

Grayrigg CofE School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112320 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 395754 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 June 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Jean Kendall HMI |

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

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|--|-------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 35 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Nigel Davis |
| Headteacher | Denise Gallagher |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 November 2007 |
| School address | Grayrigg Kendal LA8 9BU |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent five hours observing teaching and learning, seeing both full-time teachers teach mathematics and literacy. It was not possible to observe part-time teachers. The inspector carried out a full scrutiny of all pupils' work alongside the headteacher. She spoke to pupils and listened to a number of pupils reading. The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and had a telephone conversation a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the school's monitoring, self-evaluation, action planning and policies. She took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and the 17 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers. She also took account of questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Grayrigg is much smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves a small village and surrounding rural areas. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school did not meet the current floor standards in 2011, which set the government's minimum expectation for attainment and progress. However, cohorts are so small that percentages are subject to significant fluctuations year on year.

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

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|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall Effectiveness | 4 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 4 |

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.
- The school is not satisfactory because essential systems such as monitoring, reviewing and planning for improvement are not sufficiently embedded to enable the school to improve. Teaching and achievement are satisfactory but have declined since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is inconsistent across key stages and subjects. Pupils make rapid progress at Key Stage 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are happy and enjoy school, but activities are not sufficiently broad or challenging to help them learn as well as they could. Pupils generally make good progress in reading and mathematics across the whole school, but their progress in writing is slower.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2 where activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs. However, the presentation of pupils' work varies in quality and feedback from teachers is not sufficiently focused on helping them to improve. Pupils have too few opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences at Key Stage 1; this limits the development of their writing skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and they are cared for very well. Pupils are happy, cooperative and respectful of each other during lessons and at play. They feel safe and are enthusiastic learners. Staff are encouraging, constantly building pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Leadership and management at all levels are inadequate because improvement planning is not followed through with sufficient rigour and the school has been unable to secure improvements since the last inspection. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are ineffective and policies relating to teaching, assessment, marking and presentation of work are not consistently applied. The

governing body is developing strongly now, but has been subject to disruption in the past two years. A small but significant minority of parents and carers find communication with the school difficult and feel that they are not sufficiently involved in their children's education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management at all levels, within the next six months, by:
 - developing systematic approaches to monitoring, performance management and school improvement planning and regularly reviewing the impact of actions
 - engaging effectively with parents and carers so that all feel well informed about their children's progress and the school's achievements
 - developing leadership roles across the school, particularly in relation leading on key improvement issues
 - strengthening the role of the governing body in communicating with parents and carers and in evaluating the progress of the school.
- Ensure consistently good teaching so that all groups of pupils make good progress by:
 - consistently applying policies for assessment, marking and presentation of work so that pupils know what they have to do to improve
 - ensuring that targets for improvement are clear and pupils have opportunities to respond to feedback and marking
 - broadening the range of writing experiences for pupils at Key Stage 1
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and apply key skills across all subjects at all key stages.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children make good progress across all areas of learning by:
 - making sure activities that children take part in independently in and out of doors provide sufficient challenge and interest to extend their knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that the teaching of new knowledge and skills, including that of sounds and letters (phonics), progresses at a rapid pace.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start in the Reception class with limited experience of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's physical and mathematical skills are often well developed but their language and social development is generally more limited and below that which is typical for children their age. Children settle well because they feel safe and happy. They make satisfactory progress from their starting points and are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. However, their knowledge and skills do not progress as quickly as they could because some activities are not sufficiently well matched to their learning needs and lack challenge.

Pupils make satisfactory, but uneven, progress across the rest of the school. They make good progress in their personal and social development because staff are encouraging and

help pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils make more rapid progress at Key Stage 2 where activities are well matched to their ability and interests and lessons engage all pupils in active learning. They make slower progress at Key Stage 1 because there are times when some pupils are occupied with tasks that do not fully challenge them. Pupils' achievement in writing lags behind reading and mathematics. This is because skills are not taught explicitly enough and expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are not consistently applied.

The majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress, although a small number expressed concerns about the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The inspection found that all pupils make satisfactory progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have begun to make more rapid progress recently, as their progress is more carefully tracked and support is targeted to specific learning needs. Pupils with social and behavioural needs make excellent progress because they are very well supported to manage their learning and behaviour by both staff and other pupils. This is reflected by parents and carers who referred to the 'remarkable transformation' of children and the 'great learning experience' they have had.

Year-on-year comparisons with national attainment benchmarks are not relevant. This is because cohorts are very small and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs can vary significantly. Most pupils attain in line with national expectations in standardised tasks in Year 2 and Year 6, when their prior attainment is taken into account and some pupils in the current Year 6 cohort have made better than expected progress. Pupils' attainment in reading is generally in line with or above the national expectation at both key stages.

Quality of teaching

Although teaching is satisfactory the quality varies across key stages and aspects of the curriculum. Most parents and carers feel that their children receive good teaching. There is some good teaching which is well planned to provide just the right level of challenge and support for pupils of all ability in the mixed-age classes. It builds on prior learning effectively and is supported by the teachers' clear explanation. This was seen in a good mathematics lesson, where pupils from Years 3 to 6 enjoyed collecting and interpreting data in different ways and older pupils worked out averages and frequency of occurrence. In this lesson, the teacher planned activities and used resources that appealed to pupils' interests to keep them all actively engaged throughout the lesson.

