

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST GREGORY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Smethwick, Sandwell

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 104002

Headteacher: Ms Foley

Reporting inspector: Mrs R. Harrison  
OFSTED Inspector Number: 18059

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 194464

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: infant and junior

School category: voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Park Road  
Smethwick  
West Midlands

Postcode: B67 5HX

Telephone number: 0121 4294609

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Appropriate authority: governing body

Name of chair of governors: Miss Julia Markham

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Gregory's Roman Catholic School, with 254 pupils, is an average sized primary school. The majority of pupils live within the local parish but a significant number travel in from a wider area. The school is popular and regularly oversubscribed. Social circumstances are above average overall. Most children (99 per cent) are from Roman Catholic families and 8.6 per cent are eligible for free school meals; this is below the national average. Higher than average numbers (3.6 per cent) speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children with special educational needs is also higher than average at just over 26 per cent. Seven of these children have statements of special educational need and this is above average. Children start in the nursery class in the term after they reach the age of three years. Few people move in or out of the locality, so few children join the school other than at the start of nursery and few leave other than to transfer to secondary education. Attainment of children on entry to the nursery is broadly in line with that expected of children of their age.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school providing a very good standard of education for all of its pupils. The school's strong family values, reflected by its motto 'Loving and Learning', enable children to achieve well. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the excellent commitment and dedication of all the staff, and strong support from the governors and the school community as a whole, contribute to the school's success. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Very good teaching contributes to the high standards pupils attain by the time they are eleven years old. The school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher results in highly effective teamwork in which all members of the school community play a valuable part in ensuring the school's continued very good improvement.
- Standards are well above average. Pupils perform very well in National Curriculum tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science. Their attitudes to learning are excellent, and they make very good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and teachers expect the very best from all children. Excellent assessment procedures are used very effectively to provide pupils with well-planned activities that challenge and extend learning.
- The school works very closely with parents and carers to involve them in their children's learning.
- As a result of the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils learn effectively in an environment where relationships are very secure, where people show respect for one another's views and where children feel loved.

#### **What could be improved**

- In the nursery and reception classes day-to-day assessment of what children achieve in activities could be better used to inform daily planning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the school was last inspected in May 1997, significant effort has gone into addressing effectively the key issues identified in the previous report, and into maintaining the identified strengths of the school. Teaching has improved significantly and is now very good overall: no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The school has very thorough procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. Teachers consistently provide learning activities that challenge all pupils, whatever their level of prior attainment, thus raising standards further. National Curriculum test results show the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels to be now well above the national average. The school has admitted a higher than average number of pupils with specific and complex learning needs and has, through its very strong commitment to provide well for all children, successfully met those needs and helped these pupils make very good progress. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are now in line with expectations and plans are in place to build a computer suite that will further improve access to ICT. An effective work scheme guides teachers' planning, and all teachers have taken up appropriate training to help teach the curriculum well. Provision for children under five is good and they make a good start at the school. Planning appropriately

matches the recommendations of the Foundation Stage curriculum, although the school recognises that day-to-day planning needs further attention. Governors provide excellent support to the school and meet all statutory requirements. All health and safety issues identified in the last inspection have been fully resolved. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are excellent: they have worked diligently to provide a curriculum that is now very good. Because children feel cared for and valued, they have very positive attitudes to learning. The school promotes excellent partnerships with parents and the community. Overall improvement has been very good and the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	C
Mathematics	B	B	A	A*
Science	C	A	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Since 1999, standards have improved steadily, improvement being above the national trends. National Curriculum test results are well above average when compared with schools nationally. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is also the case in mathematics and science when compared with schools where a similar percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Inspection evidence confirms these results. Children under five come into school with broadly average attainment. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and standards are above average when they enter Year 1. Progress is very good throughout Years 1 and 2, and standards for a significant number of children are well above average by the age of seven. The vast majority of pupils continue to make very good progress from Years 3 to 6 and by the time they leave school their attainment is well above average. These significant gains stem directly from teaching that is generally very good, and from the excellent assessment and monitoring procedures. Targets are continually set and reviewed for individual pupils, groups and classes and the whole school. The information gained through careful analysis of all assessment data allows the school to set ambitious but achievable targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very happy at school and are keen to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous and show respect at all times. Staff and parents have high expectations of good behaviour and all children respond well.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils and adults show great care and kindness towards each other and are mindful of the needs of others.
Attendance	Good overall and for a significant minority it is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships provide compelling day to day evidence of the school's success in fulfilling its motto 'Loving and Learning'.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Twenty-five lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all these lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in



