



St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111327
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278657
Inspection dates 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sarah Drake CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Albert Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bollington
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01625 572037
Number on roll	91	Fax number	01625 562015
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Bernadette Beckett
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Clowes

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 26 June 2006 - 27 June 2006	Inspection number 278657
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Gregory's is a small school that serves the Roman Catholic community in a village to the east of Macclesfield. Very few pupils are eligible to receive a free school meal and the great majority are of White British heritage. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. Fewer numbers than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although a higher than average proportion has a statement of special educational need. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in January 2005, and there has recently been significant staff absence through ill health.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Gregory's is a caring school that provides a satisfactory quality of education and satisfactory value for money. Standards are above average but, due to unusually high staff absence and inconsistent teaching quality, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and show a mature sensitivity to others' needs which helps to create a happy community. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good, with pupils thriving in the interesting environment that invites investigation and fun. Teachers are committed to their pupils and plan suitable activities for them to do. However, they do not always ensure that these stretch all pupils nor do they always make sufficiently clear to pupils how to improve their work. Assessment systems are not yet used consistently through the school. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors, but older pupils do not cover all the required elements of information and communication technology (ICT), nor is this used sufficiently well across other subjects. Staff provide good quality care for pupils that helps them grow in confidence. Satisfactory leadership and management have guided the school through a difficult phase, but the newly introduced systems have yet to become embedded in practice. The school has a broad understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and accurately assessed its own overall effectiveness, but its more detailed evaluation of its provision is less secure. Good partnership with the local authority is helping to focus attention more acutely. Parents are supportive of the school and well involved in their children's learning. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Staff's determination to improve the provision and the suitable management systems now in place mean that the school has the capacity to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish consistent practice and teaching quality throughout the school.
- Ensure teachers follow the assessment and tracking procedures and use the information gained to plan for pupils' progress.
- Ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 receive the ICT coverage to which they are entitled.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good as judged by the school. Small numbers in each year group mean that attainment levels fluctuate, but most children enter the Reception year with skills that are at least in line with the expectations for their age. They make good progress and begin Year 1 with skills that are above expectations in all areas of learning. In the 2005 statutory tests, Year 2 pupils achieved exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at Key Stage 1 have been above average or better over the past four years. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but this slows when they reach Key Stage 2. In 2005, Year 6 pupils gained well above average results in English,

above average in science, but reached only average standards in mathematics. Their overall progress from Year 2 was satisfactory. The school exceeded its challenging targets in English, but failed to do so in mathematics. Trends over time have been above average, but not as significantly so as for Key Stage 1. Slower progress in Years 3 and 4 has a knock on effect on pupils' standards in Years 5 and 6. However, standards in mathematics are now similar to those in English with an above average proportion of Year 6 pupils working at the higher levels. Pupils' progress, including that of those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is now satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, rather than satisfactory. The school operates as a harmonious community in which pupils feel a genuine sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. Even the youngest pupils are tolerant of those who find self-discipline difficult and they offer helpful suggestions about how to make others feel better. Older pupils competently carry out their responsibilities as school councillors, recycling or road safety officers. They have been instrumental in, for example, introducing the friendship bench and increasing the football area so that playtimes are happy occasions for everyone. Pupils behave well. They generally collaborate well in lessons and are appreciative of their teachers' efforts to make learning fun. Their attendance is well above average. Pupils are very aware of how to live healthily and they act in a sensible, safe manner throughout the day. They take an active part in the community through, for instance, involvement in local festivals and are generous supporters of charitable fundraising. They have a good awareness of cultures other than their own and a curiosity to find out more about, for example, different countries involved in football's World Cup. Their good attitudes to learning and strong basic skills equip them well for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Frequent staff absence over the past year has led to lack of continuity which has had an impact on pupils' learning in most year groups, but particularly those in Years 3 and 4. Where teaching is good, work is suitably planned with a variety of activities that stretch those of different abilities. Lessons move at a good pace, teachers question skilfully, use subject specific language and make good use of the interactive whiteboards. They clarify the learning objectives of the lesson. As one pupil said, 'This helps you, because if you forget what you're doing, you can look back to it.' Pupils are willing learners; they concentrate well and think about their work. In less effective lessons, the pace slackens; higher ability pupils in particular spend too much time waiting for others to catch up and teachers allow pupils to do too little work.

