

# George Romney Junior School

Cobden Street, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA15 8SE

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
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. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. In recent years, it has not been good enough to enable pupils to achieve consistently well across each year group and across subjects.
- Some teachers do not use all of the assessment information available to them to plan lessons precisely. As a result, they do not always provide activities that are at the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- When work and activities provided for pupils are sometimes too easy and at other times too difficult, teachers do not always adapt their lessons quickly enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for staff to observe good and better teaching.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning is too slow for the most-able pupils and they do not always have enough time to find out things for themselves. This sometimes happens when too much time is spent on whole-class teaching, particularly in literacy lessons.
- Some subject leaders have not checked closely enough that actions put in place have improved the quality of teaching. They do not yet monitor the achievement over time of all groups of pupils in their areas of responsibility.
- There is an overly positive view of the rates of progress made by pupils since the previous inspection. Senior leaders and members of the governing body do not regularly check the progress of groups of pupils across all year groups.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The leadership of the headteacher is driving change. Together with senior leaders and the governing body, they are ensuring that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are now improving more rapidly.
- A new tracking system has been introduced to measure precisely and regularly how well pupils are progressing.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say they feel safe in school. This is reflected in the above-average rate of attendance.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of additional activities which add variety and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven teachers and visited eight lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector 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 leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; governors; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector 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 own performance, its development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils' work in their books.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 14 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. Pupils are taught mainly in three Years 3/4 classes combining mixed abilities and three classes of Years 5/6 pupils. For mathematics, pupils are taught in ability groups.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve teaching and progress across each year group and class so that they are consistently good by making sure that:
  - work is specifically planned and matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly in literacy lessons
  - teachers adapt their lessons quickly when pupils find the work too easy or too hard
  - the pace of lessons allows pupils to make as much progress as possible.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - developing the role of subject leaders in measuring progress made by pupils across every year group and class and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility
  - providing more opportunities for staff to observe good and better teaching across and beyond the school
  - ensuring that senior leaders and governors assess accurately how well all groups of pupils are progressing throughout the school in order to drive continuous improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Results of the 2012 and 2013 national tests for Year 6 pupils and the school's pupil assessment data indicate that progress made by pupils is inconsistent across year groups and subjects. As a result, achievement requires improvement. Progress was particularly poor by the end of Year 6 in mathematics in 2012 and in reading and writing in 2013, but the school has put measures in place to tackle this.
- From year to year, pupils' abilities when they join the school vary but are usually at least in line with national expectations or higher. Standards achieved in Year 6 in 2013 were above the national average in mathematics, reading and writing, but lower than the national average in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Too few pupils reached the higher levels in writing and reading given their starting points in Year 3.
- By the time pupils leave school, most pupils have usually made the progress expected of them in reading and writing, although this was not the case in 2013. Over time, too few pupils do consistently better than this. Improvements in pupils' progress in writing can now be seen because the school has implemented a whole-school approach to teaching writing. There are also more opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. Pupils are making accelerated progress in reading due to the structured approach the school has to the teaching of reading.
- After a dip in 2012, pupils are now making expected progress in mathematics and the proportion making better than expected progress is increasing due to improvements in the teaching of mathematics. Most pupils are secure in their mental mathematics ability and can apply this to a range of problem-solving opportunities across the curriculum.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as with their peers, requires improvement. However, there was evidence during the inspection of programmes of support improving the rate of progress for this group of pupils.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium grant made similar progress to that of their peers in mathematics and writing, but this was not the case with reading. Attainment in mathematics and writing was higher than the national average for this group nationally, but in reading, it was lower. The gaps in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school are narrowing in English and mathematics. However, they are generally a term behind other pupils in mathematics and two terms behind in English. Therefore, the promotion of equal opportunities is not yet fully effective.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across all lessons, either over time or as seen during the inspection.
- Teachers do not always use the information on how well pupils are progressing to plan precisely activities for the range of abilities in their class. There was evidence during the inspection of literacy lessons where too long was spent on whole-class introductions. This holds the most-able pupils back and prevents them from getting on with their work and moving on more quickly.
- When teachers set work that is not at the correct level and the pace of learning is too slow for pupils, they do not make the progress that they should. Teachers do not always adapt their lessons quickly enough when, occasionally, pupils find the work too hard and at other times too easy.
- In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons well together and work very effectively as a team in class. A range of stimulating activities is designed to meet the needs of the full range of pupils' abilities and the pace of learning in these lessons is swift.
- An example of this was seen in an English lesson with Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. The starter activity to engage pupils in using correct punctuation was planned extremely well to meet the

