

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103721
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	323887
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	180
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McCann
Headteacher	Ina Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Harry Rose Road Coventry CV2 5AT
Telephone number	02476 445900

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Inspection number	323887

Fax number

02476 650274

Age group 4-11

Inspection dates 12-13 May 2009

Inspection number 323887

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Gregory's Primary School is smaller than average. One third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and two thirds are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language at home is below the national average. A few pupils are at the early stages of acquiring the language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. The on-site Pilgrim Care Club caters for the school's pupils before and after school. It is managed by the governors. The headteacher has been in post for two terms.

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 satisfactory school. Achievement is satisfactory and currently standards are average when pupils leave school at the end of Year 6. Children's achievement in the Reception class is satisfactory and improving. The new headteacher has made a good start in identifying areas for improvement and staff enthusiastically share her determination to raise standards. Although it is too early to judge the overall effectiveness of the plans she has initiated, there are signs that some aspects of the school are getting better.

Pupils thrive and grow into mature young people in the school's friendly ethos. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults, and behave well. They feel very safe and enjoy all aspects of school. They show good levels of independence and their personal development is good.

Parents are supportive of the school. One wrote, 'My daughter likes school very much. She comes home full of smiles ready to share all the new facts she has learned with the family.' Another said, 'The school has made a very positive contribution to my child's enthusiasm for learning. She is growing in confidence because she is encouraged to take risks, to be creative and to challenge ideas.'

Although a minority of parents wrote to say that their child's progress could be quicker, there are signs of improvement. Teaching and learning is satisfactory but the level of challenge is not consistently high enough to ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, regularly make good progress. However, there are indications that teaching is improving. For example, pupils now have many opportunities to discuss and clarify their ideas in groups to develop their understanding and this is accelerating their progress.

The satisfactory curriculum supports aspects of pupils' personal development well and the many clubs and educational visits widen pupils' horizons and add to their enjoyment of school. Teachers know their pupils well and use this information effectively to provide a good standard of pastoral care. The Pilgrim Care Club provides a safe and secure family atmosphere for those who attend. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English receive appropriate support, which enables them to take a full part in all school activities. The school uses outside agencies well to support pupils' learning and welfare. Care, guidance and support are only satisfactory overall because the advice given to pupils about how they can improve their work is not always detailed enough, although it is satisfactory.

Subject leaders are working hard to improve standards and provide the headteacher with enthusiastic support. However, some are new in post and are not yet taking sufficient responsibility for ensuring that progress is consistently good in their areas of responsibility, and this means leadership and management overall is satisfactory. The record of recent improvements shows the school has a satisfactory capacity to get better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's skills and experiences on entry to Reception are below those typically expected for their age. They have declined over the past three years because the numbers of pupils who start school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased. Children's learning moves on at a satisfactory pace and, by the time they start Year 1, they reach levels that are a little below the national average.

Children's personal development is good and progress has improved. Children really enjoy school. They are polite to each other and to adults, and behave well. Children readily take turns, and share toys and learning resources well. They listen carefully to each other and to the teachers. Children are cared for well. They feel very safe in both the classroom and in the outdoor learning area. Parents are very happy with the induction arrangements which help children settle quickly into the routines of school. Parents are welcomed into class at the start of the school day and into assemblies and they have ample opportunities to discuss their child's progress with adults.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are clear signs that it is improving. For example, teachers now plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities for pupils to learn, explore and gain independence. The environment has improved so that it fosters children's curiosity well. However, not all learning resources are labelled so that children can develop their reading skills further. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on raising standards and the recently improved arrangements for assessment enable staff to plan activities which are more closely matched to children's abilities. This is beginning to accelerate children's progress.

The Pilgrim Care Club leader works closely with Early Years Foundation Stage teachers to ensure that the activities she provides for children make a valuable contribution to their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils, especially the more able, are challenged well in lessons so that they regularly make good progress.
- Improve the academic advice given to pupils so that they better understand how they can improve their work.
- Ensure subject leaders take full responsibility for standards and improvements to secure consistently good progress in the areas for which they are responsible.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

Pupils' achievement, including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 standards are average. The progress of boys in Year 2, which was slow last year, has accelerated and is now similar to that of the girls. This is because teachers ensure that the boys find their work relevant and interesting.

