

# St Gregory's RC Primary School, Farnworth, Bolton

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105244
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308809
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Ann Barker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Maloney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Presto Street Farnworth Bolton Lancashire BL4 8AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 332658
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated in an urban area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The school holds Investor in People status, and Healthy School and Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which the personal development and the care and support for pupils are strengths. Parents value the education it provides and many comment on how approachable the teachers are and how caring the school is. 'My child loves going to school. I am pleased with the way the school takes care of the children. It is like a big family,' are typical comments. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and offers satisfactory value for money.

Pupils are happy and welcoming to visitors. Good relationships exist at all levels and these encourage pupils to behave well. The school has a caring and welcoming atmosphere. It provides a happy and safe place for pupils to learn. Pupils say they enjoy school and talk in glowing terms about how 'how helpful and caring our teachers are'. They are very health conscious. They are proud that their school has gained the Healthy School and Activemark awards because, in their words, 'This shows how much we do to be healthy.' It was a pleasure to see younger pupils brushing their teeth vigorously after lunch. As they say, 'We do this every day to look after our teeth so they don't go bad.' Pupils enjoy raising money for local charities in their community. They also enjoy the range of opportunities they have to take positions of responsibility by becoming buddies and monitors, for example. By the time they leave school, pupils are self-confident and articulate young people looking forward to the challenges of the next stages in their education.

Pupils' achievement as they move through the school varies greatly because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In Years 1 and 2 good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and attain above average standards from broadly average starting points. In Years 3 to 6, however, the variable quality of teaching means that the rate of progress pupils make in different classes is inconsistent. 'How well we learn depends on which teacher we have and how interesting the lessons are. Our teacher this year is great because lessons are fun but in other years the teachers have talked too much and we had to listen too much,' was a telling comment on the quality of teaching. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are broadly average, although in English and mathematics standards have dipped over the last two years and are not as high as they should be. Better achievement is also hampered by a lack of rigour in the school's procedures for using assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and the impact of teaching on learning. The school is addressing these issues by reorganising staffing in Key Stage 2 as well as by developing its procedures for using assessment data and linking them more closely to performance management. It is too early for the impact of these initiatives to be felt.

The headteacher is exceptionally committed to the welfare of the pupils and knows them all very well as individuals. An influx of new teachers over the last three years is helping to reinvigorate the leadership and management of the school. Teachers are eager to take on responsibilities and develop their expertise. Increasingly, the headteacher is able to delegate responsibilities and is confident people will get on with the job. This is giving him more time and opportunity to focus on strategic planning and concentrate on raising standards and achievement further. As a result, forward planning has improved and is now firmly focused on tackling barriers to raising standards and achievement. This is giving the school satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage which they enter with skills and knowledge generally in line with those expected for their age. Good personal, social and emotional provision enables children to develop positive attitudes and helps them settle quickly. They enjoy coming to school and behave well. The rate of progress in some areas of learning is variable because not enough opportunities are given for independent learning to take place. The cramped and uninviting outdoor provision is under utilised. This restricts learning opportunities significantly. Satisfactory leadership of the Foundation Stage recognises the need for a less structured curriculum and improved outdoor provision. Monitoring of children's progress helps staff set appropriate tasks, although they do not always take full advantage of the opportunity to develop children's speaking skills during adult-led activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the range of indoor and outdoor activities in the Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities for independent learning.
- Improve achievement and raise standards in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Make the quality of teaching and learning more consistently effective, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Make the use of assessment more rigorous and effective in tracking pupils' progress and in monitoring the impact of teaching on their achievement.

