

St Bridget's C of E School

Brigham, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0TU

Inspection dates

27–28 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 make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils achieve well because they are valued and motivated. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are above average and, in reading and writing, are well above average.
- Pupils do well because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Lively and interesting topics capture pupils' imagination.
- Relationships in school between pupils and adults are a strength, contributing well to helping pupils to feel safe.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around school helps to make sure that the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils are very positive about their learning and keen to do well.
- Attendance is average. The school works closely with parents to continue to improve attendance.
- Parents are very positive about this thriving school and praise the staff's commitment to their children.
- Strong team work is the key to the school's success. The headteacher, all staff and governors are united in working to meet the many different needs of all pupils. They are having a positive impact on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children do not explore numbers and shapes enough. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their mathematics skills in different subjects.
- The progress pupils make as they work is not checked regularly enough in order to provide further challenge.
- In mathematics, the improved calculations policy is not yet established.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough information about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five teachers and visited eight lessons, which included a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed break time and talked regularly with pupils as they moved around school.
- The inspector 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 responses of the school's most recent questionnaire for parents, alongside 21 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the school's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors analysed 22 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bridget's C of E 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 below 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.
- 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.
- Pupils are taught in five classes; Nursery, Reception with a few Year 1 pupils, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- 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 standard, which is the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has achieved the Healthy School status and the Active Mark award.