However, there is also some less effective teaching, where pupils do not make the progress they are capable of because some activities occupy them but do not further their learning. Teaching is weaker in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the teaching of new knowledge and skills, including the sounds that letters represent (phonics), does not proceed at a sufficiently rapid pace to secure good progress for all children. Some activities that children are able to choose independently lack challenge for the more-able children, and there is limited scope for children to use the outdoors due to difficulties in supervision. The teaching of writing is weaker across the school and pupils' presentation of their work is too variable in quality. Pupils have limited opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences at Key Stage 1 and so do not develop a broad vocabulary and an understanding of the features of different types of writing. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, the feedback does not give pupils clear points for improvement nor do pupils always have opportunity to act on feedback. A few parents and carers expressed a concern that the

feedback given to children after homework is poor. Consequently, pupils and their parents and carers are not as clear as they could be about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Positive relationships and caring approaches by all staff are features of all teaching. Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved recently and these pupils are now well supported in personal tuition sessions and in class. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in all aspects of school life so that all pupils are confident to contribute their views and feel valued. Pupils develop a good understanding of moral and cultural issues through the curriculum and various additional activities, as illustrated in an assembly focusing on the results of their fund-raising for a school in Rwanda. They are reflective and have well developed social skills, which are constantly reinforced in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and this is a perception shared by parents, carers and pupils. The school has a positive, friendly and inclusive ethos where all pupils feel valued. Staff and pupils show kindness, consideration and mutual respect for each other, which promotes a safe, caring atmosphere within the school. Consequently, all pupils feel safe and all parents and carers who returned questionnaires agree that their children feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils of all ages work and play happily together. Older pupils show maturity and good leadership skills in supporting younger pupils in both their work and in maintaining their safety. Pupils who sometimes struggle with their behaviour are very well supported by other pupils and staff. They have made excellent gains in their personal and social development. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say bullying is rare and the school deals effectively with any that should occur. This is a view shared by almost all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire, although a very small number feel that the school takes too long to respond to concerns they have raised about bullying in the past.

The friendly, encouraging atmosphere pervades the classrooms. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and teachers successfully help them to build confidence and make good contributions to lessons. Pupils are encouraging and supportive of each other when undertaking collaborative tasks and show very good social, team working and leadership skills. Pupils show perseverance when tackling challenging tasks but their attention understandably wanders when tasks are not fully engaging. The presentation of their work is too variable because expectations for presentation are not made clear to them. Most parents and carers feel that lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour and no disruption was seen during the inspection. Attendance is above average and there was no persistent absence in 2011. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions over the past few years.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate because the school has been unable to consolidate previously good performance and does not have the capacity to secure further improvements. Although improvement plans are focused on the right priorities, they have not been rigorously enough pursued. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress is not systematic and the impact of professional development and performance

management is not routinely followed up or evaluated. Approaches to assessment, marking and teaching are inconsistent and the quality of teaching and curriculum planning is too variable. There is some good practice, but strengths are not used to best effect to inform whole-school improvement and leadership responsibilities of all staff are not clearly enough defined. A minority of parents and carers feel that they cannot communicate with school leaders and that they are not involved sufficiently in supporting their children's learning. The governing body has been through a number of changes and some difficulties which have impeded their role in holding senior leaders to account and acting as critical friends. This is now resolved with a chair in place and a strong governing body that is keen to strengthen relationships with parents and carers and to develop their monitoring role.

Despite these weaknesses, it is clear that all staff and the governing body share a strong commitment to the school, value all the children in it and want them to achieve their best. There are strengths in the care of pupils, the promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their safety and well-being. As a result, pupils are happy and develop as well-rounded individuals.

Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements. The school is highly inclusive and welcoming, so pupils are happy and develop as well-rounded individuals. The promotion of equality and tackling discrimination is integral to all aspects of its work. Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum, which includes forest school activities and many enrichment opportunities, which are particularly strong in promoting leadership skills and team working. However there is some weak practice, including lack of opportunity for pupils to reinforce their key literacy and mathematical skills across subjects and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, making curriculum planning inadequate overall.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
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| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grayrigg CofE School, Kendal, LA8 9BU

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I came to inspect your school. I was impressed by your good behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and the way you all work together. It is clear you are happy in school and feel safe. You have very well developed personal and social skills. Your teachers care for you and want you to achieve your best. There is some good teaching and some exciting activities that enrich your education.

However, there are some aspects of the school's work that are not as good as they could be. I have given the school a notice to improve which means that another inspector will come to check on how well the school is doing in six to eight months time. They will be keen to gather your views.

There are three areas for improvement.

- Improve leadership and management, particularly with regard to planning for improvement and engaging effectively with all your parents and carers.
- Make sure teaching is consistently good so you make good progress in all key stages and subjects, including in writing.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children in the Reception class make more rapid progress.

I know all staff, governors and school leaders are keen to bring about these improvements quickly. I am sure your parents and carers will want to help by working positively with them for the benefit of the whole school. I would like to wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

