

St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101923
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	286225
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maura Lyons
Headteacher	Mr Terry Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
School address	Woodfield Road Ealing London W5 1SL
Telephone number	020 8997 7550
Fax number	020 8810 6506

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school with a Nursery. Pupils come from mainly average social and economic circumstances and they join the school with above expected skills and capabilities. There are relatively few pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is well above the national figure. The headteacher took up post in September 2006. At the time of the last inspection, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management.

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 an improving school which provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The school's previous designation of having serious weaknesses no longer applies. Since his appointment, the headteacher has successfully united staff and governors who are now working together with a shared vision for the school. He provides good leadership and has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on thorough monitoring and self-evaluation. Several new initiatives have been put in place to improve the education the school provides and check on pupils' progress. As a result, the school's capacity to make the necessary improvements is good.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage where teachers plan a very good range of stimulating work. The very good balance between independent tasks and activities led by adults helps pupils to develop their social skills and confidence. Parents rightly praise this area of the school's work. One wrote, 'My daughter has made huge strides in confidence and ability in the wonderful Nursery and seems engaged and enthusiastic about Reception so far.'

Achievement is satisfactory, based on satisfactory teaching and a sound curriculum. Standards had been well above average by the end of Year 6 over recent years. In 2006, standards fell, although they were still above average. One of the main reasons for the decline was a lack of pupil assessment and tracking data. Standards improved in 2007. Pupils met their targets in English and mathematics as a result of improvement in the collection and use of data. However, there is more to do to make sure this information is used consistently well to prepare the next steps in pupils' learning. Progress is inconsistent as pupils move through the years because the quality of teaching varies significantly. Senior and middle leaders are not yet fully part of the monitoring process and, consequently, the quality of teaching is not scrutinised regularly enough to identify areas for further improvement quickly.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and to the local community. Links with the local abbey, as well as opportunities to take on responsibility in school, help pupils develop good social skills and grow in confidence. Despite the unease of some parents, pupils spoke positively about the newly formed classes in Years 3 to 5. As a pupil wisely explained, 'I've lots of new friends now and it gets us ready to go to secondary school when we'll have to get on with new people'. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and nearly two thirds walk or ride to school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as consistently above average attendance and their top place on the 2007 local authority attendance tables show. Behaviour is generally good and most pupils have good attitudes to learning.

The quality of pastoral care is good and contributes well to pupils' self-confidence and security. Academic care and guidance is satisfactory because new systems to check pupils' progress have not been in place long enough to ensure that they are making as much progress as they can.

Though some parents are apprehensive about some of the changes the school is making, many made a point of writing to confirm their confidence in the recently appointed headteacher.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enjoy learning and make very good progress to reach well above average standards by the start of Year 1. The outstanding curriculum in both Nursery and Reception links all areas

of learning and planned activities provide practical hands on experiences. For example, children in the Nursery handled a variety of vegetables observing colour, texture and size. Opportunities to act out the 'Enormous Beetroot' story and then make vegetable soup brought the curriculum to life. Children's early literacy and numeracy skills are promoted extremely well and teaching assistants are used effectively to extend learning. Children with learning difficulties are identified early and receive very good support. Those learning English as an additional language make very good progress because the teachers know their learning needs and address them very well. Through strong teamwork, transition to Year 1 is sensitively planned so that children move easily to the next stage of their education. However, there is no covered outside area for Reception classes and only a small area for Nursery. As a result, use of outdoor spaces for learning is limited in wet weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that they reflect the school's best practice in order make progress good across the school.
- Extend the role of senior managers and subject leaders so they become systematically involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and raising standards.
- Ensure that the assessment and tracking systems are used effectively in all subjects to match work consistently to the needs of the pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their starting points, pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Because of exemplary planning and thoughtful teaching, children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. Progress across the rest of the school is only satisfactory overall because there are considerable variations in achievement between classes. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 where standards have risen steadily over recent years and are above the national average. As a result of specific targeted work and support, standards are good by the end of Year 6 and meet challenging targets. However, school data shows that some pupils in other years are not making the progress of which they are capable. While there has not been enough time to see the effectiveness of the steps taken to address this, the school has nevertheless set itself ambitious targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Support, though sometimes good, is not consistently well planned to meet their needs. Pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and generally reach standards in line with similar pupils nationally as a result of the specific support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. The Catholic culture permeates the whole school and helps pupils to think carefully about spirituality. Pupils are polite, confident and keen to learn. Relationships with staff and among the pupils are strong. Lunch and break times are well managed by older pupils who are trained playground buddies. Behaviour is very good around the school, although a minority do not behave as well in lessons when the teaching

