

# St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134667
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	328947
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Holmes

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.

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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 (total)	390
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Yates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Spring Garden Road Longton ST3 2QN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 235340

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	328947

**Fax number**

01782 236147

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27-28 April 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Gregory's is a larger than average Catholic primary school, with close links to the local parish. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage for Nursery and Reception aged children. Most pupils are from White British families. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and for whom English is an additional language are below average but increasing. There have been significant changes to the senior leadership of the school in the previous 12 months.

The school has held the Artsmark and Healthy Schools status for the last two years and has recently gained International School status and become an Eco school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education. Following a period of significant change in the leadership of the school, it is moving forward at a rapid pace because of the extremely clear direction set by the headteacher, staff and governors. All are highly committed to improving the quality of provision and ensuring that all pupils do as well as possible. The provision for pupils' pastoral care and support is a strength and makes a strong contribution to their outstanding personal development and well-being. The school has extremely strong links with a number of local agencies to support pupils' well-being, for example the Integrated Family Support Team. Parents are very supportive and are full of praise for the 'dedication and professionalism' of the staff. One parent, typical of many, commented: 'This is a lovely school with a happy, friendly atmosphere.'

From the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils achieve well and reach standards which are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are higher in English than they are in mathematics. Standards in mathematics have improved recently with more pupils reaching the expected level by Year 6. However, more pupils reach the higher levels in English by the end of Year 6 than in mathematics. This issue is being tackled but the gap in achievement between these subjects remains for older pupils. More able pupils have fewer opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and understanding in mathematics through other subjects than they do in English. Key factors in pupils' good achievement are the effectiveness of the senior leaders and the quality of teaching and learning, both of which have improved recently. Subject leaders also have had a positive effect on improving achievement and there are good systems for checking the performance of pupils which help staff to use the results of assessments to plan learning effectively. Pupils are engaged in their learning and are stimulated by a good range of learning activities. Although most pupils are aware of their learning targets, marking does not always make clear to them what they need to do to reach them. The broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced by a wide range of additional activities, supports pupils' learning and personal development well. Engagement with other communities beyond the local area, for example in rural areas and in other countries is underdeveloped.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and their enjoyment of school is seen in their outstanding behaviour. They are courteous and polite, yet confident in their dealings with adults and with each other. They feel that the school 'is like a family where everyone supports each other'. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the community through the work of the school council and the work they do in raising money for local charities. The school council decided to make more activities available at lunchtime and breaks, which led to pupils becoming play leaders who lead the activities and support other pupils. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of how to live healthily and stay safe. They take advantage of the many opportunities to exercise, make healthy eating choices and know that they can go to any adult in school if they are worried. Pupils' preparation for future economic well-being is good because of their good achievement and the good opportunities they have to take part in activities that promote teamwork.

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

#### Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because of good leadership. The teacher in charge has a clear vision for improving provision further to raise standards and

the team of staff are committed to meeting children's needs. Links with parents have been strengthened and they are extremely positive about the quality of education their children receive. One typically commented, 'My child loves coming to school, is happy and making good progress, which is all down to the staff.' This nurturing, caring approach by staff, who know every child well ensures good provision for their welfare and results in good personal, social and emotional development. Children feel safe and secure because of the warm, positive relationships. Consequently, they work and cooperate well with each other and become increasingly confident and independent as learners, as seen in playing The Hungry Caterpillar game in the story house.

Children join the school with skills and abilities similar to those expected for their age although many have weaknesses in their language and communication. They make good progress because of good learning and development. Most children in Reception are on track to reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. These improvements in children's attainment are recent and staff are working hard to build on them. Good planning and effective use of assessment to identify next steps in learning result in a wide range of imaginative activities that promote speaking and listening. There is an attractive and stimulating learning environment with exciting areas to learn like the 'Mini Beast Cave'. The outdoor environment is used satisfactorily but children have fewer opportunities to extend their learning outside than they do indoors.

