

# St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106506
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	336684
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs K Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Naylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Kensington Drive Higher Folds Leigh WN7 2YG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, the learning mentor and pupils and a conversation held with School Improvement Partner. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. 37 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed together with those from staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of strategies for raising attainment and improving academic performance, attitudes and behaviour
- the rate of pupils' progress across the school
- the impact of the curriculum on learning and on the ability of pupils to independently apply their basic skills across a range of contexts.

## Information about the school

This is a small school. The large majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a pre- school Nursery provided within the school building which is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

The school has achieved status as a Healthy School and gained accreditation for the Financial Management Systems in Schools.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Some elements of its provision are outstanding, such as the vibrant curriculum and the support and teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils feel safe and secure and thrive on the good care and guidance they receive. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's provision and say the school is a highly valued part of the local community.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children get a good start to their education, although provision for outdoor learning is relatively weak. In Years 1 to 6, good teaching makes lessons exciting and relevant. For instance, the World Cup was very skilfully used to inspire Year 6 pupils to solve challenging mathematical problems linked to the capacity of the different sports stadia.

Pupils make good progress and they achieve well. They thoroughly enjoy their learning. Small year groups contribute effectively to pupils' good attainment. In 2009, attainment at the end of Year 6 was significantly above the national average and school data show that this is the case again this year. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics with a high proportion exceeding the expectations for their age. Attainment in writing has fallen behind other subjects because more-able writers could do even better. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high quality support and make excellent progress from their starting points.

A key factor to the good learning is the calm atmosphere that pervades the school. Very effective strategies, used particularly by the learning mentor, ensure that all pupils are fully included. Pupils are well-behaved, polite and responsible, and understand how to live safe and healthy lives. As play-partners and in helping around school, pupils make a good contribution to school life. Their opinions are valued through the school house system. Although pupils have a good knowledge of their own faith and local culture, their understanding of people different to themselves is relatively weak.

Clear sighted and astute leadership by the headteacher, supported by an effective deputy headteacher and an excellent governing body has consolidated the strengths noted at the last inspection. Attainment has improved, as have aspects of the curriculum and of leadership and management. This good track record, coupled with accurate and effective systems for self-evaluation, gives the school a good capacity to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment and achievement of the more-able pupils in writing, by:

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- sharpening the quality of intervention and support for the more-able pupils
- ensuring that writing tasks are honed to challenge the more-able across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
  - providing a suitably resourced area for outdoor learning.
- Raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society, by:
  - establishing and implementing an action plan to develop pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures
  - monitoring systematically the impact of the strategy on the pupils' attitudes and understanding.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils love school and their attendance has improved steadily in recent years. It is currently above the national average. Pupils are very keen to learn and absorb new ideas and skills. This enthusiasm enables pupils to learn new things quickly in lessons. Most pupils take a pride in their work and are very productive, demonstrating good attention and high levels of curiosity. For instance, following a visit to Jodrell Bank, some younger Key Stage 2 pupils were inspired to debate in groups and then create good quality written scripts linked to an imaginary television interview.

The positive attitudes to learning contribute to pupils making rapid progress from low starting points. The school sets high targets for pupils' performance and, with the exception of those for the more-able in English, they are met and often exceeded. The progress between Years 2 and 6 is very rapid, particularly so in mathematics. The impressive progress in mathematics is the result of some excellent quality teaching, particularly in Year 6. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom have significant barriers to learning, benefit from high quality support and their attainment exceeds that of similar pupils nationally.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A strong sense of right and wrong, and generally good social skills, help pupils to form good friendships. Access to an excellent range of sporting activities provided by the school, the encouragement of drinking water and wholesome healthy lunches combine to give pupils a good understanding of how to be safe and healthy. They willingly help others and frequently raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers are frequently imaginative in their approach to teaching; this captures the interests of most pupils. By linking subjects together, and by encouraging pupils to take a practical approach to learning, lessons are fun. An example of this was a science lesson relating to the topic on water. It included listening to music, which accompanied a computerised presentation linked to water, followed up by pupils using pastels to create water landscapes in the style of Monet. Teachers take time to find out what pupils already know and then plan work to extend their learning. All lessons have a clearly explained purpose, which links in to the effective way in which pupils evaluate their own progress. However, the involvement of pupils in assessment varies. Strategies for stretching more-able pupils in writing are not as sharp as they are in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of contexts, but their targets for improvement are not always tuned closely enough to individual needs. This reduces their achievement in writing.