nearly one fifth of lessons seen. Four lessons seen this time were satisfactory, ten were good and nine very good. Much of the very good teaching was in the junior classes where two further lessons were judged to be excellent. In these lessons pupils were totally immersed in their learning, captivated by excellent presentations, and kept fully involved by very good opportunities to ask and answer questions. This level of very good teaching contributes effectively to the high standards pupils achieve.

The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils apply these confidently across all subject areas. Teachers' very good subject knowledge, planning and excellent assessment strategies enable them to meet the needs of all pupils very effectively. The school also maximises the commitment and expertise of support staff and volunteers who work with pupils across the ability range. However, whilst the direct teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes is good, in a few lessons groups of children who are not the focus of direct adult support, make limited progress sometimes. While standards in ICT are now in line with expectations, teachers' planned use of ICT in day-to-day lessons is sometimes limited for pupils to practise skills they have gained.

Pupils' learning is very good overall. They work hard and try their best to meet their teachers' and their own high expectations. They are very clear about the achievement targets that they have set and are regularly reminded to check their work against these expectations. Pupils of all ages and abilities are confident learners and are quick to respond to positive acknowledgement of their hard work and effort. Their attentiveness to staff and one another's presentations is generally very good, and they show a very caring approach when helping peers to achieve to the best of their ability.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Children under five experience a wide range of good learning opportunities. Every effort is made to include all pupils on trips to places of interest. Extra-curricular provision is very good and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum very effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Early identification of special needs enables staff to set targets and plan appropriately. Progress is monitored carefully. The school works in close partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that the right help is provided to support each child with appropriate sensitivity.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although a small number of children are from homes where English is not the first language, they generally speak English well. Teachers ensure that their progress matches that of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and is implicit within the day-to-day work of the school. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The church plays a significant role in the life of the school and its community, and all adults act as very positive role models. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes excellent care of its children. The existence of very good quality assessment procedures and their consistent use by all staff ensures that work matches individual needs very effectively.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher's single-minded drive to improve the school and raise standards has been highly influential in enabling all members of staff to play a full and active part in the school's development. She leads a highly effective team and values everyone's contributions.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are heavily involved in the work of the school. They understand its strengths and areas for development well. They are very proud of the school, sharing the strong commitment to make improvements that benefit all pupils. They work in close partnership with staff, pupils, parents and others in the school community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Regular evaluation of test results and other information are used to monitor progress and identify development targets. The school is fully aware of what needs to be done to sustain its high level of performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school maximises its resources to ensure that it achieves 'best value' in all its work. Spending is targeted carefully to improve the school environment and develop the curriculum. The school gives very good value for money.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Pupils behave well and take good care of each other.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is successful in enabling children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Staff work hard, are very approachable and readily available to discuss concerns.</li> <li>• The school works very closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range and availability of activities that the school provides outside lessons.</li> <li>• They do not always know how well their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully endorses the parents' positive views. The school provides a good range of activities for pupils in the junior classes and, while there are fewer opportunities for children in the infants, that is similar to other schools. Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children make.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Excellent leadership from the headteacher results in highly effective teamwork in which all members of the school community play a valuable part in ensuring the school's very good improvement.**

