

# St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2BJ

## Inspection dates

20–21 April 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Staff, governors and parents all say that the headteacher is the catalyst for the school's rapid improvement. He has galvanised staff and changed the culture of the school.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and of the areas which need to improve further.
- Governors are effective; they have responded very positively to the review of governance.
- English and mathematics subject leaders, each supported by a team of teachers, have driven important improvements in these subjects. Leadership of other subjects is in its infancy.
- Leaders' good improvements to the provision for disadvantaged pupils are helpful but need longer to become fully embedded. The changes made are helping most disadvantaged pupils to catch up with other pupils. However, the regular absence of some disadvantaged pupils prevents them from doing this.
- School and the vast majority of parents work very closely together so pupils thrive at St Gregory's.
- Although pupils' outcomes are improving rapidly, there remain some small differences in year-on-year progress because of variations in teaching as teachers get up to speed with the new initiatives and approaches leaders have introduced.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good overall and outstanding in the special support centres, where these pupils flourish.
- The most able pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress overall.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning play an important part in their good progress. They take great pride in themselves and their school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong.
- Parents agree that their children feel safe and well cared for at St Gregory's.
- Children generally make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, although some tasks in the latter do not sufficiently challenge the most able.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that all teachers fully understand, and implement fully, the school's approaches to teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the most able children in the Reception class receive sufficient challenge in the tasks they are given to do.
- Fully embed the recent improvements in provision for disadvantaged pupils and seek ways to further improve the attendance of those who are regularly absent.
- By September 2017, ensure that foundation subject leaders take responsibility for the curriculum and pupils' standards in their subject.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher's strong leadership and determination lie at the heart of the school's rapid improvement. Ably supported by governors and staff, he has driven the school forward. As one parent stated, 'His enthusiasm and determination are clear to see.'
- Leaders, governors and staff's high aspirations for all pupils ensure that St Gregory's is inclusive of everyone. For example, to include pupils who have a hearing impairment, staff and pupils 'sign' to greet one another in assembly.
- School leaders' very clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement ensures that changes are being made in the aspects of the school's work where they are most needed.
- Staff morale is good. Those responding to Ofsted's online survey agreed they share a clear understanding of the goals leaders are aiming to achieve. Those working in the school when it was last inspected all agree it has improved well.
- Leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning, provide useful advice and guidance when necessary, and see it is acted upon. As a result, teachers are successfully implementing most of the changes leaders have made. This is a good response to the recommendation of Ofsted's first monitoring visit, following the previous inspection. All staff responding to the online survey agreed that leaders use professional development to support teachers' improvement.
- English and mathematics subject leaders' understanding of their role is very clear because both have received high-quality training. One has already achieved national accreditation while the other is in the process of doing so. Changes made to their subjects are largely embedded because improving these subjects was rightly a priority. These subjects are now monitored effectively.
- Leadership of other subjects typifies the headteacher's thorough and well-thought-through approach to school improvement. He sensibly recognised staff could not do everything at once, and English and mathematics had to come first. Currently, teachers are receiving the preparation and training to start to lead foundation subjects in the next academic year. This is effective leadership.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good overall. Pupils' needs are assessed carefully so the right extra help can be provided. Parents are fully involved. Leaders ensure that spending directly benefits pupils, whether through the provision of extra help from an additional adult, or the provision of a specific piece of equipment to aid their learning. The coordinator wants only what is best for pupils, in both their academic and personal development, and makes no compromise or excuses. Provision for pupils in the centres is outstanding. These pupils thrive and make rapid progress from their differing starting points.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils is very well led and managed, an improvement since the previous inspection. In particular, each pupil's unique needs are assessed accurately. The 'whole' pupil is considered, including their attitudes to learning. The views of the pupils themselves, and their parents, are sought. A clear plan is then put

in place. In many ways this is very successful. The progress of the vast majority of pupils is accelerated because extra staff are employed to check there are no gaps or misunderstandings in their learning. However, leaders have not yet managed to improve the attendance of the few pupils who are regularly absent.

