

St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Schneider Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 4AA

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Regardless of their starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They learn well, developing their speaking and listening skills as well as how to socialise with each other.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. All staff work together extremely well to give good support to pupils, personally and in their learning. Good teaching means that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and take part enthusiastically. Lessons are interesting and good use is made of a wide range of resources.
- Additional adult support for pupils who find learning difficult is effective in helping them to achieve well.
- The school promotes a love of reading from the moment children start school.
- This is a happy school where pupils enjoy learning and playing. Pupils get on extremely well with each other as well as with staff.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. They feel safe in school and are aware of different kinds of bullying.
- Pupils delight in coming to school, which is why attendance is above average.
- The school has good relationships with parents and plays an important role in community life.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors know exactly what the school does well and where improvements are needed. The school is continuing to improve because they have taken decisive actions which are improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged enough during lessons, especially in mathematics and writing.
- There are not enough occasions for pupils to develop and practise their mathematical skills through a wide range subjects.
- Marking of work sometimes fails to show how work can be improved and too little time is set aside for pupils to respond so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Leaders are not in a position to quickly see how well the school is doing because plans for improvement do not provide clear bench marks against which to measure success.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed seven teachers and visited 15 lessons, which included a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, four governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed break time and talked regularly with pupils as they moved around school.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- A range of the school's documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, systems for tracking pupils' progress, documents regarding safeguarding, key policies and pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses of the school's most recent questionnaire for parents alongside 27 responses from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 108 responses to the school's pupils' questionnaire for Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors analysed 17 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Pius X Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- A high proportion of pupils benefit from additional support for their emotional needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government 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 by the local authority.
- The school has an above average proportion of pupils who enter and leave the school part-way through their primary education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.
- The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold and KidSafe UK awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further and raise achievement for all groups of pupils by:
 - making sure that pupils are challenged throughout the whole lesson, especially the most able pupils in mathematics and writing
 - ensure that marking of pupils' work is developed further so that pupils know how to improve their work and have time to respond to teachers' comments
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their mathematical skills throughout other subjects
 - seeking opportunities for teachers to regularly observe outstanding teaching in practice.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by refining the school development plan so that there are specific reference points for success that can be measured easily.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for children of this age, especially in reading, writing and numbers. They make good progress because they are taught well and benefit from many different exciting activities. The teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) is good. Children enjoy sharing a book with an adult, making letter shapes on each other's backs or using brightly coloured play dough to make letters and words.
- The school is committed to making sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those whose first language is not English and those who need additional support for their emotional needs make good progress across the school. Parents agree that their children make good progress.
- Pupils' good progress in reading through Years 1 and 2 is built on from the teaching in the Reception class. By the end of Year 1, results in the national phonics screening check show that the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard is now above average. Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are rising and the school's most recent assessments signal that this will continue.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading in the Year 6 national tests in 2012 and 2013 has been average, while the number making above expected progress in reading has risen in 2013 to well above the national average. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading, and the recently established school library provides pupils with good opportunities to choose new books to read at home or at school. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading overtime have been average.
- Although pupils' progress was good by the end of Year 6 in 2013, standards in mathematics and writing were below average, whereas in 2012 they were average. However, pupils' targets for reading, writing and mathematics, as well as recent teachers' assessments, indicate that standards should rise in mathematics and writing in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who are eligible for pupil premium funding make similar good progress to other pupils. This is because of the strong working relationships between teachers and teaching assistants and the opportunities pupils have through enrichment and intervention on a one-to-one basis or small group support.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to increase the progress of eligible pupils. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally. The school is focused on closing this gap in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics rapidly.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times have a wide range of abilities. Their needs are identified quickly and, if needed, additional support is put in place to make sure they also make good progress.
- The school tracks the performance of all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, carefully. Currently, these pupils are making good progress especially in reading. For instance, in 2013, Year 6 pupils achieving the higher level, was well above the national average in the Year 6 national tests. However, pupils aspiring to the higher levels in both Key Stages 1 and 2 in writing and mathematics are not always challenged enough by the work they are given in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- All parents who responded to the school's most recent questionnaire feel that their children are well taught. The lively classrooms and stimulating displays make a positive contribution to pupils' good attitudes and achievement. Pupils' work and their enjoyment of learning indicate that teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Practical and interesting tasks, together with excellent relationships between adults and pupils,

help pupils to be ready to learn at all times. They work hard, staying focused when working independently, with a partner or in small groups, and this contributes to their enjoyment of learning and good progress.

