

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Ostley Bank, Newbarns, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA13 9LR

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is highly valued by pupils, their families, staff and the local community.
- All staff contribute to the caring and supportive atmosphere. This encourages pupils to do well in all aspects of their academic achievement and personal development.
- From an early age, children enjoy school and are very keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is often exemplary. Pupils feel happy and safe.
- Children get off to a good start with their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress during their time in school.
- Pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils making the expected rate of progress is higher than that found nationally.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school as is spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers provide good guidance and advice to help pupils with ways to improve their learning.
- There are many interesting activities in lessons which the pupils enjoy. They particularly like learning outdoors and the many trips and visitors to the school which capture their imagination and bring their learning to life.
- This is an improving school. Leaders have successfully introduced changes to enhance further the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The dedicated governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, activities in lessons do not provide the appropriate level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Teachers do not always adapt lessons quickly enough to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to solve challenging mathematical problems and explain how they have worked things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 teachers and visited 16 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, senior staff and subject leaders, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, its development plans, records of pupils’ attainment and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils’ work.
- The inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and an additional 21 responses received during the inspection were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Since the previous inspection the school has gained UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award and continues to hold Healthy School status, Activemark and Eco (Bronze) Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thereby drive pupils' progress at an even faster rate, especially in mathematics, by:
 - planning work precisely enough to provide appropriate challenge for pupils of all levels of ability to ensure that they reach their full potential
 - regularly checking pupils' understanding of their work during lessons and quickly adapting the lesson when pupils find work too easy or too hard
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to independently solve mathematical problems and explain their working out.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children settle very well when they join the Nursery and Reception classes due to excellent transition arrangements between school and home. They quickly develop an understanding of how to play and learn well together. Children demonstrate their understanding of knowing right from wrong and show respect for each other and the adults around them.
- Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age, although this does vary from year to year. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues in Years 1 and 2. They join Year 3 with attainment levels which are higher than those typical for their age, particularly in reading.
- From an early age, children develop a love of books. They learn effectively how to link letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). As a result, significantly more than the national average achieve the expected level in reading in Year 1 and at the higher levels at the end of both key stages.
- After a dip in 2012, attainment in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6 is now above national levels because of increased opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' writing skills. There is a whole-school and systematic approach to teaching mathematics which ensures pupils have secure mental mathematics skills to help with problem solving.
- The proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in English and mathematics from their individual starting point is generally higher than that found nationally, although stronger in English than mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Most pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make the same good progress as other pupils because of timely and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants. Similarly, those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is at least similar, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils in school in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and some teaching is outstanding.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers plan lessons to ensure pupils are given work to get the best out of them. Consequently, pupils learn rapidly because the activities in lessons are usually well matched to their ability and they are finding out things for themselves.
- An example of this was seen in a Key Stage 1 science lesson. The teacher grasped the attention of pupils by telling the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. They enthusiastically discussed their thoughts with their partners about what makes plants grow before embarking on planting their own seeds and labelling the pots to show the various sizes of seeds planted. Pupils of all abilities were highly engaged and enjoying their learning which had been designed to stretch and challenge their literacy skills alongside their scientific knowledge. All pupils made outstanding progress.
- In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson pupils were challenged to test the Pythagoras theorem with a series of problems to solve. Initially, some pupils struggled and the teacher appropriately adapted the lesson so that the pupils could understand more clearly how to approach working out the problems. By the end of the lesson pupils made good progress, having applied their secure mental mathematics skills and knowledge of how to use calculators to find square roots of numbers.
- Occasionally, when the activities do not meet the needs of all ability ranges fully, some pupils find the work too easy and others too hard. Teachers do not always adapt their teaching quickly enough when this is the case. There are times when pupils are not given enough time to work

out mathematical problems for themselves and explain how they had reached their answers.

- Teachers insist on good presentation across all work and pupils take pride in what they do. Marking is thorough and ensures pupils know how to improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants who support those with special educational needs, pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and those for whom English is not their first language are well trained to provide for the individual learning needs of each pupil. They always encourage pupils to do their best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- In an assembly attended by inspectors Year 3 pupils read a prayer they had written, expressing that they were 'thankful for all the teachers and children who help to make Holy Family a wonderful school'. From an early age, young children learn to value each other and their school community. This leads to pupils feeling happy, safe and secure. This is reflected in their above-average attendance and their punctuality in the mornings, which is very good indeed.
- There is an exceptional atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school. This is reflected in all of the responses to the staff questionnaire, all parents who talked to the inspectors, the school's surveys exploring the views of parents and the views expressed on Parent View.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school and this results in extremely good attitudes to learning. The Year 6 play leaders organise activities for the younger children at lunchtimes and act as extremely good role models. Similarly, older pupils are motivated by visits from secondary school pupils who help Key Stage 2 pupils develop their German speaking skills.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at this school, although they do learn about different types of bullying and, for example, how to stay safe when using the internet. They are adamant that they could turn to any adult in the school if they felt unsafe and that there are clear procedures that would deal with issues should they arise. Pupils and their parents believe they are extremely well cared for at school.
- Pupils' experiences are enhanced through a range of well-managed trips, before- and after-school activities and outdoor opportunities. All staff give freely of their own time and an example of this was seen when the site manager was leading the gardening club, which the pupils were clearly enjoying. Music and sport are key features of the school and pupils regularly compete in and win national and regional competitions.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a good understanding of how to drive whole-school improvement. The school's systems to check pupils' progress are strong. Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching and measure effectively how well staff are meeting their various areas of responsibility. All staff, including newly qualified teachers, are well supported through training opportunities both within the school and beyond. Improvements to the quality of teaching are clearly evident.
- Since the previous inspection there have been improvements to the outdoor areas. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore things for themselves, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- The local authority effectively provides guidance for the school with 'light-touch' support.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. During the inspection Year 2 pupils benefited from a visit to a local farm whilst Years 5 and 6 respectively attended a local secondary school for an art class and a citizenship scheme. The school has a sharp focus on literacy and numeracy development through a wide range of experiences.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and supports pupils in making an excellent contribution to the positive atmosphere in school. Pupils are aware of different religions

and cultures and this is made real for them with, for example, their link with a school in Germany.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is committed to continually driving improvements at this school. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. They have an accurate overview of overall provision. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team. Governors challenge staff on pupils' progress and have a secure understanding of data. This level of enquiry and accountability contributes to shaping the short- and long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching which is linked to teachers' salary progression based on meeting performance management targets. They check that staff make effective use of pupil premium funding to ensure equality of opportunity and that all groups of pupils achieve well.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112366
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	413009

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Allington
Headteacher	Kate Waplinton
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2010
Telephone number	01229 828018
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	manager@holyfamily.cumbria.sch.uk

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