- Additional primary school sports funding is used very effectively. Teachers benefit from working alongside sports coaches in order to learn new techniques. Extra activities, including competitive games, give pupils many opportunities to join in. This year, every pupil in Year 6 has represented the school in at least one sport.
- All subjects are incorporated into the curriculum. Reading, writing and mathematics skills are practised regularly through topic work. Topics are innovative and interesting. For example, Year 4 pupils drew on the experiences of local people to find out what it was like living through the Second World War. They used this information to create a performance using dance and drama. A good range of extra-curricular activities extend and enrich the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are generous in all they do for others, for example through supporting a Kenyan community. Pupils proudly perform meaningful roles in assembly, such as reading the blessing. They contribute thoughtfully to a discussion of 'friendship' and how they should treat others.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is clear. They understand 'fairness' because the sought-after positions of pupil responsibility are chosen by vote. They celebrate events of national importance, such as the Queen's birthday or Remembrance Day.
- Links with other schools are strong. Pupils benefit from lessons with high school teachers because they have the opportunity to draw on their subject knowledge and understanding.
- The relationship with the local authority is beneficial. The recommendation of Ofsted's second monitoring visit, that the school access support through the local authority, has been followed. For example, the early years provision has benefited from such advice.
- Parents' positive view of the school is reflected in their response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Nineteen in every 20 parents responding said they would recommend the school to another parent. Comments typical of many include, 'it's a lovely school; well taught, well led, and my child loves it there'.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. The recommendations of the review that followed the previous inspection have been fully and successfully implemented.
- Strong and decisive leadership ensures effective organisation and efficient use of time and individual governor's skills and expertise.
- Governors receive, and act on, a wide range of information about the school, including information about pupils' progress. They now rigorously compare this with that from other sources, including their own monitoring, to check it matches and they challenge leaders if it does not. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Governors closely monitor the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium,

to ensure that it is used effectively. This is another improvement since the review.

- Governors rigorously oversee the performance of staff, including the headteacher, to check performance targets are met and pay increases are appropriately awarded.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's culture promotes vigilance for the safeguarding of pupils. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and know what to look for in order to keep pupils safe.
- Staff and governors' regular training, including about the 'Prevent' duty, helps ensure that awareness levels do not drop. Staff's up-to-date knowledge enables them to identify potentially vulnerable pupils, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Staff say that they are confident in raising any concerns they might have about pupils' welfare. The school's clear and thorough systems effectively record and note concerns and actions taken.
- Documentation is thorough. Checks on the suitability of staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are robust.
- Relationships with outside agencies are strong. School staff call on a range of expertise to seek help to support pupils and vulnerable families.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Leaders' swift action in response to the recommendation of Ofsted's first monitoring visit has improved the quality of teaching. In particular, training is used effectively to support the many improvements leaders have introduced. Teachers recognise and welcome the changes. All responding to the online survey agreed they are trusted to innovate in ways that are right for pupils. However, as teachers implement the changes, there remain small variations across the school in different classes. Work seen in pupils' books, and the school's information about pupils' progress, confirm this.
- Lessons run smoothly because staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships. Teachers build trust so pupils will 'have a go'. Pupils are supported to understand that they can learn from making mistakes.
- Teachers deploy the well-trained teaching assistants effectively. Particularly when working with small groups or individuals, teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They know when to step in and help, and when to give a pupil longer to try and figure something out for themselves.
- Reading is taught well. The new approach to teaching phonics is effective. Learning builds systematically. Good use of technology entuses pupils. Older pupils learn more advanced skills through challenging text and teachers' probing questions. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were asked, 'Why is the cloud as a cloth metaphor effective?' Their thoughtful responses demonstrated their good understanding.
- Writing is generally taught well. Teachers use an approach which fully engages pupils, including boys. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the

teaching of spelling is inconsistent. Most, but not all, teachers expect pupils to apply what they have learned in all writing, including in other subjects.

- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils are given opportunities to reason and apply their skills in other subjects, which supports their understanding.
- Most, but not all, teachers skilfully guide pupils to reflect and recognise what they have achieved and what they need to improve. This gives pupils a clear focus for their learning.
- Additional staff, employed specifically to help meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, are effective. They supplement, rather than replace, class teachers. Although this only began two terms ago, school information and work in pupils' books demonstrates the rapid improvements most pupils are making. Those that attend school regularly are making accelerated progress.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the centres is outstanding. Stimulating activities arouse these pupils' curiosity and desire to learn. Many arrive with little or no communication skills. Through carefully structured fun activities, staff encourage and develop pupils' skills so that most leave the school able to communicate and express themselves well. A comment typical of many parents was: 'They have found a way of teaching my son that has allowed him to actually learn numbers and letters.' The expertise of teachers and teaching assistants is deployed well to advise staff how best to support pupils across the school.
- Teachers encourage and expect pupils to take pride in their work and present it to a good standard.
- Homework is used effectively, for example to extend learning done in school. Pupils say they enjoy online activities. Nine in every 10 parents responding to the Ofsted Parent View survey agreed homework is appropriate for their children's age.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View agreed that their children are happy at school and they are well looked after.
- Pupils' learning benefits from their very positive attitudes. They persevere; one pupil told an inspector, 'you should never give up, even when the work is hard'. In conversation, pupils stress the importance of working well together: 'we are happy to help each other, because if we got stuck we would want someone to help us'.
- Pupils say they like the sense of community in the school. They say 'everyone works together' and 'in the playground all you hear is kind talk'. In breakfast club, pupils are polite and respectful. They enjoy the interesting activities provided for them.
- Pupils willingly accept responsibility and the range of meaningful opportunities staff give them to help. Digital leaders help other pupils with computing and produce posters advertising aspects of e-safety. Play leaders organise games for younger pupils. The eco-committee have written the school's code, including 'use both sides of

scrap paper'. The school council helped design the outdoor classroom.

- Pupils in the centres thrive in the nurturing ethos. 'Positivity' rules; pupils 'glow' because staff are constantly vigilant in recognising every achievement and success, no matter how small.
- Different aspects of school life are regularly showcased through special events. For example, 'Friendship Week' reminds every pupil of the importance of their relationships.
- Pupils' good understanding and awareness of safety is the result of clear advice and regular reminders in lessons. Whether using the internet or a bicycle, pupils know what to do to stay safe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Nine in every 10 parents responding to the online survey agreed the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and a moral code. They know what staff expect of them, understand the school rules and usually stick to them. Older pupils have a mature outlook. 'You are responsible for how you behave. If someone behaves badly, you should remain focused and get on with your work.'
- The vast majority of pupils work and play together harmoniously. All pupils, including those in the centres, are seen as one community. Pupils say play leaders help other pupils if they struggle to manage their behaviour. Play leaders say, 'we try to resolve differences unless it is quite bad, then we find an adult'.
- Pupils' behaviour as they move around the school is very orderly; they have a good awareness of their own safety and of that of others.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They say bullying very rarely happens, but that they have adults to turn to if they are worried. They are confident something would be done if bullying were to occur. About four in every five parents expressing a view through Parent View said the school deals effectively with bullying. The overwhelming majority agreed their children feel safe in school.
- Attendance overall is broadly average and improving. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school is twice that of other pupils. This adversely affects their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Since the headteacher arrived, he and other school leaders have introduced many changes to the curriculum and to teaching so pupils make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils are catching up to the national expectations for pupils of their age. The cumulative effect is growing. However, this was too late to make a significant difference to Year 6 pupils' attainment in the 2016 national tests.
- The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work seen by inspectors in pupils' books, show that the vast majority of current pupils make good progress.