In English, most teachers' marking provides helpful guidance for pupils, but this is not standard throughout the school or across other subjects. Where they do provide targets, these change rapidly and it is not always clear whether or not they have been achieved. Teaching, learning and assessment in the Foundation Stage are of good quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It largely complies with requirements and is suitably adapted to excite pupils' interest and encourage them to want to learn more. Good emphasis is placed on the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills with many different programmes, implemented by skilled teaching assistants, to support those who need an extra boost. The recently introduced precision spelling programme, which runs throughout the school, is having a good impact on pupils' written work. Personal and health education is suitably provided for, and pupils have opportunities to increase their understanding of the world of work. The Foundation Stage curriculum is much improved since the last inspection, encourages pupils to have fun and makes good use of the outside area to promote learning. The school acknowledges that a number of elements are missing from the ICT provision for Key Stage 2 pupils. The curriculum is enriched through, for example, visits, visitors such as a local poet and themed events, such as the One World week focus on Africa. Pupils enjoy the range of extra activities, including the gardening club that is run by a parent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support for its pupils. Parents and pupils alike praise the manner in which newcomers are welcomed and helped to settle. Pupils know that their concerns will be listened to and good relationships throughout the school help them to grow in self-confidence. Suitable arrangements promote health and safety. Procedures to ensure child protection and safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are in place. The walking bus, led by parents, supports pupils' healthy and safe living. Pupils, parents and staff have developed a good menu of healthy food at break and lunchtimes which pupils much enjoy. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are suitably supported, although record keeping is not always up to date. Teachers mostly assess pupils' work on a termly basis but, as yet, they do not all monitor pupils' progress on a sufficiently regular basis to highlight areas of weakness at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staffing difficulties have meant that proposed improvements in provision have taken longer to establish than intended. However, with help from the local authority, through the primary leadership partnership, suitable systems are now in place to provide a sound basis on which to move forward.

The school knows its areas of weakness, and has tackled sensitive problems with determination. Development planning identifies suitable areas for improvement. Provision for Foundation Stage children has improved well since the last inspection. Recently introduced systems mean that it will now be possible to build up a picture of individual pupils' progress through the school and thus identify areas requiring greater support or challenge. Staff are working as a team, keen to improve their practice and beginning to take joint responsibility for pupils' progress and the standards achieved in national tests. Subject leaders are beginning to monitor provision in their areas of responsibility, but it has not been possible to do so for every class. Resources are adequate with recent investments in ICT strengthening the provision here. Sound financial management ensures that the school keeps within its budget and has improved its accommodation over recent years. Despite high levels of staff absence, the school runs smoothly with administrative and caretaking staff making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Governance is satisfactory, with governors becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities relating to pupils' academic achievement as well as management of resources. Parents are supportive and contribute their ideas to help school improvement, but, rightly, are concerned over the upheavals of the past year. The school has the capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

Thank you for being so friendly and polite to me when I visited you recently. I enjoyed my time at your school and consider that you are very lucky to have such lovely grounds in which to work and play. Here is a list of other things that I was pleased to see in your school:

- you form good relationships with each other and are very thoughtful about looking after other people and helping to improve the school
- you behave well so that your school is a happy community
- you enjoy learning, have very good attendance and try hard with your work
- visits, visitors and extra activities bring your learning to life
- pupils in Class 1 have lots of fun and make good progress
- teachers look after you well and you know a lot about keeping healthy.

I know that there have been lots of changes this year which has been very unsettling for you and members of staff. This is what I have asked your school to do next to help you make better progress:

- ensure that you receive consistent, good quality teaching
- carefully monitor the progress you make as you move through the school and take action if you are not moving forward as swiftly as you are able to
- make sure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover all the areas that they should in ICT.

Your job will be to continue to enjoy learning and work hard.