is just satisfactory. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe, know why it is important to stay fit and healthy and have taken part in healthy lifestyle workshops. Very high numbers of pupils participate in after-school sports clubs. Good standards in numeracy and literacy prepare pupils well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A number of parents voiced concerns regarding consistency in teaching and learning across classes. Senior staff now monitor the quality of provision and provides targeted professional support to colleagues. This is beginning to have an impact but the quality of teaching and learning remains too variable across the school. Consequently, pupils are not making consistently good progress throughout the school. In some classes, teaching is lively and moves learning along at a good pace. Pupils say they enjoy working with partners and talking about what they are learning. In other lessons, tasks are not always well matched to what pupils are expected to learn and pupils have limited opportunities to take an active part. As a result, the rate of learning slows and, in these classes, the behaviour of pupils is not consistently good. The quality of marking is variable and does not always make clear to pupils how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Theme days bring the curriculum to life. For example, in history pupils in Year 4 dress in costume and experience life as Tudors. The curriculum for personal, social, health and emotional development is good because it is well planned and encourages strong personal skills. After-school clubs extend the curriculum well. For example, good links with a local football club help pupils to develop teamwork and sporting skills. The school also has a popular choir and the orchestra performs regularly at the local abbey.

The curriculum is balanced and meets statutory requirements. However, it is not yet fully effective in ensuring good progress throughout the school. This is due to some variation in teachers' planning. Although teaching staff now plan together closely with senior staff, work is not consistently well matched to the needs of pupils. As a result, it does not make sufficient impact on pupils' progress. Opportunities for pupils to make creative and practical use of their literacy, numeracy and computing skills in other subjects are missed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of pastoral care is good and parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils are in no doubt they can report their concerns to an adult and that they will be dealt with effectively. Good links with the local Catholic community and local schools provide positive additional support and expertise. However, academic guidance and support systems have only been recently established. Data is not used consistently well enough to enable pupils to make good rather than satisfactory progress in all classes. Some teachers are not able to identify quickly enough where pupils' progress has not been as good as it could be. As a result, planning for the next steps in learning is not consistently well matched to the needs of all learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head teacher has made a significant impact on the school since starting in September 2006. New systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and check pupils' progress ensure the school has an accurate view of its strengths and where developments are needed. Teaching is inconsistent but the school is taking effective action to improve this. Although the use of data is inconsistent across the school, teachers are beginning to use their knowledge of how well pupils are doing to set clear targets for improvement. The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle subject leaders have been clarified in the past year and they are now clearly focused on achievement in their areas. However, they have not had time to play a strategic leadership role in helping teachers to improve pupils' achievement.

Governors supported the school well through a transition period. They have a much improved understanding of the need to monitor the work of the school and are developing their role in challenging the school to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School, London, W5 1SL

Thank you for making us so welcome and telling us your thoughts about your school when we came to visit. You were very polite and friendly and this helped us to learn a lot about your work and your school. St Gregory's is providing a satisfactory education. This means we have found some good things in the school but also some things to improve. These are some of the things we found out.

- Teaching in Nursery and Reception classes is very good and helps the youngest children to settle quickly and learn very well.
- You attend school very regularly and have won an award from the local authority in 2007 for the best attendance.
- You try hard in lessons and enjoy practical activities.
- Most of you behave sensibly in class and around the school.
- The school makes sure that everyone feels safe and happy.
- Mr Cooper has made several changes since he became headteacher and he is leading these developments well.

We have asked teachers to carry on working hard to make lessons better so that even more lessons are good ones which will help you learn more quickly.

The staff are helping Mr Cooper to make the school even better and we would like the other leading staff in the school to do even more to check up on the quality of all the work the school is doing.

We have also asked the teachers to analyse all the information the school collects about the standards you have reached to make sure you are making good progress all the time.

You will be able to help your school improve by continuing to try hard in lessons and sharing your views about the school through your school council. We left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector