

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Grange Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2AX

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and the governing body did not ensure that pupils who recently left key stage 2 made good progress in reading and writing during their time at the school.
- Leaders do not monitor the wider curriculum, its implementation or its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- School improvement plans do not contain information that governors can use to measure success or to hold leaders to account.
- The school is in a period of transition. Many leaders are new to their roles. They have made a good start but have not yet received the training and support to bring rapid improvements.
- The quality of teaching in phonics and reading is too variable. Pupils are taught the same letter sounds regardless of their ability. This limits the progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that challenge pupils. In some lessons, pupils complete the same work regardless of their ability.
- Teachers do not always deploy teaching assistants effectively to support individual pupils' needs.
- Staff do not consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. Incidents of low-level disruption are too common.
- Some pupils do not present their work with care.

The school has the following strengths

- Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are now making better progress.
- Children get off to a positive start in the early years. The quality of teaching is good. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults know pupils and their families extremely well. There is a warm and caring ethos throughout the school.
- There are effective procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Rates of absence and persistent absence are currently below national averages.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders new to their roles receive support and training to help them to make rapid improvements in their areas of responsibility
 - leaders monitor the wider curriculum, its implementation and its impact on the outcomes for pupils
 - school improvement plans contain the information that will allow governors to hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that outcomes for pupils improve by ensuring that:
 - teachers identify and correct pupils' misconceptions quickly and plan activities that challenge all groups of pupils
 - teaching assistants are effectively deployed to meet individual pupils' needs
 - the teaching of phonics and reading are consistently good.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development and welfare by ensuring that:
 - adults consistently use the school's behaviour policy to reduce incidents of low-level disruption
 - all pupils present their work to the best of their ability.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and the governing body have not been successful in ensuring that those pupils who left key stage 2 recently have made strong progress in reading and writing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is helping to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a sound understanding of British values and enjoy educational visits. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to develop outdoor and adventurous skills during a week-long residential. However, leaders do not monitor the wider curriculum well. It is currently unclear whether the curriculum is being implemented effectively and what impact it is having on pupils' outcomes.
- The school improvement plan does not contain precise enough actions. Consequently, the governing body is unable to hold leaders fully to account.
- Many leaders are new to their roles. They have made a good start in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their area of responsibility. However, they have not received the training and support to ensure that improvements occur rapidly.
- Leaders have a good overview of the current attainment and progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is analysed closely, it is shared with the governing body and areas of weakness are identified. Leaders are able to provide extra support to those classes and subjects that require it.
- Leaders and the governing body are ambitious and set increasingly high standards for staff and pupils alike. Teachers and teaching assistants told inspectors that they appreciate opportunities to develop professionally, and that they enjoy courses provided by the trust.
- The new leader responsible for pupils with SEND has made a strong start in a short space of time. Effective systems are now in place to check on the progress that pupils are making. Inspection evidence and information provided by the school shows that the majority of pupils with SEND are now making good progress.
- The allocation and monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is good. The leader has a clear overview of pupils' individual barriers to learning and has accurately identified strategies to support their learning. The majority of disadvantaged pupils are currently making improving progress.
- The leadership of mathematics is strong. Teachers now ensure that pupils have more frequent opportunities to use practical resources and to explain their thinking through problem-solving and reasoning activities. Standards in mathematics have risen over recent years.
- The leader responsible for the physical education and sport funding has ensured that staff have received training, and pupils have increased their participation in numerous competitions with other schools. After-school clubs in, for example, gymnastics, football, and bench-ball have been successful in targeting and engaging pupils who previously had not taken part in physical activity.
- Leaders provide a safe and stimulating environment for pupils to learn and staff to work. Bright classrooms and displays of pupils' work in the corridors help to celebrate

the best work alongside support materials to help pupils with, for example, spellings and times tables.

- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and its leaders. One parent commented that, 'The headteacher and her competent management team are having a really positive effect on the school.'