1. The school emanates a very strong team spirit where everyone's hard work is valued and as a result children achieve well. The school's key aim is to foster a culture of 'Loving and Learning', and this underpins all its day-to-day work. The headteacher diligently accepted the challenges posed by the previous inspection and has led the school effectively in addressing all key issues. Not only has school improvement been very good, but also there is clear direction in the School Development Plan to ensure continuous improvement. In close partnership with staff, governors and parents, she has enabled the school to provide very good standards of education, within an environment where children feel well cared for and happy. The headteacher's passion and enthusiasm, aligned with her very clear understanding of what needs to be done, have established her as a well-respected role model in the support and guidance of the work of others.
2. Key staff make excellent contributions to the development of their areas of expertise. As a result of a systematic review of the curriculum, staff development issues have been resolved successfully, in, for example, ICT and provision for children under five. All subject co-ordinators regularly review planning, teaching and learning, and are generally quite clear about the quality of work children produce. Through this consistent approach to monitoring, areas requiring attention are easily identified, and teachers receive helpful feedback from the headteacher and other colleagues. Excellent use is made of highly refined assessment procedures to help teachers set appropriate targets for improvement, and this practice effectively supports the raising of standards.
3. The governing body, chaired by a very hard working and dedicated member, carries out its role extremely well. Governors clearly support the Catholic mission and take a very keen interest in the welfare and development of staff and pupils. For example, they are very sensitive to the current situation in which the school has no deputy headteacher, and carefully review the pressures this places on the headteacher and her senior managers. All governors regularly visit the school to monitor work in classes and engage in constructive dialogue with staff. In this way they have a very good overview of the day-to-day work in the school and are tuned into any concerns and issues staff or parents might have. They understand well the school's strengths and areas for development. Financial management is excellent. Governors ensure that the school plan is suitably resourced, and have a clear view as to what are the current priorities. Wherever possible, the headteacher, with governors' support, seeks additional grants and funding, all of which are then used effectively to speed up improvements. For example, suitable money was secured to purchase ICT hardware, although work on building the computer suite has yet to commence.
4. The school regularly reviews its performance and sets challenging but achievable targets because time is taken to assess individual pupils' capabilities. The commitment

to meet the needs of each child is highly commendable, reinforcing the school's strong principles to unequivocally promote social and educational inclusion. With this level of dedication and commitment, and the very good standards achieved, the school gives very good value for money.

**Standards are well above average. Pupils perform very well in the National Curriculum tests and assessments and tests in English, mathematics and science. Their attitudes to learning are excellent, and they make very good progress.**

5. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and many attain high standards in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests and assessments. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained steady improvement, slightly above the national trend. Any variations that occur are attributable to the relative size of the cohorts in the year groups and the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs. The school places great emphasis on ensuring the effective integration of children of all abilities. Standards in all three subjects have improved since the previous inspection, reflecting the school's very good improvements in the planning, the teaching and assessment procedures.
6. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in all lessons and more than half achieve the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Pupils with special needs are identified early and great care is taken to support each child appropriately. Individual education plans for children with special needs, and very careful target setting for every child throughout the school, ensure that all pupils make very good progress.
7. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is broadly average. The children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes in all of the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. They make very good progress in communication and literacy skills and personal and social development. By the time they enter Year 1 the vast majority achieve above average attainment in the nationally recommended early learning goals. The most able children know many initial sounds and can read key words. They recognise and can write numbers up to a hundred, and complete words and simple sentences in their writing. Children with specific learning needs are identified very early on and all staff work sensitively with these children, to ensure that they make the same good progress.
8. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieved well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. From the limited range of work seen at this early stage of the school year, standards are clearly above average. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed step by step, and most children are confident in these areas, applying well their prior knowledge and understanding to new learning.
9. By the end of Year 2, children read and write confidently, composing good, coherent sentences and simple punctuation is used accurately. Listening skills are of a high standard and pupils are encouraged to express ideas and offer suggestions in the shared class activities. They particularly enjoy classroom challenges, presented, for example, in mental mathematics or discussion time, when every child is expected to contribute. Children who are less confident are supported gently by staff and peers. Emphasis has been given to raising standards in reading and writing, and this has been effective. The

school's approach to reading includes regular practice in school and at home. There is consistent development of pupils' ability to build words and many opportunities to enjoy books. Their range of writing is good and pupils extend their skills to other subjects, for example by writing accounts in history and summarising investigations in science.

