

Saint Gabriel's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111716
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	337727
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Millett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Young
Headteacher	Mrs M Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons or parts of lessons, conducted learning walks and spent time in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. Seven teachers were observed, a scrutiny of pupils' work was carried out and meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, including policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the school's development plan, self-evaluation records, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's assessment data. The inspectors analysed completed questionnaires from staff, pupils and 43 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the levels of progress being made by pupils in each phase
- procedures for the assessment and moderation of pupils' writing
- how the curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils and the opportunities it provides for developing writing.

Information about the school

St Gabriel's is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that found nationally as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of pupils are White British with a very small minority from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is well below average. The school has gained many awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Eco-Schools Award. The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils. A new headteacher has joined the school since the last inspection.

Privately managed after-school care makes use of school facilities and did not form part of this inspection.

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

St Gabriel's is a good school and has made significant progress since the previous inspection. It has a safe and welcoming environment for pupils. They clearly enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in many learning opportunities. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils agree with the statement, 'My school is fun and helps me learn.' Staff ensure that pupils' time in school is enjoyable and rewarding.

Pupils achieve well. Attainment is broadly average and improving. All pupils, irrespective of their starting points or abilities, make good progress. Regular assessments inform the tracking system so progress is closely monitored. Writing, in particular, is being developed although this has yet to make a positive impact upon standards. In some classes there are lost opportunities for writing in other subjects. Teaching overall is good. However, there are some inconsistencies in the rigour of marking across all subjects.

Pupils make an extremely positive contribution to the school and local community. Older pupils take very seriously their role as buddies to the youngest children. All are extremely knowledgeable as to what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and the need for regular exercise. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has undergone many changes not all of which are fully established. Children take part with great enthusiasm in activities which are imaginative and well thought out. However, planning and the channeling of children's enthusiasm are not always sharply focused. Older pupils say they really enjoy their work, especially in French and information and communication technology (ICT). Behaviour is good, sometimes outstanding, and pupils show respect for adults and each other.

Relationships throughout are strong. The headteacher sets the tone with high levels of concern for all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. Pupils speak about how safe they feel in school. Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding and evident in the overwhelmingly positive responses to the parental questionnaires. Very strong links with the church, local schools and external agencies provide pupils with additional learning experiences. These, alongside the curriculum, promote community cohesion well. Activities, such as the well-established links with a school in France and charity work, provide pupils with a deeper understanding of the wide range of cultures and beliefs found beyond Great Britain.

Self-evaluation is robust and leaders have a clear and effective commitment to improvement. These factors, along with improving standards, show that the school has a good capacity for sustaining further development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By 2011, raise standards across the school by:
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching through monitoring and the sharing of best practice so the same high level of expectation is present in all lessons
 - creating more opportunities in other subjects for pupils to write and ensuring that the marking of that work is to the same high level as marking in literacy.
- By 2011, improve the practice in Early Years Foundation Stage to a good level by:
 - ensuring that planning is well focused and includes more challenging opportunities for the more able
 - increasing adults' intervention to guide children to use a wider variety of activities and to work in varying groups
 - continuing to develop routines and so establish adults' expectations with regard to behaviour.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils develop good attitudes towards learning. They enjoy learning and collaborate well when working in groups or in pairs. In class, pupils listen carefully and are keen to answer questions. Most express their views clearly and are able to give good explanations, providing relevant answers. This was seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils used mathematical language confidently to explain how to work out co-ordinates. The school's tracking data shows that pupils' good progress continues through school so that by Year 6, previously broadly average standards are showing signs of improvement overall, but to a greater degree in mathematics and science than in English. Although an above average number of Year 6 pupils attained highly in the national tests in 2009 in reading, similar levels of performance were not attained in writing. The picture this year shows improvement in all subjects. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language is good because of the well-targeted support they receive.

Pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They mix easily with others and have a strong sense of right and wrong and what is fair. They are respectful and have experience of the range of cultures and beliefs common in Britain and beyond. The school council, 'Green Team' and playground buddies make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils are active in raising funds for various local and national charities. They are enthusiastic about their school dinners and grow and cook their own vegetables. Improving basic skills, confident use of ICT, financial awareness through links with Business Enterprise and overall good manners, contribute effectively to pupils' future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching, overall, is good throughout the school and lessons offer a range of carefully chosen activities which engage pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. Planning is thorough and work is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils make the best progress when teachers plan challenging lessons with high expectations for achievement. Regular, accurate assessments are used to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils' work is well marked in literacy but the same rigorous criteria are not always applied to pieces of work in other subjects.

