responsibilities within school and enjoy taking part in events, such as music concerts and team sports where they represent their school with pride.
- Attendance has improved rapidly and is now very high compared to the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and say they feel very secure in school. They have been taught how to use the Internet safely and follow the 'Smart rules' when using the computers.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of all forms of bullying and could explain what was meant by homophobic bullying. They confidently said that there was no bullying in the school, although rarely there is occasional name-calling which is quickly sorted out. They commented, 'if you feel upset about anything there are always at least three adults you can go to for help or you can put your worries in the worry box.'
- Parents are very appreciative of the way in which their children are looked after and commented that the schools' arrangements for their children starting school help them to settle in well and make sure that they are very safe in school.
- Visitors to the school are carefully checked in order to keep pupils safe. The introduction of a safe entrance whereby all visitors must get authorised access to the school ensures the highest safety for pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good, although it is not yet consistently strong enough across the school to enable pupils to make outstanding progress.
- The strongest teaching is in upper Key Stage 2. In these classes work is checked carefully and mistakes are picked up quickly. Skilful marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, this is not always the same in other classes where mistakes are not followed up, so pupils continue to make the same mistakes without correcting them. This slows the progress of some pupils and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- In Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to investigate learning for themselves and find their own solutions to problems. They respond exceptionally well to challenges and will persevere with tasks until they

succeed. In Year 6 in mathematics a group of the most-able pupils was investigating different angles in preparation for them to lead the beginning of the next lesson, when they were going to explain the different properties of angles. During their preparation they discussed their findings and challenged each other's thinking. As a result, they made very good progress in their own understanding of different angles.

- In other year groups, expectations of pupils are lower and the challenge not always high enough. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they can.
- Reading is taught effectively. Pupils are encouraged to love reading a wide range of literature, including poetry, from the time they start school. Great emphasis is placed on developing good reading skills and ensuring that pupils have opportunities to use their skills for research in other subjects. The 'extreme reading' competition shows photographs of pupils reading in a wide range of places, including at the top of a mountain and on a lilo. This inspired pupils to take their books outside and read wherever they could. Older pupils buddy with younger pupils to help them with their reading.
- Teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is being strengthened so that writing improves. However, pupils are not yet being given the time they need to practise and improve these skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Teachers provide ample experiences for pupils to write in different subjects. The recent work about World War 1 which included a visit to a World War 1 house in Chorley, as well as learning about the Chorley Pals, stimulated some good quality writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is successful especially in Years 5 and 6, when teachers draw out from pupils their methods of calculations and extend their thinking when learning about shape, space and measures and so correct any misunderstandings.
- Effective team work with teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.
- Homework is used effectively to support learning beyond the classroom. Teachers provide activities through the online blog. Pupils' work on the blog is used in lessons to develop their understanding and extend their progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement overall is good and accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is strongest.
- The vast majority of pupils in Year 1 achieved the standard expected for their age in the national screening for phonics (the sounds that letters make). This is because teachers and teaching assistants are very skilful in the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. By the end of Year 2 in 2014, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. A higher proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics than they did in writing.
- Good progress is sustained in Key Stage 2. In 2014, standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in all subjects was lower than average. This was because a small group of pupils did not make as much progress as expected. However, school tracking information shows that currently progress across all Key Stage 2 year groups is good. This is a direct result of improved teaching and the determination of the headteacher to ensure that every pupil makes rapid progress.
- Current attainment, seen in pupils' books and the school's data on progress, is rising. Attainment in Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, because teaching is improving.
- In reading, the focus on enjoyment has raised attainment, as pupils read more and make better use of this skill, particularly when researching facts for their topic work.
- Writing is above average and many older pupils write accurately and make their work interesting for the reader. At times, work includes errors in basic skills that are not always picked up to ensure that pupils recognise how to write correctly.
- In mathematics, pupils are developing good investigative skills, which enable them to understand mathematical ideas at a deeper level. This is contributing to a rapid improvement in the rate of progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Disabled pupils and those supported with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their requirements are identified as early as possible. Good support from skilful teachers and teaching assistants ensures that their different needs are met and they make good progress towards their challenging targets.
- In 2014 the attainment of the very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium in mathematics was over 5 terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and over 4 terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In English the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was

2 terms behind other pupils in the school in reading and almost 3 terms behind other pupils nationally. In writing they were about 2 terms behind other pupils in school and nationally. Current school tracking information shows that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in all year groups is closing rapidly as a result of effective use of pupil premium funding.

- The most-able pupils are given effective support to ensure that they attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Although at times teachers' expectations of their pupils are not high enough, including for the most able, overall by the time they leave school they make good progress in all subjects. Tracking information shows that more pupils are likely to achieve the higher levels in writing than have done previously.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start school in the early years with skills and abilities which are below what is typical for their age, particularly in communication and language and reading and writing. They settle well into school life and routines so that they make good progress and many of them reach a good level of development. However, their overall attainment is just below average when they start in Year 1.
- Children with special educational needs or for whom the school receives additional funding make equally good progress. This is because the school identifies their needs quickly and puts in place good support for them. The school has recently employed a specialist speech and language therapist to work with children who are having difficulty with the development of the communication skills. This has made a big difference to those children, who are rapidly gaining confidence in their speaking and understanding skills.
- Teaching is good and teachers provide stimulating and exciting activities for the children to develop their skills in all areas of the curriculum. However, these activities are not as effective for outdoor learning as they are indoors. This slows down their learning and opportunities to enable the children to make rapid progress are missed when planning outdoor activities.
- Teaching of phonics is particularly skilful and enables all children to make good progress, especially those with speech and language difficulties.
- Children are cared for extremely well in early years and safeguarding procedures ensure that they are kept safe. They are developing good attitudes towards healthy eating through the snacks they choose. They are also encouraged to be independent in their learning and enjoy accepting responsibilities.
- The children are very well behaved and play happily together. They have formed excellent relationships with the adults caring for them and each other.
- The early years is led and managed effectively. The early years leader is highly knowledgeable and seeks the best for all the children, as seen through their learning journals and learning stories, which are records of the children's achievements. This information is shared with parents as a full record of the progress of their children in the early years. These records build a good picture of each individual child and help teachers to plan effectively so that children make good progress.

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	119673
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448834

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Scard
Headteacher	Rosalie Wroblewski
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
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