- The use of well-timed questions during lessons is a regular feature. Questions are gauged carefully and extend pupils' thinking and learning as the lesson is moved along by encouraging pupils to talk and discuss questions with a partner. This helps to support pupils' social development well.
- During lessons, a wide range of resources are used to stimulate pupils' interest. In Year 3, for example, when pupils were reading and performing poetry, very good use was made of the interactive white board to illustrate to pupils how a poet includes rhythm and beat when writing poetry. Pupils clapped the rhythm and beat of the poem while the teacher used a metronome to change the timing of the beat. Pupils responded quickly, clapping faster or more slowly in time with the metronome while learning much about language and poetry.
- During lessons, pupils' work is checked regularly. However, the marking of work is not yet consistently detailed enough in respect of what pupils need to do next in their learning nor are there enough opportunities for pupils to respond.
- There are many occasions when pupils have opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects, but this is not the case for their application of mathematical skills. As a result, the skills that pupils are learning in mathematics are not being fully developed in a wider variety of ways.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They work closely with teachers and skilfully lead sessions, for example phonics, so that pupils can learn effectively in small groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils confirm that this is so and say they enjoy coming to school because they can play with their friends, the school inspires them and they learn new things. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Pupils move sensibly around the school playing together happily at lunch and break times. They are developing the skills that they need to work and cooperate with others successfully as they enjoy their play.
- The atmosphere in the school is highly positive. Pupils are friendly and polite, getting on well with each other and with adults. They participate eagerly and confidently in discussions because they feel secure and understand that what they have to say is respected by adults and other pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe because adults are always there to help them. Pupils look after each other or if they are hurt they know they can go to a first aider. All parents who responded to Parent View said they feel their children are safe in school.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and they can turn to any adult in school when they need help. Through regular sessions by a specialist provider they are aware of different kinds of bullying, such as physical or name calling.
- The school council talks proudly about the contribution pupils make to a wide range of charities, for example, The British Heart Foundation and Children in Need, sometimes by having a non-uniform day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership skills have succeeded in galvanising the whole school so everyone works together harmoniously. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and together they strive for equality of opportunity for all pupils. All the staff are very positive about

every aspect of the school's work.

- Middle managers are eager to improve the school. Their roles are understood clearly, as are the responsibilities they have to make sure the school is even better, thus fully contributing to the school's good capacity to improve.
- Leadership and management of teaching are good. There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching. Regular checks on teaching are made by the headteacher and other leaders not only of lessons but also on lesson planning and pupils' books.
- Training for staff is linked closely to the management of teachers' performance and there are clear links between teachers' pay and pupils' performance. Although teachers do have opportunities to see each other teaching, there are not enough occasions when they observe outstanding teaching.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. It has provided support to the leadership team and assisted the headteacher by carrying out joint observations of teaching.
- The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and the priorities for school improvements in the school development plan are appropriate. However, the criteria for judging the success of the school's initiatives in its development plan are too vague for leaders to be able to judge whether or not improvements have been achieved.
- Singing and music make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils were enthralled during an assembly when Year 4 pupils led the singing and were accompanied with appropriate actions. This was followed by each pupil and adult being invited to copy the actions of one of the Year 4 pupils, as well as join in with the singing. Afterwards, pupils were silent for a while as they absorbed the implications of their participation in the assembly.
- The curriculum is planned well and is enriched by a variety of interesting and topical trips locally and further afield. Pupils have the opportunity to regularly visit local theatres to see evening performances. Recently, school staff and governors accompanied pupils to see a performance of 'Grease'. The school works closely with local businesses and pupils are currently involved with an ongoing science project with a local organisation through the Royal Academy of Engineering.
- Sport in the school is strong with many opportunities for pupils to participate. These opportunities have been expanded through the primary school sports funding so that pupils can now enjoy, for example, cricket and tennis as well as gymnastics and dance. This has given pupils more confidence in trying out different sporting activities and has improved teachers' skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully supportive of the school whilst challenging its performance in its drive to continue to improve the school. It manages finances prudently and checks the effect of spending carefully, for example, the primary school sports funding and is well aware that as a result of the use of the pupil premium funding, those eligible pupils make good progress. Governors know about the quality of teaching in school and are involved in rewarding teachers for their performance. Governors are in school regularly linking with subject leaders as well as individual classes, following the pupils through their school life. Governors are aware that although they understand the information on pupils' progress they could use it better to challenge the school even more. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	112365
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	426252

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Salmon
Headteacher	Amy Bates
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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