A small proportion of the schools where 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

Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Although it is never less than satisfactory, the rate of progress dips in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is of inconsistent quality. In 2007 standards in science rose significantly because teachers focused on motivating pupils more by doing more practical scientific activities and experiments in lessons. The school recognises the need now to raise standards further in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils' work and school data show that pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and are on track to meet challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The school recognises the need to track pupils' progress more rigorously to evaluate targeted support to better meet pupils' needs.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. It is underpinned by strong Christian values which give pupils a firm understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' awareness of other cultures and religions is good because of activities such as culture weeks and multi-faith assemblies. Pupils are involved in contributing to a variety of local and national charities. Pupils say that they enjoy school. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' good behaviour contributes very well to the school's caring environment. Pupils feel

safe in school and have confidence in approaching adults to help them solve any problems. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. They value the school council as a way of giving voice to their opinions. However, pupils feel that elections for membership of the council should be more regular to make its members more accountable. Standards of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and this means that pupils are in a satisfactory position to develop the skills needed for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The reorganised deployment of teachers in Key Stage 2 means that the good teaching in the present Year 6 class is impacting positively on standards and achievement. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons carefully but some do not use assessment information on pupils' progress effectively to set work that is challenging enough. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In the stronger lessons teachers accurately assess pupils' progress and guide learning well, which motivates pupils and helps them to make good progress. The use of teaching assistants to support learning is satisfactory. In some lessons opportunities are missed for teaching assistants to provide more active support. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their comments strive to make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The vocabulary in the comments, however, is sometimes beyond the comprehension of some of the pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with an appropriate emphasis placed on basic skills in mathematics, English and ICT. The introduction of more practical activities in science has led not only to greater enjoyment of the subject but improved standards and achievement. The school has started to link subjects across the curriculum by developing its creative curriculum. Although it is too early for the impact of this to be felt, pupils say that it is adding to their enjoyment of lessons. Pupils' learning is enriched by a range of visits and visitors. They really enjoy the pre-school breakfast club activities in which large numbers take part. This clearly promotes enjoyment and adds to their healthy development. Many pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as sports.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care is at the heart of the school. Procedures for protecting children are in place. Policies and procedures for health and safety and risk assessments are comprehensive and reviewed regularly. Transition arrangements into the Foundation Stage are good and ensure that children settle quickly and smoothly into school life. There is good liaison with the local high school so that Year 6 pupils feel confident and optimistic about the move to secondary education. The school works effectively with a range of outside agencies to support children when specific difficulties are identified. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage. Appropriate intervention and support are put in place but impact on achievement and progress is not evaluated rigorously enough. Some pupils are aware of their targets and what they need

to do to reach them. However, this is not always the case, with the result that some pupils do not know how well they are doing or what they need to do to make better progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is working in challenging social and economic circumstances. The headteacher has consequently put pastoral care and pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's activities. The headteacher and all the adults in the school know the pupils well. Strong links with the local community have been established through the school's close connections with the church. These strengths have contributed to the good personal development of pupils but this has been achieved at the expense of a sharp enough focus on pupils' academic progress. Pupils are well behaved, interested and keen to do well. Although achievement is satisfactory, they could make better progress and attain higher standards. Leaders and managers recognise this. Their focus is now firmly fixed on raising standards and achievement further. Procedures for self-evaluation have improved and now include the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents. As a result the school is far more accurately identifying its strengths and areas for development. Subject coordinators are keen to develop their areas and are being given the necessary training. They welcome the extra responsibilities they are being given and are eager to help the school move forward. Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors carry out their required duties and support the school's work. They appreciate the importance of achievement and standards and are learning to hold the school more to account in this area.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3
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	3

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you. What you told us helped us to find out how well your school is doing.

We think your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. We think it is doing a good job in caring for you and helping you grow into responsible and confident young people by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. We were impressed with how well you behave and how well you all get along together in lessons and at playtimes. To make your school an even more successful one there are four important things we think it needs to do:

- provide the children in Reception with better outdoor facilities and a wider range of activities to help them learn better
- help you make more progress and achieve higher standards in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- concentrate on improving teaching in Years 3 to 6 better
- check your progress more closely so that your teachers can see what they need to do to help you make even more progress.

We are confident that you will continue to work hard and help your teachers bring about these improvements to help your school go from strength to strength.