Governance of the school

- The governing body is becoming increasingly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, governors now recognise that they did not challenge leaders about the decline in pupils' progress over recent years. The school improvement plan does not contain sufficient detail for them to evaluate the success of action taken to bring improvement or for them to hold leaders to account for pupils' performance.
- The governing body has a good mix of skills and experience. Governors have received training in areas such as safer recruitment, safeguarding, finance, and health and safety.
- Individual governors are now making visits to the school, to see it in action for themselves. Information collected is shared with other governors during meetings so that the governing body is well informed. During one such recent visit, a governor identified that the behaviour of some pupils was not as good as it should be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that all the necessary checks are undertaken on adults before they can work or volunteer at the school. Recruitment files meet statutory requirements and are kept in good order.
- The designated safeguarding leads and staff have received training in areas such as the 'Prevent' duty and in spotting the signs of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.
- There is an effective system in place for staff to report any welfare concerns they have about a pupil or family to the designated leads for safeguarding. There are good links with outside agencies such as social care, the multi-agency safeguarding hub and the local police community support officer. Referrals to agencies are made swiftly, ensuring that pupils and families receive extra help when it is needed. The family support officer is tenacious in chasing up extra support if it is not forthcoming.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Staff do not always identify and correct pupils' misconceptions. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that some pupils are repeating the same mistakes they were making earlier in the term.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities that challenge pupils. Inspection evidence shows that too often pupils complete the same work regardless of their ability.

Consequently, work is often too hard for some pupils and too easy for others.

- Teachers do not consistently deploy teaching assistants effectively. There are occasions when pupils' learning and independence are not promoted well, because teaching assistants complete some of the work for the pupils.
- The teaching of phonics and reading are not consistently good. For example, during one phonics session, all the pupils learned the same letter sounds regardless of their ability. Some of the most able pupils' reading books are not at the correct level of challenge and are too easy for them.
- Teachers meet frequently with leaders to discuss the progress and attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils take standardised tests that help to confirm the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' learning. Pupils who are falling behind are identified and given support to help them catch up.
- Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to improve spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. These skills are assessed in longer pieces of extended writing. For example, pupils in Year 6 were accurately using persuasive language when writing a letter to local councillors regarding the potential closing of a local charity.
- There have been recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed using practical resources to explain how they had correctly worked out various calculations.
- Teachers set pupils' homework in line with the school's policy. This includes the weekly completion of spellings, reading and in the learning of times tables. There are further opportunities for pupils to complete tasks related to the current topic. Pupils in key stage 2 have recently made houses, tools, and clothes as part of their 'Stone Age' topic.
- End of year reports contain appropriate information for parents and carers on the various areas of the curriculum. They contain judgements on pupils' attitudes to learning, their attainment and what they should try next in order to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are knowledgeable regarding keeping themselves safe when crossing roads or using the internet. They know not to share personal information when online and to tell an adult if they see something inappropriate.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves fit and healthy through taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils attending the breakfast club benefit from a calm start to the day and a good selection of healthy foods to choose from.
- There is appropriate parental information on the school's website that provides links and advice to help support pupils' mental health and well-being.
- Pupils have a good understanding of equality and faiths and cultures different to their own. One pupil commented, 'No matter who we are or where we come from, we are all

a family together. We are all accepted.'

