

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119673
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339499
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Gallagher
Headteacher	Mrs R Wroblewski
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, seven teachers were observed and meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, pupils' books, safeguarding documents, key policies and assessments. Inspection questionnaires were received and analysed from 69 parents and carers.

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

- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development
- whether the quality of teaching, and the use of assessment, consistently enable all pupils to progress well throughout the school
- how the perceived strengths of the curriculum have an impact upon pupils' achievement
- how perceived strengths in personal development, care, guidance and support have an impact upon pupils' learning and their progress
- how effectively leaders are bringing about planned improvements.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Fewer pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Activemark silver and Eco-Schools awards.

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, providing a distinctive character and good quality of provision. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given an excellent start to their education. The school has an excellent ethos, the result of outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the motivating headteacher and her staff. Due to good safeguarding procedures pupils feel extremely safe. Parents and carers express a strong appreciation of the quality the school provides: they 'can't imagine a better primary school'. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes pupils' learning and well-being extremely well.

Since the last inspection, sustained above average standards, better links between subjects and awareness of life in multicultural Britain demonstrate a track record of improvement, illustrating well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team provides. Due to its rigorous self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans carefully to address these issues. There is a strong commitment to develop all staff through focused training. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

From broadly typical starting points on entering the Reception class excellent progress enables most children to reach levels above those expected by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils achieve well, throughout the school, because of the quality of teaching is good overall with several examples of outstanding practice. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. While teaching overall is good, there are inconsistencies in some areas, for example the most able are not always challenged sufficiently, resulting in slower progress for some. Opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning so that they might progress more quickly. The curriculum enriches pupils' learning well and contributes strongly to their good achievement and enjoyment. Pupils' behaviour is first-rate.

Leaders and managers at all levels have clearly established roles and contribute effectively to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Staffing changes mean that some middle leaders are new to their role and are beginning to engage effectively with systems for checking pupils' progress and monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Governors provide a good balance of challenge and support, and play a significant part in driving through improvements and in shaping the school's future direction. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - consistently encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for and direct their own learning
 - providing more and varied opportunities to challenge the most able pupils.
- Further engage middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and the progress made by pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils show highly positive attitudes to work. They consistently do their best and make good progress. Most lessons engage pupils well in learning. They respond well to challenges. Some learning is outstanding, for example when children have opportunities to make decisions and work creatively on their topics. Occasionally, pupils are not challenged sufficiently or not offered opportunities to make choices about their own learning. This results in slower progress for some. Learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed effectively and they progress well.

Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. A dip in outcomes in 2009 has been successfully addressed. The current focus on mathematics indicates that the proportion of pupils on track to achieve expected levels will meet the school's ambitious targets. Interventions to support learning are well planned and have a positive impact, leading to good improvement.

Pupils' personal qualities are outstanding. They are polite and adjust their behaviour well to suit different situations. They are very mindful of others and are extremely proud of their school and their achievements. Pupils are always keen to point out items of their work displayed. Growing links with a school in Ghana adds to pupils' growing understanding of cultural differences. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities, especially sports clubs, and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes sensible eating. The school council contributes a great deal to the school, for example through improvements to its environment. All pupils actively engage with charitable fundraising and many take on caring roles, such as those of playground 'pals'. Music and drama performances very effectively raise the school's profile in the wider community. By the end of Year 6 pupils are well prepared to face the challenges of the next stages of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Good planning and the effective use of assessment information by teachers means that most lessons build well on pupils' previous learning. Expectations are usually high and there is a good pace to learning because of the challenge well-planned tasks provide. Some teaching is outstanding and is particularly effective in those lessons where pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own progress and work independently of adults. Where practice is at its best pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own and others' work and to offer suggestions about possible improvements. Teaching assistants fulfil a crucial role as part of the teaching team and contribute skilfully to pupils' good learning and progress. There are occasions when teaching is good rather than outstanding. In these lessons the challenge for the most able is not consistent and opportunities to make independent decisions about learning are limited, resulting in slower progress.

