

St Patrick's CoE School

Endmoor, Kendal , Cumbria, LA8 0HH

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The school has improved considerably over the past two years and improvement is gathering pace. Standards are above average and rising and pupils are making increasingly rapid progress.
- Pupils are being increasingly well taught. Teachers are increasingly open to suggestions about how they can get better and take great pride in showing how they have done so.
- Most pupils are well behaved. They are keen to learn and get on well with each other. They are very friendly and welcoming to visitors and are polite and inquisitive.
- Leadership and management are much improved. The drive to raise standards by improving teaching has been effective. Parents are becoming more confident that their children are getting a good deal.
- The headteacher has been successful in getting staff to work more effectively as a unified team to make sure that every pupil does as well as they can.
- Over the past two years the governing body has supported school improvement particularly well. They know the children and their families well. Parents find governors approachable.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, pupils are not given harder work when the work set for them is too easy, especially in mathematics.
- Too often, pupils get careless with their handwriting, spelling and use of punctuation. Teachers do not always correct them quickly enough.
- Some targets for improvement that teachers are set are not actions to enable them to become more effective.

Information about this inspection

- Seven lessons were observed. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most twice.
- Many informal conversations were held with pupils and staff.
- The inspector met with four governors and a representative of the local authority. He spoke to five parents and took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Samples of pupils' work were checked and also the surroundings in which pupils learn and play.
- The way that staff and governors make sure that pupils are kept safe was checked and also the way staff keep a check on pupils' progress.
- The inspector looked at how good the systems are that leaders, managers and governors use for checking the effectiveness of teachers' performance.
- Plans for improvement were read and discussed with leaders, managers and governors.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club. These are run by a private provider and are open to all children, not only those on the school roll. They were not included in this inspection.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British; there are broadly equal numbers of girls and boys but within each year group there is much variation. Last year there were five boys and two girls in Year 6; this year the figures are reversed.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority). There are no looked-after children.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils is supported at school action and also at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. This varies widely from year to year. In 2013, five out of the seven Year 6 pupils were being given extra support on account of their special educational needs.
- All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teachers:
 - act quickly to improve pupils' writing, including their handwriting, spelling and punctuation
 - give pupils the opportunities to respond to comments in their marked work.
- Ensure all pupils are fully challenged to do as well as they can, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure leaders set appropriate and suitably challenging targets to improve teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment varies widely according to pupils' starting points from year to year. Nearly all pupils make good progress from those points. This includes pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Standards are currently slightly above average in mathematics and writing and well-above average in reading. This is better than was evident last year.
- Older pupils spent several years in a school that was not bringing out the best in them. This is no longer the case. They are catching up because they are being increasingly well taught. Younger pupils are being given the opportunity to build steadily on previous learning because teaching is becoming more consistently good across the school.
- Children of reception age join the school with skills typically as expected for their age. Some are well above this level, others are well below. The proportions vary widely from year to year. Whatever their starting points all develop well and make good progress.
- As they move through the school pupils continue to make good progress. It is a significant achievement that in Year 6 last year, even though five out of seven pupils had special educational needs, the school moved out of the bottom half into the top half of the national list of all schools in the progress pupils were making.
- A few of the more able Year 5 pupils are already exceeding national expectations and are on track for doing even better in Year 6. The more able pupils are given good guidance and support to ensure that this early promise transfers into better results. Achievement in reading is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to love books. Every classroom has relevant texts on prominent display and there is an extremely inviting library. In communal areas there is no escaping books. Lots of time is spent each day encouraging pupils to read and teaching them how to do so well.
- Pupils write with joy and imagination. The content of what they write is often inspirational but it is frequently let down as it is too often characterised by careless spelling mistakes, incorrect use of punctuation and handwriting, even in Year 6. This is a reason why pupils last year got good results for their writing but weaker results in spelling, punctuation and grammar assessments. Teachers are not all acting quickly enough to bring about improvements.
- Mainly in mathematics there are some instances of pupils not being given work which is hard enough when it becomes clear that they can already do what they have been given. Pupils are still making good progress, but it could be better.
- Extra money to promote sport and exercise is being used very well. From a very young age pupils are made aware about the fun of participating. They learn that sport and exercise is often enjoyable and that there is a lot more to it than what they see on television. Being able to use the village tennis courts and employ trained coaches to encourage the youngest children to chase a ball, for fun, but with purpose, does pupils a great service in improving their awareness of a healthy lifestyle.
- The pupil premium is used well to give extra learning support but also to broaden pupils' horizons by funding additional opportunities and after-school activities. Some is used to fund a member of staff as a learning mentor who works with certain pupils to improve their social skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are taught well and are keen to learn. Leaders are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are steadily eliminating weaker teaching through support and training. Teachers have a very good understanding of the importance of promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside their academic learning. This contributes enormously to the ethos of the school and its position in the local community.
- There are strengths in the way pupils learn. Pupils' behaviour is well managed. Extra adults in classrooms, including teaching assistants, students and volunteers are given good information

and instructions so they can get the best out of pupils.

