

St Gregory and St Patrick's Catholic Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112355
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337910
Inspection dates	15–16 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Parish
Headteacher	Mr A Dwyer
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of Governing Body, and a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' books and files, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement planning and curriculum and lesson plans. Fifty-seven completed questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with 22 from staff.

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

- pupils' current progress and the level of their basic skills
- the use of structured learning activities in lessons to challenge all groups
- the use of assessments and improvement targets to support pupils in their learning
- safeguarding arrangements to ensure pupils' well-being and the quality of the care, guidance and support they receive
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to bring about improvements in pupils' personal and academic development.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average; that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few from a mixed ethnic background. The school has a number of awards, including Eco Green Flag and Healthy Schools status, Silver Food for Life award, the Activemark and Investors in People status. Childcare and after-school provision, situated within the school, are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school where pupils' attainment is high. This represents outstanding learning and progress in relation to their average starting points in the Nursery. All groups of pupils achieve highly, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few who are from a mixed ethnic background. The performance of the highest attaining pupils exceeds that of their national counterparts by a wide margin. In the Nursery and Reception classes children make good progress and achieve well.

The extent to which pupils adopt a healthy approach to life is outstanding. This is seen in the choices they make for their lunch time meal, their understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet, the experiences they gain from growing and cooking their own food and their participation in a wide range of physical activities and sports. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. All pupils help to care for the school's resources, the older ones look out for the younger children at playtimes, particularly those who are vulnerable in any way. The school council is active in many ways, for example in fund raising and helping to formulate classroom rules. Pupils visit a local special school on a regular basis to broaden their understanding of the diversity of others' learning needs. They entertain elderly people for lunch and visit them in local care homes. Christian values underpin the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral and social development and are also evident in the exceptional care, guidance and support they receive.

Good teaching and good use of assessment to support learning, highly effective teaching assistants and many volunteer classroom helpers, combined with an excellent curriculum which excites pupils' interest, lead to pupils' outstanding achievement. The occasional use of worksheets slows the rate of progress and does little to stimulate learning and there are times when opportunities are missed for whole-class discussion of work.

The headteacher provides the vision and innovative approach which have led to significant improvements in facilities and curricular provision since the previous inspection. He is supported exceptionally well by an outstanding deputy headteacher. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school's capacity to improve further is good. There are extensive and effective links with outside agencies and partner institutions to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The school is a harmonious and calm place in which to work and it makes an outstanding contribution to the cohesion of the wider community.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - learning activities enable the rate of progress to be consistently good or better in all lessons
 - opportunities are taken to extend and consolidate learning through whole- class discussion of work when appropriate.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are keen to learn and work well together and independently. They know right from wrong and are sensitive to each other's feelings. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Their behaviour is good. Attainment has been consistently well above national expectations for all groups since the previous inspection. The school's assessment information and inspection evidence show that pupils' current progress is excellent and that they are well placed to emulate past high standards. This is so for all groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are excellent, as are their speaking and listening skills when working in pairs or small groups. Their ability to talk about their learning to the whole class and comment on and question each other's contributions was less evident. They are courteous when receiving visitors and are active in local community activities through their music and sport. Pupils' cultural development is good. Their punctuality to school and to lessons means that no time is lost in learning. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education and outstanding foundations are being laid for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2

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

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	
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. Learning activities are structured by different levels of difficulty to meet the needs of all groups and assessments are used well to give pupils realistically challenging targets to help them improve. Written and oral guidance is good so that pupils know how well they are doing and what will be the next steps in their learning. The teaching assistants are highly effective, quick to identify problems in learning at an early stage and are effective at intervening effectively to resolve them. The many volunteer helpers are committed and hard-working. This exceptional support for all pupils contributes significantly to their excellent progress. Very good use is made of ICT as a teaching aid, adding to pupils' enjoyment of lessons and providing them with opportunities to work independently. Occasionally, there is a reliance on worksheets, limiting the opportunities for independent learning. The curriculum is providing pupils with exciting learning opportunities which are relevant to their needs. Areas of learning are integrated through topics and themes and excellent planning ensures that opportunities for the use of basic skills are woven into all activities. Extensive enrichment activities broaden pupils' understanding of their work, do much for their health and well-being, and contribute to their sense of enjoyment and fun. Pupils are made aware of global issues through the school's curricular provision and through the talks that visitors give. There are many visitors to the school who talk to the pupils about their interests and occupations. Such outstanding provision is a major factor in pupils' progress. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, resulting in the exceptional progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable in any way.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team and the subject coordinators have high expectations of pupils and work hard for the school's success. This ambition is shared by all staff. Barriers to learning are identified quickly and dealt with effectively, resulting in every boy and girl having an equal chance. Good use is made of challenging performance targets to ensure pupils achieve as well as they can. Good systems enable staff to monitor the progress of different groups and spot underachievement at an early stage. The school's contribution to community cohesion is exceptional. Through its close links with, for example, parents, carers, outside agencies and other schools, and because of its happy and harmonious learning environment, the school meets the needs of pupils and the local community very well. Through their fund raising work, through the talks from visitors and from curricular provision, pupils have an excellent understanding for their age of national issues and what it means to be a member of a global community. Governance is good. Governors are supportive of the school and many give generously of their time to support pupils in their work and to after-school activities. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Safe working is evident in daily routines, and safety audits are undertaken regularly. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and in the use of more challenging and interesting learning activities since the previous inspection because of the deputy headteacher's close monitoring of provision and her effective support for the newly qualified teachers. The school gives excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's overall development when they join the Nursery is at the expected level for their age. Imaginative activities and a secure environment ensure they settle quickly and feel happy. Their progress is good and by the end of Reception they have achieved well, particularly in their language and mathematical skills. Their behaviour is good and they show awareness of the needs of others, learning and playing well together. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop. They ensure that there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those which the children choose for themselves. The learning environment is inspirational. It excites children's curiosity through the use of displays and artefacts of striking shape and colour. The management of the classrooms and outdoor areas is good, resulting in safe and orderly working. The monitoring and recording of children's progress is good. There are close links with parents and carers to enable them to support their children's learning and also with outside agencies to give support to individual children when this is needed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and recognise the excellent progress their children make academically and in their personal development. The inspectors agree that their views are well-founded. The few concerns related to individual problems and did not reveal any pattern of dissatisfaction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gregory and St Patrick's Catholic Community 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	72	15	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	72	15	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	58	24	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	68	16	28	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	70	16	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	58	21	37	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	58	24	42	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)	27	47	24	42	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	60	22	39	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	49	25	44	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	46	29	51	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	54	23	40	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	70	15	26	1	2	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). 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"> ■ 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.



19 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory and St Patrick's Catholic Community School, Whitehaven CA28 8AJ

Thank you for the warm welcome we received during our visit to your school. We enjoyed seeing all the interesting things you are doing and talking to you about your work. You made a valuable contribution to the inspection.

We judge that yours is an outstanding school. You make excellent progress in your work and you have the personal qualities to be successful at school and in later life. For example, you can work independently and find out things for yourselves and you are courteous and welcoming to visitors.

Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together. You told us how much you like your teachers, the teaching assistants and the adult helpers and that they are always there to give you the help and support you need. You also said you enjoy the work you are given and we found that it is interesting and meets your needs well. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and well and you all do a lot to help out in school and in the local community.

There are always things to do to make your school better. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to talk about your work to the whole class. We have also asked that, instead of sometimes having worksheets to complete, you have practical activities to do.

You can help by continuing to work hard and support each other.

Thank you again for the help you gave us. Our best wishes to you for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead Inspector

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