10. By the end of Year 6 standards in English are well above average, with well over half the pupils achieving the higher Level 5. The very good progress seen in the infants is successfully sustained. In all the junior classes, both teachers' and pupils' expectations remain high. Year 6 pupils have well above average reading skills and they read with fluency and expression. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils read with sensitive passion the plight of the wretched fox being remorselessly hunted down. Pupils read confidently, drawing relevant information from texts to support their ideas - for example, 'These words make me feel awash with emotion'. Their skills in reading are used effectively to research topics and discover different viewpoints, seen, for example, when they were reflecting on resource material on the World War 2 topic in Year 4. The pupils use a wide vocabulary in their factual accounts and their story telling. They give good attention to presentation and handwriting, and because expectations are high, the majority of pupils know when they have done their best work.
11. The very effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has supported the development of English throughout the school. Children are taught appropriate skills in a very creative but structured way and teachers take positive action to identify what children can do well, and where they need extra help.
12. Standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 6 and this also is an improvement since the last report, when standards were 'above the national average'. The school has implemented the Numeracy Strategy very well and improvement in the subject has been very good. Teachers feel that standards in mental mathematics, three-dimensional shape and problem solving are particularly good, and pupils enjoy these aspects. They acquire a good understanding of the key processes they need to apply in various contexts and take care to work answers out accurately and with reasonable explanations. Good use is made of number skills in design and technology and science. The use of ICT to support data handling and recording has improved significantly since the last inspection, and attention is being given to extend use of this facility.
13. Standards in science are also well above average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 and this is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were reported to be 'in line with national expectations'. Development of the subject has been very good. The revised work scheme places greater emphasis on teaching skills, not just facts, and children apply prior knowledge well to new situations. They are challenged to think and reason their ideas and offer explanations for their answers. These high expectations support learning very effectively. For example, in the Year 6 lesson exploring upward thrust and gravity, pupils were asked to identify key variables that they need to consider when designing the investigation. In this lesson higher attaining pupils found the task challenging and fun. Similarly, in a lesson in Year 1, children thought long and hard about selecting a healthy diet, and explained well that they needed vitamins and fibre to keep their bodies 'up and running'. Limited use of

ICT is made to support teaching, but pupils do carry out recording and research tasks using computers.

14. During the inspection there was too little time to look in detail at other subjects, but standards are at least satisfactory, and examples of very good work were seen in many of the subjects observed. Standards in music are very good, and pupils make very good progress in performance skills. Some excellent work was seen in history and science in Year 4 and English in Year 5. Pupils were totally engrossed in learning, demonstrating again their very positive attitudes to school and learning. Standards in ICT are now in line with expectations and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have worked hard on establishing a good scheme of work, are undergoing the relevant ICT training to develop their own subject knowledge and expertise, and are aware further work needs to be carried out in ensuring that day-to-day planning integrates effective ICT applications.
15. Improvement in standards results directly from continuous hard work by all staff. Subject co-ordinators have put great energy into developing their subjects, refining previous work, and building in any new requirements extremely well. They regularly monitor planning, teaching and learning, supporting improvements for individual groups where necessary. Excellent assessment procedures and regular moderation of pupils' work highlight what children know and what they need to do next to improve. This level of detailed analysis is exemplary.

**The overall quality of teaching is very good and teachers expect the very best from all children. Excellent assessment procedures are used very effectively to provide pupils with well-planned activities that challenge and extend learning.**

16. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Good lessons were seen across the school and two excellent lessons were seen in the junior classes, in history and English. This marked improvement in teaching is largely due to the excellent leadership and management of all subjects, and the continued commitment to hard work by all staff in the school. They are keen to help pupils achieve the very best they can, and pupils appreciate all that the school does for them by responding very positively at all times. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well. This is a major factor in the high standards pupils achieve.
17. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed work schemes in line with new guidelines and teachers' planning is very thorough, paying due attention to the development of skills as well as ensuring that knowledge and understanding develop well. In the majority of lessons, it is clear what is being taught and learning targets are clearly shared with pupils of differing abilities. Children generally understand well what they are learning and why. They are encouraged to think about what they already know and are helped to build on this prior knowledge, through very skilful and challenging questioning. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1, pupils explained very sensibly why certain combinations of food were unhealthy, quoting quite knowledgeably from television advertising regarding 'vitamin and energy rich foods'. In an English lesson in Year 4, the text being studied highlighted links with the pupils'

history topic, helping them appreciate more clearly what it must have been like to be an evacuee in the war. Such cross-curricular links prevail across the schemes of work and make learning more 'joined up' for children. A further benefit is that teachers plan units of work that complement each other well, thus maximising the time available for each subject. Because children see learning as a continuum, they make better sense of the wide range of experiences offered to them.

18. Throughout the school, pupils learn very well and teachers ensure that lessons are interesting, involve all pupils appropriately and every child is made aware of the expectations placed upon him or her to work hard. This is not to say that lessons are not 'fun'; teachers take great care to plan for a good range of tasks and activities, explain these very clearly, and ensure that resources and support staff are generally deployed to maximum effect. In two lessons in the Foundation Stage, judged to be satisfactory overall, children were presented with too many activities. This did not allow staff to intervene effectively enough with all the children, thus limiting their overall progress. Pace of lessons is generally very good, and because teachers are confident in what they are teaching, strategies they use are very effective. For example, appropriate time is given for pupils to work in pairs and groups to share thinking time, and short discussions at the end of lessons help teachers and pupils to clarify whether their targets have been met successfully. In some lessons teachers use this time to set the scene for the next bit of learning pupils will be moving on to, and this provides pupils with a very good context for what they are asked to do.
19. Teachers place good emphasis on children's learning to think for themselves, and develop good organisational skills. Learning is very good overall. Children in the nursery and reception classes are encouraged to organise themselves and get on with the activities provided, sensibly and efficiently. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are expected to plan their own time in which to complete tasks, and work with others where appropriate, as, for example, in art and design and technology lessons where resources need to be shared. Because relationships are very good, most pupils have no difficulties working together, and seeking help from one another and from adults when appropriate.
20. Support staff and volunteers from the local community are invaluable in supporting pupils of all abilities, and the school makes very effective use of any help available. Classroom assistants work hard with every child in their care, helping them to enjoy learning and achieve well. Excellent support from volunteers includes listening to readers and working with high attaining pupils. Teachers ensure that clear guidance and support is given to all adults who help, about the targets each child is to achieve.
21. Excellent use is made of day-to-day assessment to plan teaching, and procedures are applied consistently across the infant and junior classes. Teachers gather relevant and helpful data to monitor progress and targets set for English and mathematics are reviewed each half-term, and termly for all other subjects. This careful analysis identifies areas in which pupils need more support to reach their targets. Where pupils exceed previously set targets, this is recorded and more challenging activities are arranged. Because these procedures are applied across the school, and because teachers also know their children well, all children are given the help they need as soon as this information is reviewed at regular staff meetings. This level of care is excellent. Information about children in each class is passed to the teacher they move on to, and is

regularly shared with parents. Standards have been raised because a clear picture builds up of pupils and their achievements, but also of subjects where more work may be required to improve teaching and learning.

22. Pupils are diligent in their studies, and are keen to learn, taking every opportunity offered to do their best. For example, a lunchtime band practice involving sixteen pupils gave them a chance to share their musical skills with others. Because the teacher gave willingly of her time, children appreciated the interest taken to help them improve. Very good behaviour and genuine enthusiasm for learning, inspired by some very good teaching, help pupils to remain highly motivated. They enjoy being praised, and show respect for each other by listening to everyone's views and offering constructive help and advice to peers when evaluating work. For example, pupils spontaneously applauded each other's presentations during a number of the lessons seen during the inspection. When given opportunities to work independently or in unsupervised groups, they settle very quickly to work, and take every care to not disturb others.