- School data and inspection evidence suggest that the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 will be above the 2016 national average. This represents an improvement on last year's school results. This is partly because the school has introduced a new approach. Aspirations are high; pupils judged to be falling behind are given extra help and the ambition to catch up.
- Pupils' work books and the school's own checks of pupils' progress suggest Year 2 are on track to do well this year. Roughly nine in every 10 pupils are on track to achieve at or above the expectation for their age in reading and mathematics, and eight in every 10 in writing. This represents an improvement on the 2016 outcomes.
- The attainment of the current Year 6 in reading is on track to be above last year's national average, but similar to it in writing and mathematics. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics combined are also on track to be higher than last year's national result.
- The progress of the present Year 6 is good. When these pupils were tested at the end of Year 2, they were significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' assessment information and pupils' work in books show that these pupils have made rapid progress over the last year to catch up on their previously slower progress.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. Tasks generally provide the challenge they need to deepen their understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well because learning is personalised to each individual's needs. School data and pupils' books demonstrate the accelerated progress made in the last year. Extra help enables pupils to catch up on any gaps in their learning, although the regular absence of some of these pupils leads to further missed lessons.
- Pupils in mainstream classes who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well from their different starting points. Their needs are accurately assessed so they receive the precise extra help they need.
- In ways that are appropriate for them, pupils in the centres make great strides, particularly in their personal development and in learning the key skills they need in their next school.
- Leaders and teachers recognised that in the past boys often did less well than girls, and that the difference was much larger than that typically found nationally. Boys and girls both say they like the way learning is presented now, and that it is more interesting, particularly in writing lessons. As a result, the rate of progress made by both boys and girls is good.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is good overall in both Nursery and Reception classes. Children make good progress overall, too. From starting points that are generally similar to, or slightly above, those typical for their age when they join, school checks on progress suggest about four in every five children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. Children are generally well prepared for Year 1.



- Children settle quickly. They learn the day's routines and arrive each morning keen and inquisitive, ready for what the new day has to offer.
- Parents say their children feel safe and happy. They say their children enjoy one another's company and learn to socialise well. They work and play together collaboratively.
- Both inside and out, interesting activities motivate children to be curious and creative. In the Nursery class, staff engage children's interest and promote a love of learning they will take with them into subsequent classes. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children.
- Reading is a particular strength. Children are taught letter sounds and blends, and teachers take every opportunity to encourage children to practise them. From Nursery, staff promote good writing habits. For example, they encourage children to talk about their play, and then record it.
- Parents say the arrangements for their children to start, whether in Nursery or Reception, are good and their children settle quickly.
- Transition to Year 1 is smooth. As the year progresses, children are gradually introduced to more and more activities in preparation for the next stage of their education. For example, they start attending school assemblies.
- Assessment of one day's learning is used to plan the next, so tasks are generally neither too hard nor too easy. However, children who arrive into Reception with skills that are more developed than those typical for their age are sometimes given tasks they can already do, or can do very quickly.
- Children's academic and personal development benefits from home and school working very closely together. Before children start, staff visit them in their own surroundings. Parents appreciate the information and practical resources they are given to help their children learn out of school. Parents say they enjoy opportunities to 'stay and play', or have lunch with their children.
- The provision is well organised and managed. Staff know the expected systems and procedures, including those for safeguarding children, and ensuring their welfare.

## School details

Unique reference number	124757
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10031359

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Gee
Headteacher	Daniel Woodrow
Telephone number	01787 372418
Website	<a href="http://www.stgregoryschool.co.uk/">www.stgregoryschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-gregory.suffolk.sch.uk">admin@st-gregory.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school operates a Nursery each weekday morning.
- There is one class in Reception and one in each year group from Year 1 to Year 5. In Year 6, there are two classes.
- The school has two special support centre classes catering for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and complex additional needs.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion who have an education, health

and care plan is well above average.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club five days a week.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school and site.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, other staff and governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 93 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors considered the views of 35 members of staff and 27 pupils who responded to their online surveys.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspectors also looked at arrangements for safeguarding procedures, including relevant records.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Hopkins	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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