Subjects are planned with the pupils' needs in mind rather than simply trying to apply national strategies. As a result, pupils are generally interested in what they are learning and this contributes significantly to their good progress. A wealth of exciting opportunities for pupils enhances the good development of their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Sports coaches, music tutors, Spanish lessons, and a variety of educational visits within the locality and further afield, very effectively enhance lessons. Events, such as the 'Science Week,' are very popular with pupils who talk excitedly about all they do and the practical approach taken.

The school cares very much for each pupil. Day-to-day attention to pupils' hygiene and

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well-being has a high priority in all that goes on in the school. Good strategies are established to support not only pupils, but also their families at times of need. This enables all pupils to be fully included regardless of their educational, social or physical needs. The school building is generally kept safe and secure, but risk assessments are not sharp enough in respect of the outside areas.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide the school with very clear educational direction. A good teaching team has been built which shares a conviction for promoting both the pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. Effective use of assessment and the outcomes of monitoring highlight the key priorities for school improvement. Close attention is given to reaching challenging targets for pupils' attainment. Subjects are generally well managed and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a high priority. Underpinning the school's success is excellent governance. Governors have a thorough understanding of statistical data about the school's performance and are meticulous in monitoring where strengths and weaknesses exist. They are passionate about the place of the school in its community. The school complies with safeguarding procedures. It makes a vital contribution to cohesion within its community, but strategies to promote cohesion in a wider, global sense lack vision and ambition.

Partnerships, such as with local schools and support agencies from education and health, contribute positively to pupils' education. Parents and carers are important partners in their children's education. They are kept well informed and given good opportunities to help in school and give support to their children at home. The school successfully promotes equal opportunities and effectively tackles any discrimination. The school gives good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to their education and are well prepared for the next stage. They benefit from experienced and caring staff who know each child individually. The weaknesses many children have in their language development, when starting school, are recognised. Initiatives are taken to successfully improve their speaking and listening skills. A good range of activities related to a theme, such as 'People Who Help Us' encourage independence, as well as enabling children to receive guided support from skilled staff. Children make good progress. From low skills on entry, the children's levels of development rise at a good rate. Despite this good improvement, attainment at the end of the Reception Year is typically below age related expectations with a continuing weakness in communication, language and literacy skills. While this provision results in good progress indoors, the resources for outdoor learning are just adequate and hold back the learning of some children. Parents and carers are very much valued participants in their children's education. They are kept well informed and encouraged to support learning at home through a number of initiatives. Assessment is accurate and a range of records help staff to keep an eye on each individual's progress. The provision is effectively managed to meet the needs of the large majority of children. They are kept safe and secure at all times.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

The large majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires express high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. They feel that it helps their children to thrive academically and also personally. The contribution to the local community is highly valued. The inspection findings back up the parents' positive views. While a very few parents and carers felt that the school did not help them support their children's learning, or prepare their children well for the future, the inspection found that these aspects were good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	49	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	54	16	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	51	17	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	59	12	32	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	51	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	57	11	30	4	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	59	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	46	15	41	3	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	51	13	35	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	41	17	46	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	54	13	35	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	57	14	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	54	12	32	2	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24th June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School, Leigh, WN7 2YG

The two days I recently spent with you were memorable and enjoyable. You attend a good school which is caring and helpful to you and your families. It was good to see how well most of you learn and enjoy school. You behave well and treat others with respect and care. Your good understanding of how to be healthy and safe is important in helping you to stay happy in future.

You make good gains in your knowledge and skills as you move through the school. High standards are set and you usually reach them. Those of you who find learning difficult receive really good support and make excellent progress. Your learning in mathematics is particularly rapid. There have been some recent improvements in your writing, but some of you could do even better and I have asked the school to find ways of helping you. There are two other things that I have asked the school to consider to improve it further. These are to:

- improve the outdoor learning resources for children in the Reception class
- develop ways of widening your knowledge of cultures and faiths different to your own.

Please thank your parents and carers for sending me their questionnaires. They rate your school highly and feel that it is well managed. I agree with you that your headteacher leads your school very well and has created a caring and calm atmosphere throughout the school. Your teachers do a great job and the many experiences you have beyond the classroom really adds excitement to your lessons.

I hope you all continue to enjoy your time at the school, work hard and have the confidence to follow your interests and achieve your ambitions.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead inspector

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