**The school works very closely with parents and carers to involve them in their children's learning.**

23. Parents and carers have extremely positive views of the school. They appreciate the hard work and effort of all staff and governors in providing their children with high quality learning opportunities. They are very happy with the standards pupils achieve and feel that the school has the interests of all pupils at heart. The school promotes very positive relationships with parents, welcoming them into consultations about, for example, the School Development Plan. In recent times, staff and governors have offered curriculum workshops to explain changes and offer advice as to how parents can help support their children's learning. Parents have attended these events, listened to information, and been given appropriate time to ask questions. The school shares with them their children's half-termly targets for English and mathematics, and information about targets in other subjects each term. This regular involvement in academic work gives parents a very good overview of what their children are doing, and how parents can help. For some it is quite an eye opener to see how much work their children do, and how high teachers' expectations are of what pupils can achieve. Because parents feel very comfortable in approaching the school with concerns and issues, knowing that they will be listened to attentively, parents are confident that their children make the best progress they can.
24. A good number of parents and other members of the local parish community regularly help in school. Because their help is actively sought and valued, they feel involved in the day-to-day life of the school and take very seriously their role in helping children do well. The school is an integral part of the community and visitors supporting teaching make very valuable contributions to the curriculum. For example, a local doctor brought alive the subject of bones, muscles and body structure in a way that totally captivated pupils' interest in a lesson in Year 4. In a similar way, many other members of the community visit the school and teachers explore opportunities to extend this resource wherever possible. For example, pupils from Year 2 onwards are able to audition for musical instrument tuition. Parents are expected to support any children who successfully take up this opportunity, and do so willingly. Parents are invited to join in celebrations and special events in the school, thus continuing to develop the very



good links with home and school. Parents accompany school trips, raise substantial funds to purchase additional materials and resources, and organise social functions, often including activities where entire families take part. The strong family ethos is totally in line with the overall emphasis the school places on 'Loving and Learning'. Because parents understand more clearly how the school operates through this wide range of involvement, they are better prepared to help and guide their children's development.

**As a result of the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' personal development is very good. They learn effectively in an environment where relationships are very secure, where people show respect for one another's views and where children feel loved.**

25. As a result of the very good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' personal development is very good. In an environment where people really care for each other, children are made very aware of their responsibilities to always try hard and do their best. As members of the school community, children are encouraged to consider what they can do to help others. They are expected to show respect for the views and beliefs of others, and have very positive role models in the adults who work with them in school. They take opportunities to raise funds for charity, perform musical events for the elderly in the area, and help friends and peers in lessons. They are proud of their work and of the school, knowing that it enjoys a high reputation in the area.
26. Pupils hold the school in high regard. The vast majority enjoy school, and from as early as nursery class are shown how to behave and what impact their behaviour has on others. Provision for their moral development is very good, and from an early age children know the difference between right and wrong. Expectations are high, but through gentle reminders and careful guidance, pupils quickly become sensitive to the needs of others. For example, older pupils help younger ones at lunch times, and children with special educational needs are treated with appropriate kindness and patience when they sometimes struggle with tasks. A good example was observed in a lesson in the reception class, where the artistic efforts of one child were noted with praise by the classmate working alongside him. Pupils are encouraged to work without direct supervision, and once it has been made clear what is required, they settle quickly and work well independently. At the same time, relationships are so good that pupils are not afraid to seek help, and know that they will be listened to. During the inspection, while children were not shy, nor were they forward or discourteous. They are friendly and polite, listen carefully and engage in mature dialogue about the virtues of being in this school.
27. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual development and links with the parish church are very strong. Teachers give pupils time to reflect on feelings, for example, from the literature they study, from art, music and dance lessons, and from time given to thinking about others during assemblies. They also have time to reflect on the richness and diversity of other cultures and communities through a very good range of visits that is offered by the school, and from visitors to the school. Celebrations in the school are seen as important social events: for example, the whole school shared in the headteacher's landmark birthday recently. Pupils in Year 6

described the occasion with great affection, as it had obviously been something they felt privileged to have shared. Similarly, pupils are eager to relate their adventures on residential visits, not only gaining tremendously from these trips regarding curricular work, but also as significant social events, memories of which they dwell on with excitement.

