



St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119673
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291499
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Eaves Green Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Chorley, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		PR7 3QG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01257 263865
Number on roll (school)	190	Fax number	01257 234181
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Gerard Gallagher
		Headteacher	Mrs Linda Caswell
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	9–10 January 2007	291499

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Gregory's is a smaller than average Roman Catholic primary school. The school serves an area with broadly average social and economic characteristics. Three pupils who speak English as an additional language joined the school in December. Otherwise all pupils are English speaking and a below average number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's attainment when they start school is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Gregory's is a good school and provides good value for money. The great majority of parents are very pleased with the school and praise the staff, the ethos and the standards their children attain. One parent wrote, 'my child says the only thing wrong with school is that it's closed at the weekends.' All staff are dedicated and work hard to establish a caring community where every member of the school is valued equally. They present excellent role models. Christian values underpin the work of the school and the simple mission statement 'be kind, be fair, be honest' is known and understood by every child. Pupils enjoy their learning and behaviour is exemplary. A secure environment has been created, which allows children to gain sufficient confidence to express their feelings and opinions well. All necessary child protection safeguards are in place. Pupils take a full and active part in school decision-making and wholeheartedly embrace the process of making school a happy, healthy environment. The pupils have a strong sense of social and community responsibility, although their knowledge and understanding of multi-cultural Britain is limited.

Standards are above average. They have risen in all areas of learning during the last two years and pupils of all ages achieve well. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified early and are enabled to achieve well. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for future learning and life. This is the result of good teaching and learning, a strong curriculum and some outstanding assessment practices. Stimulating, creative and imaginative lessons fire the enthusiasm of the pupils, who are willing and co-operative learners. Assessment guides teachers planning and pupils are fully involved in judging their own work. The curriculum is rich and varied with an emphasis on enjoyment and enquiry. Special activity weeks are a particular strength. Nevertheless, stronger links between subjects could be developed to provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop their good basic skills. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Imaginative and inspirational teaching ensures that pupils are stimulated and enjoy their learning through a wide range of experiences. Activities are carefully planned to ensure that all elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered. Good use is made of indoor and outdoor spaces. Children enjoy their learning and are eager to share their new experiences. Assessment systems are excellent and ensure that all children make good progress through all areas of learning.

Leadership and management of the school are good and give the school a strong sense of purpose and direction. Effective monitoring ensures that the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas where improvement can be made. There has been good progress since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more opportunities for pupils to learn about multi-cultural Britain.
- Strengthen links between subjects so that pupils use and develop their basic skills more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all ages achieve well and reach standards that are above average.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Moreover, their confidence is boosted particularly by the excellent gains they make in personal, social and emotional development. By the time they move into Year 1, children are working securely at, or above, the expected levels for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in national tests fell slightly in 2005 but were still above average. Standards rose in 2006, with a higher percentage of pupils gaining the better than average Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards are above average in Year 6. This was reflected in the 2005 national test results. Pupils performed well and exceeded the challenging targets set by the school. In 2006, more pupils reached the better than average Level 5 than ever before in English and science, many of them going beyond expectations. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are above average. Girls perform slightly better than boys but by no more than the difference nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because of the excellent care and support they receive from teachers and support assistants. The new pupils who learn English as an additional language have settled into school well and are already making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Starting in the Foundation Stage, they quickly grow in confidence and independence and develop caring attitudes. As a result, pupils are well prepared for future schooling and life. Excellent moral and social development means there is no evidence of racism or bullying and behaviour is exemplary. Very good attitudes to learning and school and above average attendance are clear evidence of high levels of enjoyment. Pupils know it is important to keep healthy and they feel safe in school. Excellent spiritual development is promoted by joyous assemblies and the close relationship with the local church where pupils act as servers at Mass and some play musical instruments or read for the service. Cultural development is good, particularly pupils' knowledge and understanding of local traditions. Furthermore, they experience creative elements of cultural education although their knowledge of other faiths and cultures is limited. Pupils contribute to their community in numerous ways, such as managing the selling of fruit or toast at morning break and through the work of the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding practice. School rightly reviewed teaching quality recently and, as a result, the accurate analysis of assessments has led to detailed and targeted planning of lessons. The introduction of more formalised assessment coincides with an improvement in standards and achievement. This is because teachers are able to focus their teaching more accurately on the wide range of abilities and different needs of the pupils in their care. Pupils achieve well because they enjoy learning in the imaginative and well planned lessons. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to participate in the planning of their learning. They clearly understand their targets and how, by focusing their efforts on identified areas for improvement, they are empowered to improve standards and progress.

Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team and support those who need additional help very well. This includes those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as more able pupils. School has identified the need to link the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, together with ICT, in other areas of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with a particularly strong emphasis on its contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, future academic well-being is supported through the strong promotion of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Teachers make learning enjoyable and interesting and are creative in the way they approach the curriculum. The emphasis is on excitement and enjoyment, challenge and enquiry. Special activity weeks where the focus is on different subjects such as science, mathematics, literacy and history provide wider opportunities for learning. This practice could be extended further to develop more frequent links across the curriculum. The school provides a very good range of sporting, musical and creative extra-curricular activities, which pupils enjoy. Pupils in Year 6 eagerly participate in an annual residential activity holiday. The curriculum is further enhanced by links with external providers, such as authors, artists, teachers from the local secondary school and coaches from Bolton Wanderers football club and Lancashire cricket club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school gives pupils an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. This is a community where every member of the school is valued equally. Pupils gain sufficient confidence to express their feelings and opinions well. Close links with a range of

outside agencies enable pupils who experience learning, behavioural and emotional problems to receive excellent care. Child protection measures and effective risk assessments are robust. There is an effective personal, social and health education programme, which contributes to the pupils' excellent personal development. Guidance for pupils is based on thorough, careful assessment and they all have targets that guide their learning and help to raise standards. Pupils are involved in the setting of those targets and are aware that if they work hard they will achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and this is reflected in the school's thorough and accurate self-evaluation. The experienced and highly caring head teacher is a strong leader, supported by a dynamic deputy head and other key staff. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The inspirational leadership of the Foundation Stage motivates staff and children alike and results in the high standard of provision seen throughout this early learning stage. School improvement planning is effective. All the staff work closely together as a team through sharing information and joint decision-making. This sharing of good practice, whole-school initiatives such as the recent focus on assessment, and the careful monitoring of every pupil's progress have led to rising standards across the school. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to learn and enjoy school. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored well and staff benefit from training to improve their teaching of skills. The positive ethos of the school results in excellent personal development. Governors support the school well and show a thorough knowledge of its strengths and areas still to improve. They are beginning to act as a critical friend and ask challenging questions.

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Eaves Green Road

Chorley

Lancashire

PR7 3QG

9 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school this week. Although we were only with you two days, we really enjoyed meeting you and finding out about the work you do. St Gregory's is a good school and we can understand why you like it so much.

These are the things we particularly liked about your school:

- the excellent quality of the work going on in Reception
- your enjoyment and enthusiasm for all the many activities you do
- the way in which everyone looks after each other and no-one feels lonely or left out
- the way in which the older pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, give up their time to help around school with lots of jobs
- teachers make learning fun and you listen carefully to all that they say
- the way in which you are all involved in assessing your work and the work of your friends
- adults take very good care of you and make sure you are safe
- you behave extremely well in class and try hard
- you have a really good understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe.

We also looked at what the school might do next. Here are some of the things we suggested:

- give you more opportunities to learn about the many different kinds of people who live in Britain
- give you lots of opportunities to use and develop your good basic skills in all the subjects that you do.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw (Lead Inspector) and Jennifer Taylor (Team Inspector)