needs of the wide range of pupils' abilities. Highly stimulated by the idea of responding to a letter from the local council to help save the school's outdoor environmental area, the pupils worked very effectively in small groups to share ideas and opinions to be included in their writing. Pupils made outstanding progress during this lesson as a result of outstanding teaching.

- In a lesson with Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrated their secure mental mathematics ability to help solve problems using different methods of measurement. The teacher very effectively questioned pupils about the methods they used to reach their answers and good progress was made.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning when instructed well by the teacher. They always encourage pupils to do their best.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in teachers' marking and pupils are now regularly given time to edit and improve their work.

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

- There is an atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school. Parents told the inspector that their children really do enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in above-average attendance. Together with a network of schools, George Romney now employs an education welfare officer to work with a small minority of families on improving attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. During the inspection, they behaved well. School records confirm that good behaviour is typical. Occasionally, when activities are not accurately matched to pupils' abilities, they become sidetracked from their learning. There are good systems in place and effective links with external agencies for the small minority of pupils who need support in choosing appropriate behaviour.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and falling out. They are aware of different forms of bullying and can explain, with clarity, the dangers of making friends 'on line'. Pupils are confident that there is little bullying and, should it occur, it is dealt effectively with by adults.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and learn how to stay safe beyond school. There are regular visits from the police and other professionals to support and encourage safety at all times.
- The older children enjoy their various roles and responsibilities. Some volunteer to train as sports leaders to encourage active play with the younger pupils at lunchtimes. Others run the tuck shop at break times and help to clear the hall after lunch.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in sports to help them stay healthy and promote well-being. Trophies displayed near to the school entrance illustrate how well they achieve in competitive sports. The primary school sport funding is to be allocated towards working with external coaches. This is to improve the skills of staff so that they can teach a wider range of sporting activities to a higher standard.

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

- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement because the school has not been able to maintain good progress and higher standards across year groups since the previous inspection when the school was judged to be good.
- The headteacher has introduced initiatives to tackle school priorities. There is a new system in place for checking how well pupils are progressing but some subject leaders do not use this precisely enough to improve achievement in their areas of responsibility across the school.
- Teaching is closely checked by the headteacher in conjunction with the local authority, which continues to provide effective support. Staff are encouraged to attend training that fits with school priorities and their own developmental needs. However, there are too few opportunities for teachers to observe good and better teaching across and beyond the school.
- Targets are set for all teachers and school leaders to check on their performance. Systems are

now in place to reward teachers where performance is good or better and to deal with underperformance.

- The improved curriculum includes more opportunities to learn from real-life situations such as using the outdoor environment. The Barrow Engineering Project is increasing pupils' engagement in design, technology and engineering. One member of staff described the curriculum as now being 'exciting, engaging and relevant'. Inspection findings support this view.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The inspirational teaching of art ignites pupils' love of art. This is demonstrated by the exceptionally high calibre of artwork displayed around the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. Governors now have an accurate overview of what the school provides. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team. However, governors have not challenged senior leaders, including the headteacher, to account for the inconsistencies in the school's improvement over time. Governors are now more familiar with performance data and are aware of the quality of teaching which is linked to teachers' appraisal. Salary progression is based on teachers meeting targets. Governors check that staff make effective use of pupil premium funding but they have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to reach the standards of which they are capable.

## 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>	112234
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	424598

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joy Lowes
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Reddy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 463002
<b>Fax number</b>	–
<b>Email address</b>	admin@georgeromney.cumbria.sch.uk



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