The school provides a well-planned curriculum which stimulates pupils' interests and contributes well to their personal development. It also enables them to make good progress year on year. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of additional activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. For example, day visits, visitors and residential visits add to the excitement of learning. Meaningful links across different subjects are emerging through the use of themes. These give pupils increased opportunities to make purposeful use of their basic skills. However, opportunities for developing writing are sometimes overlooked. ICT is well used to support learning and teaching. There is good provision for music through singing and samba. The school provides an extensive range of lunchtime activities and after-school clubs which further enhance pupils' knowledge and skills.

¹ 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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St Gabriel's is a very caring school that places great importance on developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Adults know pupils well and respond positively to their needs. Pupils' individual needs are quickly assessed and help given where needed. Pupils know that if they have a problem there is always someone there to help them. 'Our teachers are nice and help everyone,' commented one pupil. Pupils at risk of underachievement, those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and through strong links with outside agencies. The highly organised breakfast club is well used and much appreciated by parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The clear focus of the headteacher is at the heart of the school's success. Supportive and enthusiastic staff and governors share the same drive and ambition for the school and are committed to providing the best education possible for all pupils. Their vision has equality of opportunity at its heart and they will not tolerate any form of harassment. A key reason for the school's progress is the strenuous efforts that have been made to eliminate differences in performance. The improving use of assessment and tracking is helping to focus closely on individual pupils' needs. Monitoring is used well, to improve the quality of teaching for example, although exemplary practice is not always shared to best effect.

The school's development plan is directly focused on raising pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning. Good use is made of targets which are increasingly demanding. Governors are fully supportive of the school and play an effective role in monitoring and challenging its performance. The school has a highly positive relationship with parents and carers. They are exceptionally well informed and engaged in their children's learning. The promotion of community cohesion is strong. Pupils take part in many local events. In addition to being at the heart of the local community, the school has links with a school in France and extends pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures well. Pupils already have positive attitudes towards ethnic diversity. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding and health and safety requirements were well met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with considerable potential to be even more effective as the new team of staff becomes established. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are at levels below those expected for their age. The school's clear priorities on the development of language, through stimulating opportunities for play and a range of teaching methods, enable children to make sound progress. Some have caught up to attain expected levels for their age, although not all and not in all areas, by the time they leave the Reception class.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has undergone significant levels of development under the enthusiastic leadership of the manager. The recent improvements to the accommodation, indoors and out, have prompted changes to the organisation of activities which are beginning to show some positive impact but are yet to be embedded. Children have access to an imaginative range of resources that capture their interest. The current topic of castles proved to be very popular, particularly with the boys. Not all groups of children make best use of the learning areas as there is sometimes insufficient adult intervention to focus children's attention or challenge the more able. Observations are recorded and used to inform planning and add detail to children's individual records of learning.

Strong relationships with parents and carers and the school's system of 'buddying' new starters with older pupils ensure that children settle well and enjoy being part of the school. Some children are still learning to behave safely and take responsibility for small tasks and require much support in this. They are developing healthy habits such as washing hands and enjoying fruit snacks. Leaders and other staff are passionate about

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raising standards and presenting children with a wide range of experiences. A strong sense of common purpose is emerging and there is clear evidence of the capacity to tackle issues effectively.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

About 30% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They are unanimous in their overwhelming support for the school and express extremely positive views of the quality of care and all-round standard of education their children receive. Almost all parents and carers feel the school helps them support their children's learning and promotes healthy lifestyles. Inspectors agree.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Gabriel's Catholic Voluntary Aided 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 143 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	79	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	77	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	63	16	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	60	17	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	72	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	58	17	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	60	16	37	1	2	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)	23	53	19	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	60	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	58	18	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	79	9	21	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Gabriel's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Middlesbrough, TS7 9LF

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently; a special 'thank you' to those of you who gave up their time to talk to me. Many of you told me that St Gabriel's is a good school, and I agree.

Here are some of the things that I found out.

- You are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors.
- Your behaviour is good in the classroom and around school.
- Most of you make good progress during your time in school. Standards are average and improving.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe.
- Your teachers are doing a good job and make lessons fun.
- The headteacher and governors are good at running the school and understand how they could make it even better.
- You have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and make an outstanding contribution to your school and local area.
- Your parents and carers are also very pleased with the education you receive.

To make your school even better I have asked the staff and governors to do these things.

- Share ideas with each other so that more lessons are good or outstanding.
- Give you more opportunities to practise writing in other subjects.
- Make sure that all your work is marked in the same way as in literacy.
- Plan more challenging activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, guide them to make good choices and help them learn the class routines.

I know you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Christine Millett

Lead inspector

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