The curriculum provides a good range of interesting opportunities for learning because of the way teachers plan links between subjects, building on lessons learned through partnership with other schools in developing a 'creative' curriculum. This enables literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills, for example, to be practised in a meaningful way. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is the way it is enriched by clubs and activities after school as well as a wide range of visits and visitors to support learning and boost pupils' personal development and enjoyment.

A very safe and welcoming environment is at the heart of the school's outstanding

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

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care, guidance and support. The school knows its children and families very well. Provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is very carefully monitored and the school makes full use of additional services to ensure that their needs are met. There are productive links with pre-school settings and work with local high schools helps to make transition as smooth as possible. Parents and carers are very happy with the way in which their children are cared for and the overwhelming majority are pleased with the level of access they have to information about their children's progress and welfare.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Changes in the management structure have enabled all staff members to be effectively involved in planning. This has led to a renewed energy and shared drive for improvement. Training opportunities for staff in subject areas have brought more focus and middle leaders are beginning to engage effectively in monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress. Leaders recognise the need for continued rigorous monitoring. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos and the school's ambition for all of its pupils, 'be fair, be kind, be honest', has contributed to its sustained improvement. Community cohesion is high on the governors' agenda. There is clear understanding of the school's context within the community and firm plans to build on the links already established with schools and other groups from differing social and cultural backgrounds. There are good systems and procedures for keeping pupils safe in school, including the promotion of internet safety. Leaders are alert to ensure that safeguarding remains robust and effective.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2

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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

Outstanding leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage give children's learning and development an excellent start. They make rapid progress from joining Reception with broadly expected skills for their age. Virtually all reach a good level of development before transferring to Year 1 and a significant number are more advanced. High-quality provision for their welfare ensures that children learn in an environment where risks are very well managed or eliminated. Staff have clearly designated roles with regard to children's well-being and all help in the evaluation of progress and in tailoring the next steps for learning and development. Very effective partnerships with parents and carers, pre-school settings and other agencies contribute greatly to children's welfare and progress. There is a very wide range of challenging and exciting activities to encourage independence, stimulate children's imaginations and help them develop curiosity and an eagerness to learn. They develop excellent personal skills. They understand how to stay safe, behave very well and work collaboratively with others. The very good balance between adult-led activities and those which children choose for themselves means that activities to promote early literacy and number work are widely available and very effective. The outside area is used very well to allow children to build on their skills through exploration and play.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and comment very positively about the quality of care and education their children receive.

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All who responded say that their children are safe and inspectors agree. Parents and carers feel welcome if they have any worries or concerns, and many endorse the view of one parent that, 'We are really pleased with the school, the children can't wait to go every day.' Very few parents and carers had concerns related to information about their children's progress and whether their suggestions are listened to. The inspection finds that ideas presented by parents and carers are often acted upon and the school provides a wide range of easily accessible information about pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	78	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	86	10	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	49	33	48	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	52	33	48	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	55	29	42	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	29	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)	34	49	32	46	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	59	28	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	57	28	41	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	45	33	48	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	59	25	36	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	68	21	30	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley PR7 3QG

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school for its recent inspection. It was a delight to meet you; we appreciated your politeness and enjoyed talking with you. We were impressed that you demonstrated many very mature attitudes in your personal development. You have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and to be healthy. You make an excellent contribution to your school and the wider community. Very well done! We have judged your behaviour to be outstanding. In addition to these very positive attributes, you also make good progress in your learning to reach above average standards by Year 6.

Your school is led and managed well. All adults play their part in the smooth running of the school and wanting the best for you. Your headteacher, the teachers and all the other adults give good help and support and the governors keep a close eye on the school. Through the hard work of the adults the school provides you with outstanding levels of care, guidance and support, and good teaching. The subjects you learn are interesting too and it is good to hear about your involvement in the school council, as play pals and the fundraising for so many good causes. We know you enjoy these activities, along with your after-school clubs, visits and the many visitors.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? We have asked your leaders to offer even more challenge to pupils who find learning easier and to encourage you all to take more responsibility for your own learning. In addition, we have asked that teachers who look after the subjects extend the way they check how well you are doing and how good the teaching is. You attend a good school with many things that are outstanding. Congratulations!

Yours sincerely

Michael Onyon

Lead Inspector

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