

# St Gregory and St Patrick's Catholic Community School

Esk Avenue, Corkickle, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 8AJ

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- After a period of uncertainty, the newly-appointed executive headteacher has brought stability to the school. Along with other leaders, she has successfully built on the strengths of the school, and put into place robust procedures that are having a successful impact on the school's performance.
- Governors are now better informed on how well the school is doing. As a result they feel more confident in providing challenge and support to the executive headteacher and other school leaders.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around school and on the playground. They have a positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils are well cared for and kept safe; they are well aware of how to keep themselves safe.
- Teaching is typically good and improving. There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils and this helps pupils to learn well.
- Teaching assistants are supportive and their time inside and outside classrooms is effective in helping pupils to achieve well.
- From their mostly low starting points in the Nursery, pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly in-line with similar pupils nationally. This picture is improving and represents good progress given pupils' starting points when they enter Key Stage 1.
- The quality of education, care and support for children in the early years is good.
- Parents value the work of the school and the support their children receive. One parent commented 'This place is fabulous, I have no complaints.'

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in outstanding achievement for pupils.
- Occasionally the work set for pupils is not demanding enough, especially in mathematics.
- The outdoor space in the Reception class does not always provide opportunities for children to play and explore imaginatively and therefore reinforce what they learn in class.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. They also looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, five members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school outside lessons, including on the playgrounds during breaks.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed the 28 responses that had been submitted to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's view of its own performance, school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.

### Inspection team

Alan Chaffey , Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila Mawer	Additional Inspector
Alastair Younger	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Gregory and St Patrick's Catholic Community School is a larger than average-sized infant school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is lower than that found nationally. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A change in leadership at the school has resulted in an executive headteacher being recently appointed.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so as to raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
  - ensuring all pupils are consistently challenged by moving them onto more demanding learning tasks as soon as they are ready, especially in mathematics
  - developing further the role of subject leaders so that they rigorously monitor the quality of teaching, and the impact it has on learning, and provide support where needed.
- Further raise the achievement of children in the Reception class by:
  - improving the quality of their outdoor learning by providing more opportunities for imaginative play, problem solving and investigation.

### Inspection judgements

**The leadership and management** are good

- Strong and determined leadership by the recently-appointed executive headteacher has brought stability to the school following a period of uncertainty and disruption. With the support of staff and governors she has introduced more rigorous systems and procedures which are making a positive impact on the school's performance. There is a noticeable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and there is a great determination to improve yet further.
- The executive headteacher has an accurate view of the school's performance. Her evaluation of how well the school is doing is honest and identifies what needs to be done to improve further and how it will be achieved.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels is improving. They show great resolve in driving forward improvement and are developing good skills to ensure that this happens. Subject leaders and middle leaders check pupils' progress carefully so that underperformance is identified quickly. Their role has been enhanced considerably but does not yet involve them fully in checking the quality of teaching for their areas of responsibility and so their contribution to improving teaching is limited.
- Good performance management procedures are now firmly established and are well managed through effective staff appraisal. Pay awards are dependent upon teachers' performance in relation to pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is wide-ranging and mostly well matched to pupils' learning needs and interests. Pupils enjoy learning through the range of enrichment activities that they have participated in, such as a 'beach battle re-enactment' and visits to museums and Carlisle castle.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhanced by links to the local community and church, involvement in charity fund raising, ecological and environmental projects and a study of different faiths. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and helps them to value opinions that are different from their own.
- The additional primary sports funding is helping pupils to learn how to keep fit and lead healthy lifestyles. The funding is used to employ specialist coaches to work with pupils and develop the skills of teachers. The funding has also been used to provide additional resources and to fund after school activities such as a multi-skills club which is well attended with pupils from all year groups
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are rigorous and meet requirements.
- Governors have valued the support they received from the local authority during a period of significant change. The local authority is now more confident that the school is in a stable position having secured the leadership of the school with a proven and experienced headteacher.
- Parents are pleased with the way the school has improved and make positive comments about the changes brought about following the executive headteacher's previous support for the school and her subsequent appointment. As one parent commented 'This school has vastly improved, my children are very happy here.'
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors now receive up-to-date information about the achievement of pupils. Recent changes in leadership, including governance, have resulted in a new approach to monitoring the performance of the school. Governors commented that they are able to 'dive down' into issues because the information they receive is accurate and 'transparent'. As a result governors have acquired the knowledge to challenge and support school leaders and they now do this well.
  - Governors are well-informed about how well pupils are achieving. For example they speak knowledgeably on how the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has improved. All governors are now linked to areas for improvement identified in the school's improvement plan and are regular visitors to the school when they receive detailed information on their areas of responsibility.
  - Governors now have a greater oversight of the budget, including how the pupil premium grant is used and its impact. They are now actively involved in the performance management of staff, including making decisions relating to increases in salary.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They know about class rules, which they feel are very fair, and how they should behave when going on school visits.
- Pupils are keen to take on extra responsibilities such as monitors and librarians. In lessons pupils enjoy being together and support each other well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. This is confirmed by what pupils say about behaviour in lessons

which they believe is very good.

- Behaviour in the dining hall has improved. Some staff now have their lunch with the children which has significantly reduced the noise and disruption during this time.
- In the playground a few pupils can be a little lively at times but adults ensure playtimes remain safe and happy. During the lunch break, supervisors miss opportunities to interact with pupils, for example by playing simple games.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire consider that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school and that the school makes sure its pupils are well-behaved.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. They believe that bullying is rare, and even then limited only to silly name-calling, and if they had any concerns at all an adult at school would help them. Pupils know about e-safety and what to do if they are unsure about something when working on a computer, for example using 'the dolphin' to ask for help.
- The recently appointed executive headteacher has introduced more thorough procedures for recording and dealing with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- Pupils are punctual and attend school regularly. Overall attendance has improved and is now in-line with national averages.
- There have been no exclusions in recent times.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Most teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and pupils respond positively to teachers' instructions and guidance.
- A more consistent approach to marking is now firmly embedded across the school. This is helping pupils recognise what they are doing well and how to make their work even better. Comments and feedback from teachers encourage pupils to improve their work.
- Expectations of how pupils should present their work are mostly high. As a result, pupils take pride in their work and the presentation in their books is generally of a good quality.
- The contribution teaching assistants make to pupils' learning is valuable. They effectively support pupils who find learning more difficult than most which enables these pupils to learn well.
- Classrooms are generally calm and orderly and this helps pupils to concentrate on their work. On the rare occasion when pupils become a little restless it is because although they have understood what they have to do and are ready to start their work, the opportunity to start working is delayed because they have to wait while other pupils in the class understand fully what they have to do.
- Great care is taken with planning appropriate learning activities for pupils in English and mathematics. Activities for these lessons are well-thought out and prepared. However occasionally pupils are not moved onto harder and more challenging work as soon as they have mastered what they are learning. This is especially the case during mathematics lessons.
- Questioning is generally used well during lessons to check on pupils' understanding. Pupils who struggle to keep up during lessons are quickly noticed and help is provided to ensure all pupils understand what they are learning. Occasionally questioning is not sufficiently demanding, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Good attention is given to developing pupils' basic reading skills. The teaching of phonics has improved. Teachers are quick to check and correct errors and as a result pupils now have a better understanding of phonics.
- Writing skills are also taught well and evidence in pupils' books show that their writing is of a good quality in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary to express their ideas. This was seen in a Year 2 class when pupils were describing the sound rain makes when falling to the ground; an audio recording was used very effectively to stimulate their ideas.
- In the past, the number of pupils with special educational needs in the school was low in comparison to similar schools nationally. This is now increasing and as a result, staff are developing good strategies to provide effective support for these pupils.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Overall, children achieve well in the early years. From starting points that are predominantly below what is

typical for their age, children make good progress and by the time they move into Year 1 have reached standards that are close to what is expected for their age.

- This good start is built upon as pupils move through the school. Their progress is good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, pupils have reached standards that are mostly similar to and sometimes above other pupils nationally.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 for the last two years have been below what the school has achieved previously. However the school's current assessment procedures are reliable and correctly reflect pupils' attainment. This was confirmed by an analysis of their work which showed that the standards that pupils have been assessed at, by the teachers, are accurate.
- The introduction of regular, well-focused phonics sessions is having a positive effect on pupils' basic reading and writing skills. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help them with their reading and writing. The phonics screening check carried out each year at the end of Year 1 confirms that standards in reading are improving but are below average. However by end of Year 2 they have caught up and have reached standards in reading that are similar to what is expected for their age.
- From when they enter Year 1, pupils make good progress in writing and achieve standards that are above national averages by the end of Year 2. A scrutiny of pupils' writing shows that they have regular opportunities to write at length and there is clear evidence of good progress.
- Achievement in mathematics had declined to average in 2013. However this decline has been halted and the 2014 results confirm this. Pupils are now making better progress in mathematics and are reaching standards that are slightly above national averages, but there is still some lack of challenge in a few lessons. It is clear that sometimes pupils are capable of coping with more demanding work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by other adults. Work is planned well to meet their needs which has ensured these pupils make at least the progress expected of them. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil is given an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The school provides effective support for those pupils who are known to be disadvantaged and therefore eligible for the pupil premium. Results for 2014 show that pupils who are supported by this additional funding are about one term behind their classmates and all pupils nationally. This indicates a significant improvement on the previous year when the gap was closer to two terms.
- The progress that is made by the most-able pupils is good and similar to that of others in the school. However occasionally they are not challenged sufficiently by the work they are set. Consequently, their attainment, whilst good, is seldom outstanding.

## The early years provision

is good

- Most children start Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below what is typical for their age. Skills are particularly low in language and communication and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- By the time they leave the Reception class, children have made good progress and gained skills and knowledge that are close to what is typically expected for their age. Current results for 2014 show a further improvement in the progress children make here.
- The education and care provided for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Staff provide a positive learning environment to ensure that children receive a good balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to plan their own learning.
- Children are generally happy learners and their behaviour is good. In the Nursery they are still learning to play cooperatively and stay on task; in the Reception classes they are well-motivated and keen to learn.
- Children are very well cared for and nurtured within a safe environment. Safeguarding procedures are secure.
- The early years is well led and managed. The leader has a good understanding of how well children are doing through regular checking of their progress.
- Although children make good progress in the early years, their progress is not better than this because their learning experiences in the outdoor area are limited, for example opportunities to engage in imaginative play and for solving problems for themselves are few.

## 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>	112355
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	449277

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Doyle
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Emma Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 595010
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