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 during lessons, pupils' have their work checked regularly and are given further challenge, if needed
 - developing further teachers' marking so that pupils know how to improve their work and are given sufficient time to respond to comments.
- Speed up the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the recently developed calculations policy is adopted quickly by all teachers
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to problem-solving activities in a range of subjects
 - making sure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have even more opportunities to become familiar with numbers and shapes, both in the classroom and outdoors, especially when they are working on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children flourish in the Nursery and Reception Years where they learn to play with friends, take turns and demonstrate friendly behaviour. This helps them to form good relationships with other children as well as adults at this early stage. This firm foundation supports good progress throughout the school.
- Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age, although their skills are sometimes lower than this, especially in reading and writing. Children make good progress because they enjoy a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors, are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- This good progress is maintained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments show that standards by the end of Year 2 can vary due to the smaller number of pupils in each year group, but in 2013, standards were above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards have risen rapidly in Key Stage 2. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013, show that pupils attained well above average standards in reading and writing, and average standards in mathematics. Current attainment remains well above average in reading and writing and is on target to be above average in mathematics.
- The results of national tests in mathematics suggested that, in the past, an average proportion made the progress expected of them, rather than good progress. The school has a focus on improving mathematics and standards in 2013 were much higher than in 2012. Further actions and targets set for this year indicate that standards will rise even further and progress is now good. However, the recently developed calculations policy is not yet in full use and some pupils are less sure about how to use their skills to solve problems.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress. The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support these pupils. There are insufficient numbers in each year to make an overall judgment on the comparative attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. However, data make it very clear that they make good progress.
- Pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 enjoy reading. Reception children talk confidently about what they can find out on the cover of a book, while Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about favourite authors. By the end of Year 6, pupils' read fluently which is reflected in the Year 6 national test in 2013 when all pupils achieved Level 4 and the proportion of those achieving Level 5 was well above average.
- The strengths in reading are mirrored in pupils' writing, with work being presented neatly with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- The most able pupils make good progress and the number of pupils achieving the higher levels has risen considerably since last year. For example, in the 2013 national tests for Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics and writing has more than doubled. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 shows that the number of pupils achieving Level 3 has tripled in mathematics.
- The school tracks the progress pupils make carefully and monitors how well groups of pupils and individuals are doing. As a result, any pupils who may need additional support are identified quickly. Consequently, the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good, as is the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective, ensuring that each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Pupils who join the school part way through a year have a wide range of differing abilities. Their needs are met quickly and support is put in place swiftly, if needed, to help them make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have an excellent rapport with pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy learning, are happy in school and make good progress.
- Activities hold pupils' attention and are pitched at the right level for the different groups and ages of pupils in the classroom. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils and assess their understanding of what they are learning. During a lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils had to focus on a group of objects, then identify which had been removed when they were not looking. This led to high quality questioning to establish why the object was important or not important in their daily lives.
- As pupils work, they are often given additional guidance and this enhances their learning. However, at times, opportunities to check the work of all pupils regularly during a lesson and to challenge them even further if needed, are not fully exploited.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because routines have been considered carefully to stimulate children's curiosity and give them the best chances to learn. In nursery a group of children was organising baking outdoors. One child chose a tray to make cup-cakes and counted to check that six had been made. Adults in the Early Years Foundations Stage check children's understanding of numbers continually during the wide range of different activities. However, children have few opportunities to explore numbers and shapes on their own.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently, giving lots of praise, but do not provide comments regularly to help pupils know how to improve their work or ensure that pupils have time to respond.
- There is a good range of mathematics in pupils' books.
- The way in which learning is organised provides good opportunities for pupils to share ideas with each other as well as develop strong social and communication skills.
- Teaching of reading, writing and mathematical skills is good and there are opportunities when these skills are used in different subjects. However, there are not enough occasions when pupils apply skills to solve practical mathematical problems in different subjects, such as geography or history.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, pupils are very polite and show consideration for the needs of others, including adults. During lessons pupils are organised, they do what is required of them willingly and follow instructions well. Pupils and all the parents who responded to Parent View agree.
- Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils' behaviour consistently well across the school. Pupils want to learn and listen to adults carefully. Although at times attention can wander when they have been listening for a while or are ready to move on, they remain well behaved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils spoken with said they felt safe in school, using examples such as the school gates being locked, adults in school helping them or teachers always being around. All parents who completed Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe in school.
- The caring ethos of the school means that bullying is very rare and, if it does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different kinds of bullying, for example cyber-bullying.
- Attendance is average and rising in response to actions now in place. Pupils understand the importance of, and enjoy, learning so are keen to come to school.
- Pupils are keen to be involved in helping the school and some are happy to represent their year group on the school council or help with nursery children at break times. School council members talk proudly about the funds raised for different charities, as well as for school. Although they have raised funds to improve playground equipment, they have not yet decided what equipment they would like.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and all staff work extremely well together, complementing each other's strengths and working as a very effective team. The school's evaluations of how well it is doing are accurate and clear, with a sharp focus on pupils' achievement. All staff share a determination to continue to move the school forward, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement.
- Teaching is checked once a term by the headteacher as well as middle leaders, especially the English and mathematics subject leaders. Occasionally, shared visits lead to more precise actions that raise teaching and achievement even further. Leaders use this information well to support staff and only a few concerns remain. Actions to raise attainment are in place, although in mathematics the calculation policy is not yet fully effective.
- The school works closely with other schools in the area, with headteachers and teachers working together. This has resulted in teachers taking on board best practice seen in other schools and the headteacher sharpening her own skills, in judging the quality of teaching and learning, while observing with another headteacher.
- Effective management of staff performance ensures that whole school and individual needs are identified and met often through staff training. Clear systems ensure that teachers' pay relates to their own performance as well as that of their pupils.
- The checks made on pupils' progress trigger effective action, especially in increasing the number of pupils reaching above average levels and raising attainment in mathematics.
- Staff work well with parents who are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are kept well informed and contribute to their children's learning.
- The local authority representative offers effective support, for example, through shared observations of and judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.
- Many activities involving visits, including residential visits for Years 5 and 6 and the involvement of visitors and the local community, especially the church, enrich pupils' work, supporting the good progress they make. Pupils have access to a good range of exciting resources in lessons and to extra-curricular opportunities. Learning outside the classroom is increasing the range of activities the school offers pupils. As a result, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The school is making good use of the new primary school sport funding. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, such as cross-country running, orienteering or tag rugby, many of which they play as a team, challenging other schools. Additional coaching has helped to develop gymnastics and dance, while working alongside teachers to help develop their skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body plays a full role in helping the school to improve. It is rigorous in checking the school's work. Governors have close links with subject leaders and visit lessons, checking for example, how resources recently purchased are used. They are regularly in school, not only to check performance, but also to provide support, for example, with educational visits. As a consequence of knowing the school well, governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching and are aware of the links between pupils' achievement and teachers' salary progression. Data on pupils' progress are analysed and governors have a good understanding of how the school is performing against other schools nationally. They keep a sharp focus on pupils' achievement. They know how well pupil premium funding and the primary school sports funding are spent in order to help pupils in their learning. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are checked regularly.

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	112271
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439563

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Stevenson
Headteacher	Lisa Hemingway
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
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