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

- Improve the proportions of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics by providing improved opportunities to use and apply mathematical knowledge and understanding in other subject areas.
- Improve marking so that it consistently identifies for pupils what they need to do next to reach their targets.
- Ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to engage with communities outside the local area in order to promote their understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom community and beyond.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Most pupils make good progress and reach standards which are above average by the end of Year 6. They make good progress from their different starting points on entry to the school. Standards are higher in English than in mathematics because more pupils reach higher levels in English, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Recent initiatives to improve standards of attainment in mathematics have had a positive effect in all classes but, in the upper juniors, the gap in achievement between English and mathematics for more able pupils has not been closed. Important factors in improving achievement have been the improved use of assessment information to check pupils' performance and the improved checking of subject leaders to raise standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and achieve well because of the good levels of support they receive for their learning.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is demonstrated by the quality of relationships they form with each other, the tolerance and understanding they show to those from different faiths and backgrounds, and their willingness to take on responsibilities within school, for example as 'eco warriors'. Pupils have a good cultural awareness through their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and the increasing range of activities they experience in school, for example learning French. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school through opportunities they have to participate in decision making. For example, pupils were involved in reviewing the school's 'Anti-Bullying Charter', which helps them understand what to do to stay safe. Their enjoyment of school is seen in their good attendance, which has improved significantly and their outstanding levels of care and support for one another, for example as peer mediators.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and manage them well. Pupils like their teachers, describing them as 'fair' and their lessons as 'fun'. They have good opportunities to work with other pupils and experience a good range of teaching and learning approaches which engage them in their learning. They share resources well and show good levels of respect for the views of others. Assessment information is used effectively to plan pupils' learning and ensure pupils' needs are met. Learning objectives are clear and are used well to ensure that pupils are clear about their learning. Occasionally, lessons are too teacher-led, which results in a slower pace of learning for some pupils. Marking is regular but does not identify specifically for all pupils, what they need to do next to improve their work and reach their targets. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning and provide them with good levels of support.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A number of strategies have been put in place to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and their achievement in mathematics. These strategies, which include role-play areas in Key Stage 1 classrooms and 'Start Of Day Activities' in mathematics, are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. However, for more able pupils in mathematics, the curriculum does not always enable them to make the progress they are capable of. The opportunities they have to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in other subjects are limited compared to the good opportunities they have to use their reading and writing skills in all subjects. A good programme of personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development well. A strength of the school's provision is the wide range of extra clubs and activities it provides for pupils. These are extremely popular with pupils, are well attended and are increasingly being used to improve the achievement of targeted groups of pupils in English and mathematics.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Levels of pastoral care and support are a strength of the school. Adults are excellent role models for pupils and the high expectations they demonstrate enable pupils to feel safe and help them to gain high standards of personal skills. Adults have exceptional knowledge of all pupils and this does much to ensure that all pupils are supported well, particularly vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. Child protection arrangements and those to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare meet current requirements. A breakfast club has been recently introduced which is popular with both parents and pupils. There are good systems in place to check attendance which have had a positive effect on improving attendance levels. The learning mentor and the home-school link worker have been effective in both engaging parents through the extended services programme and securing their increased involvement in their children's learning. Systems to support pupils' academic guidance are satisfactory. All pupils have learning targets in English and mathematics, and receive guidance on how to achieve them. However, not all pupils are clear about what they need to do to reach their targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have set high expectations, with a clear vision of continual improvement to boost pupils' achievement and personal development and well-being. The rapid progress made in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school's extended services indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. There are good and accurate systems for self-evaluation, which are rigorously used by senior leaders, with effective strategies for checking provision and improving the performance of pupils. Subject leaders have a clear role to raise standards. In mathematics, for example, there is evidence to show that the strategies implemented have resulted in improved achievement, with more pupils reaching the expected levels and further work to improve the achievement of the most able pupils in the older classes. Governors fulfil their duties well and challenge the school effectively to improve its performance through the work of the committees and the focused links between governors and subject leaders. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. The school has analysed its community and has a clear plan to promote community cohesion, but engagement with communities beyond the local area, for example in rural areas and in other countries, is underdeveloped. Several initiatives to engage with other communities are in place but have not had enough time to positively affect pupils' understanding.



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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 2QN

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We thought you were polite and helpful. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say. We know that you are proud of your school and enjoy your time there. We think that St Gregory's is a good school with a number of strengths. These are the main things we found out about your school:

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards that are above average for your age. Those of you who find learning easier do better in your reading, writing and science than you do in mathematics.
- Your attendance is good and your behaviour is outstanding. You show very good attitudes towards your learning.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe.
- You like and enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs, which are well attended and which you have helped to develop.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school through the many jobs that you do, such as play leaders and peer mediators.
- You are taught well and say that your teachers are 'fair' and provide you with 'fun' lessons.
- The adults in school look after you extremely well and they all work hard to help you do your best.

In order to make the school better, we have asked the staff to:

- Help those of you who find learning easier to do as well in mathematics as you do in your reading, writing and science.
- Help all of you to reach your targets by making sure when teachers mark your work, that you know what to do next to achieve them.
- Improve links with other communities so you learn more about other people in the United Kingdom and the rest of the world.

You can help by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Best Wishes

Brian Holmes

Lead inspector.