- Pupils have a strong understanding of empathy and of helping others. Each class has a project where they show compassion towards someone in the local community. For example, pupils in Year 1 are raising money for a local charity and pupils in Year 2 have recently written prayers for local homeless people.
- Pupils relish the opportunities to take on extra responsibility. These include democratically elected school councillors, being house captains, librarians, corridor monitors and anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Pupils are polite and look smart in the school's uniform. Many pupils cheerily greeted inspectors and were keen to share what they were learning. Pupils show good manners and are respectful of visitors.
- Sometimes, pupils do not present their work neatly and to the best of their ability.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not consistently behave well in all classes. Incidents of low-level disruption are too common. In these classes, pupils do not respond promptly to adults' instructions and the learning of others can be disrupted.
- Staff do not consistently use the school's behaviour policy. Pupils told an inspector, 'It depends who you have,' when asked if pupils behave well.
- There are strong procedures in place to monitor those pupils whose attendance is a concern. Consequently, current rates of absence and persistent absence are lower than the national averages.
- Pupils behave well on the playground and during breaktimes. They play together sensibly and chat sociably when eating their lunch.
- Pupils have a good understanding of racism and bullying and of the different forms that they can take. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over recent years, pupils leaving key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, have not made enough progress in reading or writing when compared with other pupils nationally. Progress in writing declined considerably during this period.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils leaving key stage 1 who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics fell dramatically when compared to the proportions achieving the expected standards in 2016. However, these latest figures were broadly in line with national averages.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics check fell to well below the national average. Figures were broadly in line with the national average over previous years.
- Inspection evidence and assessment information supplied by the school suggests that some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are not working at age-related expectations in

reading, writing and mathematics. However, the majority of pupils are now starting to make better progress in these subjects.

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils leaving key stage 2 who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' progress in mathematics has increased significantly over recent years.
- In 2018, the proportions of pupils leaving both key stages 1 and 2 who achieved the higher standards in mathematics were above the national averages.
- Inspection evidence and information provided by the school indicates that the majority of current disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are making strong progress. This is particularly the case in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Over recent years, the proportions of children reaching a good level of development has been broadly in line with the national average. In 2018, the proportion was above the national average. Children make good progress from their various starting points.
- Children make particularly strong progress in writing. For example, work in children's books shows that those children who were mark making in September are now correctly writing individual letters and those who could already write their names can now correctly write a simple sentence.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and development areas in the provision. For example, the recent increase in practical resources to support children's learning has contributed to them gaining an improved understanding of number.
- Transition into the early years is well planned. Children visit in the summer term to familiarise themselves with the staff, classrooms and routines. Parents also visit and complete 'all about me' booklets that inform staff of their child's strengths and development areas. Children settle quickly because they know the school, and staff know the children well before they start.
- There are good links with outside agencies, including the speech and language team, an educational psychologist and the school nurse. This ensures that any child who requires extra support receives it promptly.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff provide a wide variety of interesting and stimulating activities that engage children and promote their independence. There are numerous opportunities, carefully designed, to promote children's writing, number, physical and creative development.
- Staff frequently use members of the community to help deepen children's knowledge. For example, there is a link with a residential care home and visits to a farm and local shops. When learning about 'People who help us' children were recently visited by the local police, fire service and a nurse.
- The 'Proud cloud' and 'our next steps' displays help to inform adults and parents of children's achievements. Staff can therefore plan carefully and accurately for children's

future learning.

- Children behave well. Positive relationships exist between adults and children and between the children themselves. Children happily share resources and learn cooperatively. For example, a group of children were observed working happily together, practising writing individual letters while sharing a large piece of paper.
- Safeguarding is effective because staff have the same training and follow the same procedures as the rest of the school. An appropriate number of adults are trained in paediatric first aid.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the early years team. One typical comment received by inspectors was, 'My son's progress since September has been amazing!'

School details

Unique reference number	142733
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057632

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust
Chair	David Williams
Headteacher	Niamh Rolph
Telephone number	01604 403 511
Website	www.stgregoryscatholicprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	head@stgregorys.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Gregory's Catholic Primary School joined the St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust on 1 April 2016.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Some lessons were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chief executive of the trust, a group of staff and a group of governors, including the chair.
- Inspectors scrutinised in detail the work in a range of pupils' books from all year groups and in a wide range of subjects. This activity was undertaken jointly with the assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including: the evaluation of the school's own performance and its development plans; information on pupils' attainment and progress; records relating to behaviour and bullying; attendance records; safeguarding procedures; and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with a group of pupils and informally with others around the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors spoke with parents before school and considered the 38 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey and 24 responses to the staff survey were considered.

Inspection team

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