

# St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118783
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313087
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Taylor

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	325
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shura Newton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Nash Road Margate CT9 4BU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 221896
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 225768

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils in this large school are White British. A small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but few are at the early stages of learning English. The uptake of free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Investors in People Awards. An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are currently in post.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It has a number of strengths, including a strong Christian and family ethos and a very happy, welcoming atmosphere.

The school works very well with parents and carers. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Parents particularly appreciate the school's open-door policy and staff's caring approach. A few rightly judge that their children could be stretched to attain higher standards. Standards reached at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Those at the end of Year 6, however, have been declining. They dipped sharply in 2007 and were well below average in English, mathematics and science. This represented significant underachievement for many pupils in Year 6 last year. This arose because historically, the school has been too slow to tackle its weaknesses, especially those in teaching and pupils' progress.

The school started to tackle its weaknesses more rigorously during the last academic year, although this was too late to raise standards for the oldest pupils. The most marked improvements to date are in the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and subject leadership, which are all satisfactory. For example, mathematics teaching is much improved, and greater attention is now given to developing pupils' skills in writing, speaking, listening and scientific enquiry. The school's expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving have also started to rise, and pupils' progress has begun to accelerate. Current standards and achievement are therefore satisfactory, though pupils in Year 6 still have a great deal of catching up to do if they are to reach the expected standards by the end of the year.

Although there are strengths in teaching in all classes, and now a significant level of good teaching, there is still some lack of challenge and tasks do not consistently meet the needs of the wide range of pupils' abilities. Furthermore, marking is not thorough enough to guide pupils towards improvement.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage and strong pastoral care ensure that pupils quickly settle into school, feel safe and secure, and are very well supported to overcome any personal difficulties. Staff have established strong links with other schools, organisations and the local community. These, along with good after-school activities, visits and visitors ensure that pupils' personal development is good and that they enjoy school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also promoted well, therefore, pupils develop confidence, work cooperatively together, form strong friendships and behave well.

External support and training for the school's leaders, has strengthened the overall leadership. The quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to continue to improve are both satisfactory. Subject managers and senior leaders have made many positive improvements. As yet, they do not always evaluate critically enough the impact of these improvements on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the school's evaluation of its own performance is over-generous in a number of key areas. The governing body is not currently meeting in full one of its statutory responsibilities to carry out and record all of the necessary safeguarding checks.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good provision and very effective links with parents enable children in Nursery and Reception to settle quickly into the daily routines and make good progress. Staff's strong focus on personal

and social skills means children gain independence, work well together and acquire good patterns of learning and behaviour. The emphasis on communication, language and literacy supports all children to make good progress, including those whose skills are well below average on entry and a small number who are new to learning English. Teaching and learning are good in both Nursery and Reception. Staff quickly get to know children and their learning needs. They have high expectations of them and check their progress regularly. Indoor and outdoor activities are interesting, challenging and exciting. Consequently, children are very keen to attend. As one parent said, 'My son loves Nursery and really misses it at weekends!' A weakness in provision is that staff in Nursery and Reception do not regularly work and plan together. This limits opportunities to ensure that the fairly recently established Nursery becomes an integral part of the school's overall provision.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- ensure that the necessary safeguarding checks are quickly completed and that up-to-date records are maintained
- in order to raise standards further, ensure that pupils are consistently challenged, that work is routinely adapted to meet the wide range of pupils' abilities, and that marking provides regular feedback to pupils about how they might improve
- develop greater rigour in the way that senior leaders and subject leaders monitor the impact of their actions on pupils' learning and progress, so that they can take decisive action to tackle the school's remaining weaknesses.

