



St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104678
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 277204
Inspection dates 27 September 2005 to 28 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Bob Thompson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Montreal Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Netherley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Liverpool, Merseyside L27 7AG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 498 4313
Number on roll	200	Fax number	0151 487 3794
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Owen
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs P Melia

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is an average sized voluntary aided school for pupils aged three to 11. There are 184 pupils on roll, evenly split between boys and girls. The population is predominately White British with very few pupils of other heritages. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are high. Many pupils start school with much catching up to do, having low attainment. The school is situated in a very deprived social area, in the bottom 2.5 per cent of the country.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. This judgement matches the school's own view of itself and that of parents and pupils. Improvements since the last inspection bode well for the future. The headteacher, extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher, is inspirational, and the senior management team is providing very clear direction and support for staff. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively so that everyone is clear what needs to be done to improve the school even further. Pupils' progress is good overall, with some making very good progress. The school is very well placed to improve. Outstanding assessment procedures and systems are in place to help pupils reach their full potential. Senior staff and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas to improve. This is why the inspectors found that they agreed with the school's judgements. Children enter the Foundation Stage with well below average standards but through carefully planned programmes and good teamwork on the part of staff, they make good progress year on year. By the end of Year 6, standards in English match national standards. Mathematics and science are above national averages. This marks good improvement from 2004. Pupils progress well throughout Years 1 to 6 because of good teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a curriculum that is enhanced significantly by activities such as sports and musical activities, visits and visitors and residential experiences. Personal care and the safeguarding of pupils are excellent. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- Improving standards in English, particularly with regard to pupils' writing, to match those in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's evaluation that pupils make good progress is correct. They do so because they are taught well, enjoy school and are eager to learn. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low overall and is particularly low in communication, language, literacy and social skills. Children progress well in the Foundation Stage.

The school sets challenging targets and exceeds them. Overall pupils progress well from Year 1 to Year 6. Standards by the end of Year 2 are slightly below national expectations. By the end of Year 6 good progress has been made and standards in English match national averages. Standards in mathematics and science exceed national averages. This represents good improvement. The school recognises that last year's Year 6 were a particularly good group.

Overall, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. The school gives every sign of having improved the achievement of higher attaining pupils since 2004 but is

rightly continuing to watch this closely. Pupils are rightly proud that their standards in science and mathematics are very high. Different groups of pupils all make good progress over their time in the school and there are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children are confident, friendly and cooperative. They learn teamwork during lessons but also when playing team games or during residential visits. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children learn to talk about their feelings and about the wonders of God's world, for example when reception children observed a spider's web. They help to write class rules. They support the school community by being sensible and usually tidy. They support others by fund raising for charity. They are developing a good understanding of European cultures.

Children behave very well in the classroom and on the playground. They relate to each other well. They recognise that there is some 'name calling' and are pleased that it is usually dealt with promptly. Children take the responsibilities given them seriously. They like school and are keen to learn.

Children know how to stay safe, for instance when using the Internet or crossing the road. They also know a great deal about how to stay fit and healthy. They are prepared well for the next stage in their schooling because they have a positive attitude to learning and good literacy and numeracy skills.

Attendance is broadly satisfactory. There are good systems to monitor children's attendance. The school, through its learning mentor, works very hard with a minority of families whose children do not attend well and is beginning to have some success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good across the school and enables children to make good progress in their learning and personal development. This judgement reflects the school's own evaluation. Staff use praise and reward systems well to keep children interested in learning. Tasks are frequently well matched to children's attainments because staff assess children thoroughly and maintain useful records of progress. Resources, like a picture of a Roman baths or old toys, are used very well to help children appreciate history. Outstanding teaching in Year 6, which makes very good use of new technologies, enables children to make very positive progress in their final year. In some lessons, worksheets used fail to challenge children's writing skills sufficiently. Children value the way teachers mark their work, liking the comments on how to improve. Homework generally supports learning well. In the Foundation Stage teachers and support staff have a clearly defined role, working well together to benefit children's learning.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they receive good support from staff and their classmates. The needs of these children are met by giving them work on the same theme as the class but with tasks simplified.

Outstanding assessment systems monitor children's progress and set challenging school targets for them. Children's answers to examination questions are carefully analysed. Teachers make good use of this information to modify the curriculum and their teaching so as to make learning even more effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is well designed and relevant to children's needs. It fully meets statutory requirements. Learning programmes, such as that in geography, are modified to make them more meaningful to children. This approach is relatively new and the school is reviewing its effectiveness. It allows children to see why they need, and how they can use, their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Children enjoy and learn a great deal from the theme weeks, like 'Health and Fitness Week' and 'Passport to Europe'.

A very good range of extra-curricular clubs for all children includes sports, music and gardening. The school is frequently involved in inter-school sports competitions. A good series of educational visits and visitors broadens the children's understanding of the world. Older children develop their teamwork and problem solving skills during exciting residential visits to the Lake District.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. Parents and children agree that the school fully lives up to its motto of 'A caring environment'. Staff know the children, their families and the area very well and use this knowledge to encourage regular attendance and an enjoyment of learning. Children work hard towards challenging targets for both their behaviour and schoolwork. Children and parents are happy with the way that youngsters join the nursery class. Transfer to secondary schools is managed well, with the learning mentor playing an important supportive role.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are rigorous and frequently reviewed. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are fully in place and known to all staff. Children feel that they have someone to turn to if they have a problem. Vulnerable children are supported effectively and their progress is very carefully monitored.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides inspirational leadership. She and her senior management team are held in high regard by staff and parents. The headteacher, governors and

senior management team have provided high quality leadership and management since the last inspection. This has resulted in very good improvements being made.

Robust self-review and outstanding assessment procedures are in place. As a result, senior staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Governors comply fully with statutory requirements and provide a balance of challenge and support to senior managers.

Subject leaders are effective, monitoring pupils' progress well and taking action to secure improvements. They track individual pupils' progress, know their strengths and weakness and what to do next in order to improve which in turn enhances pupil progress. The school has joined the Netherley Valley mathematics group. This gives the mathematics co-ordinator an excellent opportunity to observe good practice in other schools, exchange ideas and raise standards in school.

The headteacher has a very 'hands on' approach and regularly visits lessons. She takes into account the views of children, parents and Governors and acts upon them. For example, since September 2005 the school has employed its own chef. As a result, the number of children taking school meals has increased dramatically. This has enhanced children's access to and understanding of healthy eating and living.

The senior management team is an enthusiastic and solid base for future development. Staff have focussed on raising standards and been extremely successful in doing so in mathematics and science. The school has identified accurately what it needs to do to continue raising standards

Children have a voice through the school council, which enhances their personal and citizenship development. Equal opportunities are prominent in the school's work and this is a school where 'everyone matters'. Because of the highly successful leadership and management, standards are rising and achievement strengthening. The school has very good capacity to improve.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know we recently visited you to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning.

Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was useful to know what you think about your school. We did enjoy having lunch with you and listening to some good advice on 'healthy eating'.

There are some things that we think are really good about your school. These are:

- The enthusiasm from you and your teachers in wanting to do well.
- The good progress you make in your work.
- How well your headteacher and teachers know you so that they can plan exciting activities and lessons that will challenge you to improve even more.
- The good start you are given to school life by all staff in the nursery and reception class.
- Those of you who need a little extra help in your work have someone to turn to.
- Your parents are happy with the school and all it does for you.
- Your behaviour is good and you are learning to be safe and have healthy life styles.

We have asked your teachers to help you improve your writing skills, so that you can set down your ideas more clearly.