28. Extra-curricular provision is very good through the range of opportunities offered from Year 2 onwards. All pupils are offered swimming and recorder lessons, and specialist music tuition is taken up by a good number of pupils from the age of six years. The wide range of sporting clubs and activities attract many others, and this provision helps pupils to develop in areas of learning going beyond the statutory curriculum, well. The school, like many others in the country, does not offer the same level of provision for its youngest children, although they do have opportunities for gymnastics, dance and a physical education club from the reception class onwards.
29. The school places great emphasis, in its aims, on providing children with a good start to their personal and educational achievements. It does this successfully and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 they are mature, confident and responsible young people. The school prepares them well for the next phase of their development.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Day-to-day assessment of what children achieve in activities to better inform daily planning in the nursery and reception classes.**

30. Assessment procedures throughout the school are excellent and they are used very effectively to monitor progress and set targets for individual pupils. In most lessons teachers use day-to-day assessment to consider how well children achieve new skills and knowledge. Where this level of detail is recorded, teachers use the information to prepare work that appropriately challenges pupils in order to help them make very good progress. In most of the lessons seen in the nursery and reception classes, however, there was no clear evidence as to how this information is gathered by all staff working in these classes.
31. The lessons provide a good range of learning experiences for young children, in line with the recommended curriculum. Teachers have worked hard to develop provision to a good standard, and overall teaching is good. Initial and end-of-year assessments are recorded in detail and indicate that children achieve well, and learning is good overall. However, in lessons where children have choices and move from activity to activity, systems are not clear as to how adults know which activities children have explored, nor how well they achieved them. For example, in one lesson in the reception class, children were offered a range of ten activities. Many tried to cover all these tasks in the time given, thus good quality time devoted to each task was limited. In such instances, adult interventions are also limited, and progress in these lessons while good for some is limited for others. Similarly, in a lesson in the nursery class, adults concentrated on supporting specific activities, and a number of children received little direct guidance in what they were doing. There was evidence that some groups of children chose to work on the 'play' activities, in preference to the guided tasks.

32. In the nursery and reception classes, teachers miss opportunities to monitor the on-going progress of individual children and this does not match the rigorous way that happens in the rest of the school. The target setting that results from these excellent procedures ensures that everyone is clear about what needs to be achieved and when it is successfully achieved. Over time, children in the Foundation Stage clearly make good progress, but day-to-day assessment to guide short-term planning for individual and specific groups of children is an area for improvement.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

33. St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School is delivering a very good standard of education to all its pupils. Pupils enjoy school, are happy and value the very good relationships they form with everyone in the school. The school has worked very hard to raise standards and improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

**In order to continue these improvements, the school recognises through its School Development Plan that it has further work to do. The only area of improvement identified by the inspection team is:**

**To ensure that day-to-day assessment of what children achieve in activities better informs daily planning in the nursery and reception classes by**

- a) Keeping systematic records of activities children take up
- b) ensuring that adult intervention guides learning appropriately
- c) noting how well children achieve in each task so that suitable targets are set for following lessons.

*(see paragraphs 18, 30 and 31)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	10	4	0	0	0
Percentage	8	36	40	16	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	219
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	16

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	59

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	16	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (93)	94 (93)	94 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	31	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (93)	97 (93)	100 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	16	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	15
	Girls	17	17	16
	Total	31	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (78)	100 (75)	100 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	31	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (72)	100 (75)	100 (84)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	174
Any other minority ethnic group	10

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	200/2001
	£
Total income	469602
Total expenditure	450336
Expenditure per pupil	1854
Balance brought forward from previous year	5371
Balance carried forward to next year	24637

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	254
Number of questionnaires returned	124

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	6	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	40	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	39	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	55	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	67	32	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	43	4	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	30	3	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	73	24	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	35	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	42	10	3	8