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**

Attainment on entry is below that usually found. Improved Foundation Stage provision, combined with the opening of the school Nursery, means that standards at the end of Reception are rising. In 2007, the majority of children reached at least the expected standards. Over time, pupils have been making steady progress during Years 1 and 2, and standards at the end of Year 2 have been fairly stable. In 2007, reading, mathematics and science standards were broadly average, but they were below average in writing. Progress during Years 3 to 6 has not been consistent. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have therefore declined, and were well below average in 2007. Progress across all three subjects was inadequate for pupils in Year 6 last year. Staff are working determinedly to improve standards and accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school. Evidence gained from current work and assessments shows progress for all pupils is improving. It is satisfactory overall and good in some year groups.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well, act responsibly and are polite and friendly. They told inspectors how much they enjoy lessons and really appreciate the very good facilities, for example 'the nice classrooms', 'large grounds', 'enormous fields and nature reserve'. Pupils develop very good relationships with adults and one another. Consequently, they feel safe and secure and work well together. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, supported by the strong focus on healthy eating, fitness and exercise. They make a very good contribution to

the school and wider community. For example, they act as peer mediators, take an active lead in supporting charities, and get involved in many community and parish events. Pupils contribute well to decision-making through the very active school council. They generally work hard and try hard, though in most classes a few pupils do not take enough care with the presentation of their work. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not yet good enough to prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In some year groups, good teaching is helping to improve standards quickly but this is not yet a consistent picture throughout the school. General strengths in all of the teaching include teachers' good subject knowledge, careful preparation, classroom organisation and use of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The main reason why pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress is that tasks are not always matched closely enough to the wide range of pupils' abilities in every class. As a result, lessons do not always build effectively on pupils' previous learning. There are also weaknesses in the way teachers mark pupils' work. Although comments in pupils' books are often encouraging, teachers do not consistently pinpoint mistakes, guide pupils toward improvements and challenge them to work to their full capabilities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum in Nursery and Reception is broad and exciting. That in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, with a number of strengths and recent improvements that are beginning to promote faster progress and improve pupils' basic skills. The curriculum now provides good opportunities for practical activities and speaking and listening. It promotes pupils' enjoyment and fitness, and their spiritual and cultural development well. Clear links between subjects are emerging and staff also make good use of the local environment, amenities, visits, and visitors. ICT provision has improved since the last inspection, and this is helping to raise standards.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Parents say that their children are well cared for, commenting on the 'warm welcome', 'caring environment', and children being 'treated as individuals'. Good induction procedures and the 'buddy' system enable children joining the Foundation Stage and other year groups to settle quickly. Pupils in Year 6 confidently approach secondary transfer because they participate fully in events organised by their own school and the local secondary schools. Pupils and families are very well supported to resolve any personal difficulties. The family liaison officer makes a significant contribution in this regard. In most respects, child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are robust.

Key weaknesses in academic guidance have contributed to the declining progress and standards. However, new systems have been put in place which are beginning to improve progress and increase pupils' awareness of what they are expected to learn and their targets for improvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Senior leaders have gained the confidence of staff, governors and parents and are building effectively on the improvements that had already been started prior to their appointment. Their regular evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning are generally accurate. Improved use of data is beginning to help the school identify more quickly pupils at risk of underachievement, and to put interventions in place to help them catch up. Targets set for all pupils are now appropriately challenging, but those historically set for pupils in Year 6 are too low. Subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and ICT are skilled, knowledgeable and generally proactive. They have done much to improve provision and staff skills, but have not yet fully evaluated the impact of these improvements on pupils' learning, standards and progress. Governors are fully involved and very supportive. They have not, however, in the past, always been successful in challenging the school about weaknesses in standards and pupils' progress.

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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	2
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	2
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?	No
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**

16 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate CT9 4BU

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you.

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is a satisfactory school which ensures you make satisfactory progress.

These are the school's strengths:

- those of you who are in Nursery and Reception make good progress
- you behave well, are keen to learn and work well together, which really helps to make your school a happy place
- teaching is satisfactory and in some classes you are taught well
- the staff provide many interesting activities for you to do, which ensures you really enjoy school
- adults take good care of you, support you well and listen to your views.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make your school better:

- help you to improve the standard of your work by making sure teaching is always challenging and that marking gives you more information about how you can improve your work
- improve the way the school checks how well it is helping all of you to make better progress.

You can help by working hard.

With very best wishes

Kathryn Taylor Lead Inspector

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Kathryn Taylor  
Lead Inspector