- Teachers have a confident approach. For example, they allow pupils to chat in class, so long as the talk is about their work. They know that when they have something important to say, pupils will quickly be quiet and pay attention.
- There have been improvements to the quality of teaching since the last inspection. For example, teachers are better at using approaches that enable all pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. The marking of pupils' work is better in explaining what they have achieved and what they could do to improve their work.
- Great care is taken to make classrooms places that pupils enjoy being in. For example, they are refreshingly clean and tidy with displays of information and of pupils' best work.
- Teachers have created a wonderful 'book culture'. They display books everywhere. For example, they may also base learning on a significant book. Typical of this approach was when Year 2 and 3 pupils were learning how to write a kenning (a riddle to describe someone or something without mentioning the subject). Pupils not only used a thesaurus and dictionary but were seeking out other books in their classrooms to find out new and exciting words.
- Teachers are not all as vigilant as they might be in correcting mistakes pupils make in their handwriting, spelling and punctuation. For example, although familiar with writing the word 'Wednesday' there are examples of 'Wedensday', 'Wensday' and 'wednesday' even in older pupils' books. There is little evidence of pupils looking at teachers' comments about their work and correcting it and too few opportunities for them to do so.
- Pupils are at times careless with their handwriting. It is usually good, but when the standard slips and teachers point this out, not enough is done to discourage the carelessness from happening again. Too much writing is done in pencil so pupils get used being able to rub mistakes out, rather than writing in pen to help them to take more care.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and considerate. All those spoken to during the inspection were 'full of beans' and enjoying life in school.
- There are very few instances of serious misbehaviour. Some recent unpleasantness amongst a small group of pupils is being dealt with sensitively and to the satisfaction of parents and pupils.
- Pupils are alert, energetic and friendly. They demonstrate curiosity and a great willingness to learn. In the main they get on well with each other. In conversation they say that this is a great school where pupils are nice to each other. Lunch and playtimes are a delight. Lots of pupils with similar interests get together and play or talk in groups.
- Parents and staff are very positive about the behaviour of pupils. Misbehaviour in class is very rare.
- There is great respect for property and resources and pupils are proud of their school. They look after their books and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils' tolerance and respect for any differences between themselves contributes enormously to the harmonious environment of the school.
- Pupils' good behaviour means that they make the best use of what is being offered. Their attendance is broadly average. When pupils are either absent the school is very quick to find out why.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are frequently reminded about what they can do to keep themselves safe. This includes good guidance about the possible perils of using technology irresponsibly. Parents are very happy that their children are being kept safe and well looked after. A sensitive and perceptive assembly during the inspection reinforced pupils' perceptions of different forms of bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership, management and governance are much better than at the time of the last inspection. There is a rapidly increasing sense of all staff pulling together, listening to advice and participating in training to improve their practice. As a result teaching is improving and standards are rising.
- Responsibilities are becoming increasingly well defined and senior and middle leaders are welcoming the expectations that are being passed their way and dealing with them well. Teachers manage their classroom teams particularly well.
- There has been a good drive to make sure that the school is open to scrutiny. It frequently asks people from other schools and the local authority to check whether its own views about how well it is doing are accurate.
- All teachers are set targets for improvement. These are met to a good degree but a few are not appropriate and suitably challenging to further improve teaching. They do not make it clear how the actions will lead to further improvements.
- Leaders have an accurate view about how the school is doing. The quality of teaching and learning is frequently checked. Governors contribute well to this process by asking pertinent questions about why things are as they are and what could be done to improve them.
- There is a good range of subjects and activities. They focus appropriately on improving pupils' literacy and their number skills. Additionally, they embrace well the importance of activities that add enjoyment and variety to pupils' learning and enrich their lives
- Leaders, managers and governors make sure that extra funding is used sensibly. Additional sports funding encourages increased participation in sport rather than enhanced performance. Pupil premium funding is spent to support the expansion of real-life experiences for some pupils.
- Parents are given a lot of good information about what is going on in the school, how it is contributing to community life and what they can contribute to their children's learning. The vast majority of parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Leaders, managers and governors have greatly appreciated the good support given by the local authority since it was judged to require improvement at the last inspection. The support has clearly worked well. This is now a good school.
- All statutory requirements are met; most importantly, those relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has been transformed since the last inspection. Governors now have a high profile. Pupils and their parents know who they are and what they do. Governors are getting better at understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They ask the headteacher why things are as they are, and request information about what is being done to make the school better. They have undertaken extra training to help them better understand how well pupils are doing. They set the headteacher ambitious targets for school improvement. Governors have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and make sure that support to keep it improving is always a priority. Governors 'have a good head for finance'. A huge deficit in the budget has been successfully addressed and the school is now on a financially even keel. Governors have a good understanding about how they want extra money coming into the school through sports funding and the pupil premium to be used and are carefully checking up on how well it is. They fully understand the importance of matching pay to performance.

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	112318
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	442383

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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Milner
Headteacher	Suzanne Edmondson
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2012
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