

# Grayrigg CofE School

Grayrigg, Kendal, Cumbria, LA8 9BU

## Inspection dates

2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Although all pupils are now making faster progress than they used to, their progress and attainment in writing still lags behind that seen in reading and mathematics.
- At Key Stage 1, the more-able pupils are not achieving as highly as they could, especially in spelling and writing.
- The standard of presentation and handwriting in some Key Stage 2 pupils' books is often careless.
- The routines that school leaders have put in place to check the school's performance and to share good practice between schools are still at an early stage of development.
- In the long-term absence of the permanent headteacher, there is some uncertainty about the future leadership of the school. Consequently, it is difficult for the governors to have complete confidence in their long-term plans.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Pupils of all ages are making faster progress than they were at the time of the last inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made good progress this year.
- Over the past year, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Teaching at the school is now good and some is outstanding. However, it is taking time, particularly at Key Stage 1, for this better teaching to overcome the slower progress of the past.
- Parents express overwhelmingly positive views about the school. They say communication between home and school is good and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They feel exceptionally safe and secure in school.
- Pupils show care and consideration to others and willingly take on jobs that help with the smooth running of the school.
- Relationships at all levels are positive. Pupils say that bullying does not happen and that disagreement is rare.
- The acting headteacher, supported by the governors, has put effective systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. As a result school leaders know how well the school is doing and have a clear understanding about what the school needs to do to improve further.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. The inspector also visited a school assembly and inter-school sports event; observed break times, the start of a cycle safety training session and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, school staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and six governors. In addition, the inspector had a telephone conversation with a local authority school improvement adviser and a national leader in education, who has been working closely with the school.
- The inspector took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), talked to parents on the school playground and received 17 handwritten communications from parents.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, and records of governing body meetings. The work in pupils' books and records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- Grayrigg CofE School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils currently at the school are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action is also similar to that seen in most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care, and pupils who have parents serving in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are two classes at the school: one with the Reception children and Key Stage 1 pupils and the other with Key Stage 2 pupils. The headteacher has a significant teaching commitment.
- Since the last inspection, the Key Stage 2 class teacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher due to the long-term absence of the permanent headteacher. In the absence of the permanent headteacher, the younger class is being taught by a temporary teacher.
- Since July 2012, the school has been supported by a national leader in education, who is the headteacher at a partner school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and quicken progress in writing, at both Key Stages 1 and 2 , so that they are in line with the better achievement seen in reading and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that, in Key Stage 1, the teaching of spelling always builds carefully on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the more-able pupils do as well as possible
  - making sure that all pupils get plenty of opportunity to write for a variety of reasons and in different subjects
  - making high standards of presentation and handwriting a routine expectation across the school.
- Strengthen leadership and management, in order to build on the improvements seen since the last inspection, by :
  - resolving the uncertainty about the long-term leadership of the school
  - maintaining, and improving, working relationships with other local schools in order to learn from good practice and share expertise
  - making sure that the governors continue to check that the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are working as they should.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Progress for all pupils has improved since the last inspection, but there is still some lost ground to be made up due to the slower progress of the past. In Key Stage 1, the more-able pupils are still not doing as well as they could, particularly in their spelling and writing. In Key Stage 2, the standards and the progress pupils make in writing lag behind that reached in reading and mathematics.
- Children's skills and experiences on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year-to-year but, over time, are generally typical for their age. They settle quickly into the Reception/Key Stage 1 class because adults make sure that their needs are met. It is clear that the children who started school at the beginning of this academic year have made good progress, particularly in their early literacy, and are very well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- During their time in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make faster progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, they reach above-average standards in reading and mathematics, but the standard reached in writing is only just in line with the average expectations for their age and, for some pupils, this is not good enough.
- The very small numbers of pupils in each year group makes it difficult to draw any helpful conclusions about any differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils. However, it is true to say that all identifiable groups within the school, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, boys, girls, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are all doing equally as well as each other.
- These small numbers do mean that individual learning needs can be identified and their progress tracked with a high degree of precision. This aspect of the school's work has recently improved. Staff regularly collect and use information about pupils' progress and achievements to make sure that all talents are recognised and celebrated, and that the necessary support is given when required. In this way, the school makes sure that all pupils receive the attention that they need and have equal access to all that goes on at Grayrigg Primary.
- The school's focus on reading, including the systematic teaching of phonics (sounds that letters represent) as soon as children start school, is paying off. Standards of reading at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above average. Pupils read in school every day, in a dedicated reading time and as an integral part of many lessons. Pupils of all ages and abilities talk about books with enthusiasm and enjoy listening to stories in school.

### The quality of teaching

### is good

- All pupils are making faster progress because teaching has improved. The quality of teaching at the school is good and some, in Key Stage 2, is outstanding.
- Imaginative classroom management and some quirky devices and routines, such as table top buzzers, amusing tunes and sayings, help to focus everyone's attention, make lessons fun, and ensure sure that all learning time is used well.
- Teachers' strategies for managing pupils' behaviour and the positive trusting relationships that exist between staff and pupils, means that all are motivated to learn. Pupils of all ages work hard, persevere with tasks and, in the very best lessons, demonstrate a high degree of independence.
- Lessons are organised to meet the wide range of learning needs in the mixed-age classes. In one very effective teaching session about measurement, for example, Key Stage 2 pupils were at various stages of learning about how to measure angles. Skilful questioning and careful listening by staff and pupils meant that all were given work that built carefully on their current understanding and helped them to learn more. As a result all made excellent progress: their knowledge increased, their skills improved and their confidence grew.
- The quality of work in pupils' books and records from lesson observations made by different

education professionals who have been working with the school over the past year confirms that the quality of teaching seen during the inspection is typical.

- While the higher expectations of teachers are clearly apparent in the improved standard and quantity of work completed, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is still too variable; there is some careless work. Regular opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different reasons are helping them to make faster progress in their writing, although the quality of writing in subjects other than English is not as good as it could be. There is still some way to go in order for some pupils to reach the ambitious targets for writing that have now been set for them.
- Teachers' marking is detailed and provides sharply-focused guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work. In both classes, pupils are given time to reflect upon teachers' feedback and consider ways to improve their previous work before they move on to new learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel very safe. They know that their ideas, concerns and general observations about their experiences will be listened to and valued. When asked to describe school life, one pupil said, 'Well, there's never a dull day. There's always lots going on and most of it is fun, even the lessons.'
- Behaviour in class, around the school and in the playground is always good, and at times is exemplary. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and show a caring interest in others.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibility and always rise to the expectations placed upon them. Key Stage 2 pupils regularly organise events and help out in practical ways; answering the school phone, for example. In every instance, they act with maturity and common sense.
- An inter-school sports event, hosted at Grayrigg during the inspection, required all the older pupils to take on a significant level of responsibility. All were equal to the task and they demonstrated high levels of initiative. Parents, staff and pupils report that this is typical.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying or discrimination does not happen. They understand what it is, in all its forms, and say that no-one would tolerate it at Grayrigg School. Pupils are also confident that if there is something they cannot sort out for themselves, then an adult will be on hand to help.
- Pupils can explain how the school helps them to learn how to keep themselves safe and to prepare for life in the wider world. They speak in an informed way about how to stay safe when using roads, water and the internet. Cycle training sessions, led by expert volunteers, give older pupils the chance to learn about safe practices and potential dangers in a well-supervised real-life situation.
- Since the last inspection, the school has tightened up its procedures for recording and checking patterns of attendance. It is clear that most pupils are punctual and attend school regularly, but a few families show a rather casual attitude to good school attendance and their children arrive late or miss some days unnecessarily.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Actions taken by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching have been successful. The pace of change seen over the past two terms has been remarkable. This is an improving school. Nevertheless, there is still more to do in order to build upon the changes so far and push pupils' achievement higher, particularly in writing. The current uncertainty about the future leadership of the school means that it is difficult for the governors to have complete confidence in their plans for these future improvements.
- The acting headteacher has stepped up to her new responsibilities with energy and competence. Her leadership of teaching and learning is well informed. She regularly observes staff at work and knows what still needs to be done in order to get the best possible standards from the

pupils. As she is new to this role, she is still finding her way with some aspects of leadership, such as staff management and pay related matters. However, she is responsive to advice, and her infectious enthusiasm has created a sense of productive team spirit.

- The school has strengthened its links with other schools, including involvement in the Kendal Collaborative Partnership, and has benefited from the support given by a national leader in education. In addition, the local authority has provided a tailor-made programme of support to assist the school and guide it through uncertain times. These partnerships are helping to develop leadership skills across the school and allow all to learn from good practice and to share training and expertise. These links are still at an early stage of development and the benefits of collaborative working have yet to be fully realised.
- Increasingly, subjects are being taught in ways that are relevant to the pupils' interests and promote independence in learning. Worthwhile school trips, including an overnight camp, help pupils to develop a wide range of academic, practical and social skills, and to learn about the wider world.
- Links with parents are strong. The responses on Parent View, and comments in the letters sent in during the inspection, expressed unanimous support for the school. Parents who are new to the school, and those who have known it for a long time, are in agreement that the quality of communication between home and school is good.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is better than it was at the time of the last inspection because governors are more actively involved in running the school and setting its future direction. They are regular visitors in school, helping out in practical ways and gathering information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They have made some well-informed decisions in order to improve teaching at the school. Nevertheless, the systems they have put in place for checking the school's performance are not firmly established because governors are still getting to grips with this role and some key members of staff are employed in temporary positions.
  - Governors make sure that all funds, including the pupil premium, are used in the best interests of the pupils. Governors' improvement plans for the future are supported by some thoughtful financial planning although, currently, some aspects of employment and leadership are undecided.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112320
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	408888

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	28
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Davis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kirsty Cooper, Acting Headteacher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2012
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