

# St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133652
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	316179
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Shepherd

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Shaun O'Neill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Peter Mackie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Ragpath Lane Stockton-on-Tees TS19 9AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 672262
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 393582

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area with social and economic circumstances that are lower than average. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The school has been through a considerable number of changes since the previous inspection. After the amalgamation of two former schools, staff and pupils moved into one of the old buildings, where accommodation was cramped and then moved on again to a new building. The Foundation Stage staff, under new leadership, has only been working together since the beginning of the year. The provision is in one unit with shared facilities for Nursery and Reception rather than two separate classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. One of its key strengths is the determination of the headteacher and all staff to raise standards and support pupils' personal development despite all the many changes that the school has undergone since the previous inspection. They have achieved a good measure of success since the previous inspection and demonstrated a good capacity for future improvement, particularly as staff and pupils are now settled into the new purpose built accommodation. Parents appreciate the school's provision. A typical comment was, '...at St Gregory's he has received a solid foundation not only in education but in life skills.'

Another key strength is the way staff use whole school systems consistently through the school. Leaders have introduced changes sensibly and monitored work to ensure everyone is carrying them out in the same way. As a consequence, pupils' make good progress through the school and achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and more able pupils. Pupils begin Year 1 below the expected level. By the end of Year 2 standards are close to national averages and by the time pupils leave the school, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics, and above average in science, where there is a clear emphasis on investigative science.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their work and behave well. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and appreciate the playground friends system. Pupils contribute well to the community and the school council plays an effective part in developing the work of the school. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Teaching and learning are good. The marking of pupils' work is very detailed and linked closely to national curriculum levels. It gives pupils a very clear understanding of what they need to do next although teachers sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce individual targets in lessons. The curriculum is satisfactory and has some important strengths. The school has worked hard to improve its English and mathematics curriculum to match that of science: it is now well balanced in these subjects. It is not so effective in other subjects where the work is not stimulating enough and does not always match pupils' needs or interests. Opportunities are missed to extend literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Some pupils, who are withdrawn from lessons for additional support, miss out on aspects of the work being taught in the main class. The curriculum for personal development is good.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a clear educational direction and senior teachers all play their part to improve the work of the school. Governance is good. The school provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory and ensures that children make steady progress. The coordinator has a clear determination to make the recent changes work well to increase the rate of children's learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and assessment is efficient. The teaching team work well together and provide an effective balance between work with adults and independent learning. The independent tasks are interesting but do not provide different levels of challenge to match the needs of the two age groups. The organisation of the teaching areas to provide a wide range of activities across the curriculum is good. Some opportunities are missed to use

the full range of accommodation, particularly the quiet room, to ensure that groups or whole class sessions are not interrupted by the other age group. The team are working well to extend the outdoor learning area but do not ensure that it is always readily accessible for children to use. Care, support and guidance are good and this promotes children's social development well.

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

- In the Foundation Stage:
- ensure shared independent tasks match the needs of the different year groups
- use the shared accommodation more efficiently
- provide a more stimulating curriculum that matches pupils' needs and interests more closely
- increase teachers' use of pupils' individual targets in lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Children enter the school with levels of experience and skill which are lower than is typical for their age and with some speech and language difficulties. They make satisfactory progress. By the end of Reception, whilst some children are reaching the expected level, there is a higher proportion than usual who do not, particularly in language and literacy. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils make consistently good progress building on previous learning. By the end of Year 2 standards are near to average and by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with those nationally in English and mathematics, while those in science are above average. This is due to a very well balanced science curriculum, which teachers use consistently from Year 1 through to Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well due to the thorough coverage of basic skills. Achievement of more able pupils is good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school, reflected in the improving attendance rates which are now broadly average. Despite several pupils having behavioural disabilities, behaviour is consistently good through the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and settle quickly to their independent tasks in lessons. They have a good understanding of the importance of keeping safe and healthy and particularly enjoy a good variety of sports. The system of playground friends works well and pupils appreciate the support given by these pupils. Children work cooperatively together and are confident to voice their own opinions. Contributions to the community are good. There is an active school council, which identifies key areas for improving the school and carries out fund-raising to support these needs. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory. They develop satisfactory basic skills and have a good understanding of the importance of ecological issues. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers work very closely with the support staff, which results in pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities making good progress.. In the best lessons the support staff play a very active part in whole-class sessions, which

provides the pupils with additional challenge. Teachers' marking is of a consistently high quality and gives pupils a very good understanding of how to improve their work. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use these individual targets to reinforce learning during lessons. All teachers manage behaviour well and this results in a calm and purposeful context for learning. Opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons, work well to promote their speaking and listening skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths but also some weaknesses. The school has worked hard to provide a well balanced science curriculum which has had a significant impact on standards over time. Weaknesses in English and mathematics have been addressed and there is now a clear structure in place used consistently by all the teachers. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in these subjects. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has a clear focus on basic skills and works well, contributing to their good progress. The pupils' have a very positive attitude to learning but the time spent in the withdrawal sessions results in pupils sometimes missing out on the learning being covered in the main class. There are insufficient opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects and much of the curriculum content lacks interest, failing to meet the pupils' needs. The school provides a wide range of additional activities and clubs out of school, which enrich the pupils' lives, for example, the choir.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school prides itself on its good quality care, guidance and support for pupils. Teaching assistants play an important part in supporting individuals. The school has a good range of partnerships with outside agencies to complement their own provision. Safeguarding systems are in place, including child protection and risk assessments. Staff use the systems for tracking pupils' progress consistently well and there is a clear emphasis on reading, writing and mathematical skills. The school is now in a good position to compare individual's progress in the national curriculum levels across these different basic skills. The school supports pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher takes a clear lead in raising standards of both academic and personal development and has the support of senior leaders who are determined to take the work of the school forward. Together with the headteacher and governors, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A key result of the leaders' effective management of change is that the school has sustained and built on its standards over time despite the many major changes that have taken place since the previous inspection. Key staff monitor standards and pupils' work efficiently and the school is now in a good position to extend the monitoring of lessons to more coordinators. Governance is good. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's work and their monitoring includes visits to classrooms. The two staff teams from the different schools are now working well together demonstrating a good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 9AD

Thank you for being so very welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering our questions. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

You go to a good school. We were impressed with how well you behave and how quickly you settle down to work. We enjoyed talking to your school council and we think that they work hard to make your school a better place. Raising money to get some new shelves for the children in your Nursery and Reception will really help these children to see the books better. We think that you have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and your playground friends system is working well. You make good progress from Year 1 through to when you leave school and you do particularly well in science. Your teachers mark your work very carefully and give you clear targets so that you know what to do next to improve. They are going to talk to you more about this in lessons. Your school has worked hard to get your English and mathematics curriculum to be as good as your science curriculum. They are now going to work on making the other subjects more interesting and you can do your best to improve your literacy and numeracy skills in these other lessons. Your staff in the Reception and Nursery are working hard to change the way those classes work together. They plan interesting activities and they are going to make sure that they use all the different parts of the building better in future to help you to learn even more.

We think that your headteacher and governors work hard with the rest of your staff to keep improving your school. They make sure that they look after you carefully. Your teachers work really well with your teaching assistants to help you to learn.

We really enjoyed inspecting your school and we wish you all the best for your future education.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd

Lead inspector