Pupils' reading standards are a little above those in writing. Pupils' ability to express their ideas clearly when they write in different styles, such as letters or stories, is a relative strength. However, their spelling is not always accurate enough. In mathematics, pupils' speed of calculation and their mental arithmetic skills are better developed than their ability to solve mathematical problems. Standards in Year 6 in science and information and communication technology are average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils consider very thoughtfully their faith and their feelings. A well-developed understanding of right and wrong supports their good behaviour. Occasionally, pupils call out answers before others have had enough time to think. Pupils cooperate well in teams and are keen to help each other. Their understanding of the diversity of British society is a relative weakness, although it is satisfactory.

Pupils feel very safe knowing that the rare instances of bullying are quickly and effectively resolved by the school. They take care to ensure others come to no harm. Pupils clearly understand why they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and do their best to eat a balanced diet and take plenty of exercise. Pupils describe school as 'fun' and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. Most of them have good attendance records, although attendance overall is average. This is because a few families choose to take holidays in term time, even though the school discourages this practice. Children and pupils enjoy the exciting activities they undertake in the Pilgrim Care Club. Pupils support their chosen charities very generously and are keen to take responsibility as monitors and playground leaders. Pupils are proud of the way the school council assists the school to make some of its decisions; for example, they helped the school choose additional apparatus for the playground. Pupils' positive attitudes and their average standards mean that their preparation for secondary school and their future employment is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In lessons, pupils find work interesting and they are keen to learn. Relationships are positive and pupils work with a good level of independence. Teachers use computers and learning resources, such as educational games, well to engage pupils and in some lessons this is beginning to speed up progress. However, teachers are not yet consistently providing pupils, especially the more able, with work that really stretches them so that they make good progress. For example, able pupils sometimes repeat work they have already mastered or have to wait while others catch up. Progress sometimes slows when pupils spend too long on one activity. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well through such activities as lively assemblies, in which pupils have many opportunities to reflect on matters of faith, and health and physical education lessons. The school recognises that pupils need a better appreciation of the diversity of British culture and has organised opportunities for its pupils to work alongside their peers from different backgrounds in Coventry on a performing arts project. The school has plans to provide more time for pupils to practise problem solving in mathematics and linking letters to their sounds to improve their accuracy of spelling. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to undertake practical work in science. The many opportunities for pupils to learn

modern foreign languages and to take part in sports clubs and music performances broaden their experiences and add to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are cared for well. For example, pupils readily approach the learning mentor with their concerns, knowing that their worries will be sympathetically and quickly resolved. The Pilgrim Care club looks after children and pupils very well and provides them with an appealing range of healthy snacks. The school assesses the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities carefully and provides them with appropriate programmes of work that enable them to make similar progress to their peers. Pupils who do not speak English at home as their first language are given good practical support. For example, a wide range of dual-language books is used to promote their understanding of English. Outside agencies, such as interpreters and experts on behaviour management and dyslexia, are used effectively to advise staff and support pupils' education. Health and safety procedures, child protection arrangements and checks on the suitability of adults to work in school are rigorous and regularly updated.

The advice given to pupils about how to make their work better, through marking and other feedback, is not always specific enough. This means pupils are not entirely sure what precise steps they need to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation introduced by the new headteacher is providing the school with a largely accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Development plans are appropriate and some are already showing signs of success. For example, teachers' improved use of computers is engaging pupils well and leading to better progress.

Subject leaders monitor work closely in their areas of responsibility. They are helping staff to sharpen their teaching skills. For example, they are showing staff how they can improve standards of spelling by helping pupils link letters with the sound they make. However, some of them have only been in post for a short time and they are not yet taking full responsibility to ensure progress is usually good in their subjects.

The progress of pupils towards their challenging targets is regularly checked and if progress slows, the school takes appropriate action to help pupils catch up. The school is a happy and well-integrated community. Its plans to develop community cohesion in the local community and to develop further the international links it has recently established are satisfactory. The governors work hard on behalf of the school. They have a good understanding of data and are beginning to hold the school to account.

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.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Coventry, CV2 5AT

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. We especially enjoyed listening to your enthusiastic singing. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think St Gregory's is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a sound start to school in the Reception class.
- Satisfactory teaching helps you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.
- In Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave well and most of you attend very regularly.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and the chance to learn several foreign languages, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- You have a sound understanding of how you can improve your work.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers keep you working hard in lessons so that you regularly make good progress, especially those of you who find learning easy.
- Show you exactly how you can improve your work.
- Make sure the headteacher gets plenty of help from the other leaders to check how well you are learning in different subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well, trying your best in lessons and attending regularly.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector