

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Furness Road, Westfield, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 3PD

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement is not yet consistently good, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable at the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching. Not enough teaching is consistently good or better. Consequently, learning and progress are not yet good overall.
- In some lessons, teachers do not match work to the needs of all pupils and there is not sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Marking is not of a consistently high quality to enable pupils to know clearly how to improve their work. When there are comments for improvement, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to respond to them.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not brought about improvements to teaching or halted the decline in pupils' achievement as quickly as they should have done.
- The school's plans for improvement are not sharp or detailed enough. They do not have clear criteria for success or any checkpoints throughout the year.
- Leaders do not give teachers sufficient advice about how they can improve their teaching and lesson observations do not focus clearly enough on pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers in charge of subjects do not play a large enough role in checking the learning and progress of pupils in their areas.
- Governors are not given clear information about the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result they are not able to hold leaders to account well enough for the progress that pupils make.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start with their education in the early years.
- Progress in Key Stage one is mostly good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they take pride in their school.
- Pupils feel safe and their parents agree that the school looks after them well and keeps them safe.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is strong and gives pupils many life experiences that they might not otherwise have.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 10 teachers, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors examined information about current pupils' learning and progress as well as some information about the learning and progress the previous school year.
- The inspectors also looked at work in pupils' books from this term so far and a sample provided by the school from the previous academic year.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, as well as meeting some of the middle leaders, including leaders in charge of literacy and numeracy.
- A meeting was held with three governors, including the chair of governors. A phone call was made to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors also looked at reports from the local authority link adviser to the school.
- Two meetings took place with pupils, ranging from Reception to Year 6 at lunchtime on day 1.
- An inspector listened to some Year 2 pupils read at lunchtime on day 2.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school development plans for this year and for the previous year. Records on attendance and behaviour, as well as information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff were also examined.
- The inspectors took into account the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They considered the issues raised in a recent parental complaint to Ofsted, but did not investigate the complaint itself. They also took into account the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Naomi Taylor	Additional Inspector
John Ellwood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Gregory's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is well-above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is early years provision in a Reception class and part-time Nursery.
- Since the previous inspection in January 2011, there have been significant changes in staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better to raise achievement, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - planning and teaching lessons that meet the needs of all pupils and ensure that there is sufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils
 - using marking to provide clear advice to pupils about how they can improve their work
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to that guidance
 - addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in order to make up for weaknesses in teaching over time, particularly those relating to pupils' calculation skills
 - always deploying teaching assistants effectively to maximise the learning of pupils who are not making the progress they should be.
- Improve aspects of leadership and management to bring about improvements as quickly as possible by:
 - ensuring that plans for improvement are incisive, have measurable criteria for success and milestones that are frequently checked throughout the year
 - always having a focus on pupils' learning and progress when observing lessons and giving teachers clear advice on how they can improve their practice
 - developing the role of middle leaders, particularly subject leaders, in checking the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make in their areas of responsibility
 - giving governors a clear overview of the progress that different groups of pupils make to enable them to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement as effectively as possible.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Action taken to improve teaching has not had the desired effect to raise the achievement, particularly that in mathematics in Key Stage 2. They have, however, created a culture where good behaviour can flourish
- Leaders and managers, including governors, know the school's key strengths and areas to develop. However, leaders' plans for improvement, both for last year and for this year, are not incisive enough. They do not have clear criteria for success, nor do they check throughout the year how much improvement is being made. As a result improvement is not happening as quickly as it should do.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning require improvement. Lesson observations do not focus clearly enough on the learning and progress of the pupils. Teachers' professional development is not personalised enough as teachers are not given clear enough advice on how to improve their teaching. That said, some teachers have improved their teaching, although teachers' pay is not always linked closely enough to their performance.
- Middle leaders, including teachers in charge of subjects, do not monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make in their areas of responsibility well enough. They do not all have the expertise to do this as effectively as possible. Therefore, the quality of teaching and achievement are not rising quickly enough.
- Leaders say they track the pupils' progress, but records of this were not shared with the inspectors, despite inspectors asking for them.
- Nevertheless, the leadership of the school has demonstrated the capacity to improve the school. For example, the quality of pupils' writing improved considerably last year across the school because of a whole-school focus. Writing has been introduced into other subject areas and topics meet the interests of the pupils well.
- The school has used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in many ways, including to pay for additional staffing. The funding is not yet fully effective as it is not used well enough to improve the performance of the pupils for whom it was intended. However, the gaps between the performance of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in school are starting to close. This reflects the improving equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. All pupils, including vulnerable pupils are looked after well.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and there is a wide range of visits and visitors, including authors who gave pupils signed copies of their books. Literacy and information and communication technology are woven well into other curriculum areas. Information and communication technology, for example, was seen to reinforce reading in Class 2. At present, there are not as many opportunities for numeracy built into the wider curriculum.
- The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. During the inspection Year 4 pupils were observed leading an assembly on friendship. The school has links with schools in Gambia and in Liverpool. This is helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Staff who responded to the staff inspection questionnaire were mainly positive about all aspects of the school.
- The local authority increased its official support from a light touch to more targeted support in September 2014. This was a year after the attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was significantly below average in mathematics and writing. The support has not yet been fully effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and play an active role in school life. They are knowledgeable about the school. The governing body plays a key role in the allocation of the budget, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, but are not aware that it is not yet fully effective. They are becoming more knowledgeable about understanding data about pupils' performance. However, they have not always been given clear information about the progress of different groups of pupils or the quality of teaching. This means that they have been unable to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement as effectively as they might have done. Governors are very clear that this situation needs to change

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Older pupils told the inspectors that it has been good for some time. Most parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They held doors open for the inspectors and engaged with them in conversation.
- Pupils take a pride in their school. There is very litter around the playground. They describe their school as 'friendly' and one where most people get on with each other.
- They rate behaviour between 7 out of 10 and 10 out of 10. They say that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, but that a few pupils can be a bit silly at times.
- Pupils are proud to take on responsibility, such as Year 6 prefects helping the younger pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The vast majority of pupils engage well in their learning and produce neat and tidy work. When there are teachers' comments about how to improve their work, most pupils respond to them when they are given the opportunity to do so.
- Attendance is improving and is broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They know that calling someone 'gay' is wrong and say that this does not happen here.
- Pupils were able to tell the inspectors about some of the ways the school keeps them safe, including safety when working on computers.
- The school has systems in place to secure pupils' safety, including risk assessments for visits out of school.
- Parents agree strongly that their children feel safe and that the school looks after them well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Not enough teaching is good or better. This is limiting the progress that some pupils make.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils well enough. Some pupils find the work too hard and others find it too easy. This slows the progress of pupils, especially the most able, because their thinking is not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not always deploy teaching assistants well enough. This results in some pupils not making the progress that they could make. This is particularly apparent in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Marking is not of a consistently high quality. Some marking informs pupils about how they can improve their work, but too much marking in Key Stage 2 does not do this well enough. Where there are comments that tell pupils how to improve, pupils are not always given enough opportunity to act on the teachers' advice.
- There are gaps in the knowledge of some pupils, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2, that are not being plugged well enough at present, such as not understanding what the difference between two numbers means or the inability to carry out simple multiplications. This is limiting the progress that they make.
- There is evidence that some teaching is good, particularly in the early years and Key Stage 1. This is because teachers in these classes make sure that work is adapted well to the needs of individual pupils. As a result pupils generally make good progress. This was confirmed by the school's observations and inspection evidence.
- The teaching of reading is generally good especially that relating to younger pupils. A strong emphasis in the early years linking letters to sounds ensures that the majority of children go on to make good progress with their reading in Key Stage 1. Listening to Year 2 pupils read confirmed their love of reading.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Topics, such as *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz capture the imagination of the pupils so that they engaged with the work well.
- The online questionnaire showed that parents generally feel that teaching is good. The inspectors judged that, whilst some teaching is good, too much requires improvement.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make sufficiently good progress in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics. Nationally published data and school's assessment data all indicate that the progress made is inconsistent. Inspection evidence, including scrutiny of current pupils' work, confirms this. Pupils make faster progress in the early years and Key Stage 1 compared to Key Stage 2.
- In 2013 the attainment of pupils in Year 6 was average in reading, but dipped to significantly below average in writing and mathematics. Unvalidated results of the national tests in 2014 showed that writing improved to average, but mathematics remained significantly below average when compared to the national averages for 2013. Progress in writing improved greatly because of a strong focus on writing across a whole range of other subjects.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make requires improvement. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils in school in 2013 were about one year behind in reading and over a year behind in writing. Published data for 2013 showed that gaps in the standards attained between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school are closing, with disadvantaged pupils about one term behind their peers in mathematics and writing and two terms behind in reading.
- The achievement of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs also requires improvement, particularly in mathematics. The support from teaching assistants is variable, as teachers sometimes do not make it clear to them what they need to do to support pupils.
- The school was unable to present information about the progress of the most able pupils across the school. Data indicates that not enough pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny showed that the progress of the more able pupils requires improvement. This is because in some lessons the work does not stretch them well enough.
- Pupils tend to make better progress further down the school; in the early years and in Key Stage 1. This is because the quality of teaching over time is stronger than in Key Stage 2.
- The school uses the primary sports funding well, for example, paying for specialist coaching. This has raised the level of performance in sport. Sport is much enjoyed by the pupils and contributes well to their good physical well-being.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children love school, enjoy their learning and gain much in confidence during their time in early years.
- They start in Nursery with skills that are below and sometimes well below those expected, particularly in communication, literacy, numeracy and some aspects of personal and social education.
- Good induction procedures including working with parents and a stimulating environment help the children to settle quickly into the Nursery. The curriculum is varied and geared to develop the interests of the children well.
- Teaching is good throughout the early years. The work is matched well to the individual needs of the children. This ensures that they make good progress and, by the end of Reception, many reach the levels expected for their age and some exceed them, particularly the girls. Adults generally supervise the activities that children choose for themselves effectively, guiding and moving learning on well.
- Most children play sensibly together and are well behaved. Safety and welfare are given a high priority and children are taught how to keep themselves safe.
- The large outdoor area is used to extend learning well. A covered area enables most of it to be used throughout the year.
- Staff, some of whom are new in post, are led well by the early years leader. They work well as a team and regularly assess what children can and cannot do. This information is used to plan activities that are well matched to children's needs.

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	112339
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	443828

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hughie Stamper
Headteacher	Celia Holder
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
Telephone number	01900 606050
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