

St George's CofE School

School Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2JN

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Since the last inspection governors, leaders and managers, well supported by the whole staff team, have tackled weaknesses and brought about marked improvements in pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching.
- Clear priorities for further improvement have been identified. Staff are well trained, feel valued and morale is high. Consequently, the school is well placed to achieve its goals.
- Pupils attend school regularly and behave well. They look after each other and show kindness and respect to staff and visitors. They say they feel very safe in school.
- Good teaching and well-timed, effective help for pupils who are in danger of falling behind enable all pupils to make good progress over time. Interesting activities, knowledgeable teaching, perceptive questioning and well-planned work all contribute to pupils' good achievement.
- When children enter the Nursery their skills are weak in all areas and particularly in communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes where they gain confidence and enjoy learning.
- This good progress continues as they move through the school. In national tests in 2014 pupils reached standards close to national averages particularly in reading and writing.
- The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness very successfully. The school ensures pupils are given a wide range of experiences which open their eyes to what they can achieve. St George's pupils make good progress in developing sound basic skills and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some marking of work and feedback given by teachers is not of sufficiently high quality to give pupils clear pointers for improvement. Pupils do not always act on the advice they are given.
- Pupils are not always moved on quickly enough to the next task as soon as they are ready.
- Even more work can be done to encourage parents to support their children's learning by listening to them read regularly and making sure they always come to school on time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of pupils of all ages and in a range of subjects including mathematics and English. Some lessons and part-lessons were joint observations with senior staff. The headteacher and lead inspector made several shorter visits to classrooms. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twenty-six responses to the on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', were considered as well as those from the school's own parental survey and from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is about 24%, which is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and so eligible for the pupil premium is about 71%. This is well above that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of pupils are dual registered with the George Hastwell Special School and the Barrow pupil referral unit.
- In the early years there is full-time provision for children in the Reception class and either full- or part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school partway through their education is well above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers' marking consistently gives pupils clear pointers on how to improve their work and that pupils are always given the opportunity to act upon their advice
 - moving pupils on quickly to the next task as soon as they are ready.
- Work even more closely with parents to encourage them to support their children's learning by listening to them read regularly and making sure they always come to school on time.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The open, honest and determined leadership of the headteacher, well supported by all staff, has been instrumental in moving the school forward and creating a climate in which good teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Since the last inspection governance has improved. Both governors and the restructured leadership team monitor the work of the school more effectively. The quality of teaching is carefully checked and staff receive good training to help them improve their skills. Their performance is well managed. Consequently, staff feel valued and morale is high.
- Middle managers monitor the work of their areas of responsibility closely. They have clear plans for further improvement. They have ensured that changes to the curriculum have been implemented and are becoming established in the school's work.
- School improvement planning is more detailed with milestones against which progress can be measured. The school has clear priorities for further improvement and on the basis of what has been achieved in the past year has sound capacity to reach these goals.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very closely and those who are falling behind are quickly identified. They are given timely and knowledgeable extra help by both teachers and teaching assistants to ensure they achieve well.
- Although there is still a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally this gap is closing and current pupils are now making the same good progress as their peers. Extra funding is well spent on ensuring pupils can take part in a wide range of enrichment activities to support their learning as well as receiving small group and one-to-one tuition.
- Sports funding is likewise used well. Pupils have access to specialist coaching, staff are better trained and pupils take part in and compete against other schools in a wider range of sports. This allows them to develop healthy lifestyles and perform to the levels of which they are capable.
- All pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school makes sure that all pupils have equal access to the wealth of clubs, trips, visits and other exciting activities that the school provides.
- The school is working closely with parents to encourage them to support their children's learning. However, it recognises that even more can be done to encourage parents to listen to their children read and to make sure their children always arrive at school on time.
- The curriculum is very broad and ensures pupils make good progress in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy. It also develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. The new National Curriculum is being implemented successfully and is quickly becoming part of the school's work. Enrichment activities greatly extend pupils' understanding of the wider world and the opportunities that are open to them in later life. Trips to places as diverse as Muncaster Castle, London and the illuminations at Blackpool as well as the opportunities to experience work on the local newspaper, attend a very moving Remembrance service or camp out overnight all contribute to preparing St George's pupils well for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. Staff are fully trained and all have a very sharp awareness of child protection and risk assessment procedures.
- The local authority has provided support for governors and advice on improving teaching through the general adviser who has visited more frequently in the last two terms. The school has greatly appreciated the advice received during the HMI monitoring visit which has enabled the school to improve.
- The school monitors the progress, attendance and behaviour of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision very carefully to ensure they make the same good progress as their peers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors meet more frequently and monitor the work of the school more closely through regular visits. New governors have brought additional expertise to the governing body. Staff performance is well managed. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how good teachers are rewarded and weaknesses tackled. Finances are well managed and governors make sure that the school's spending of extra funds such as the pupil premium is effective. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about the performance of the school compared to schools nationally. Governors provide an important link with the community where the school is very well regarded.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff understand pupils' needs very well and are skilled in managing their behaviour. Pupils move sensibly around the school building and play happily together in the school yard. They wear their school uniform with pride and are polite and respectful to staff.
- In lessons pupils are keen to learn. They answer questions readily and work hard. They share ideas and resources willingly and cooperate well together when working in pairs and groups.
- School records show that any incidents of challenging behaviour or, rarely, bullying, are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance which has risen and is now average. A small minority of children arrive late for school despite the school's efforts to encourage parents to make sure their children arrive on time.
- Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility as members of the school council, as buddies for younger children and as prefects and monitors. They are keen to make sure that pupils new to the school feel welcome and settle in quickly. School council members showed both maturity and confidence as they produced a very thought-provoking assembly which helped to develop pupils' spiritual awareness very well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All policies and procedures are in place and well understood by all staff.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and their parents agree that the school keeps them safe. Pupils are aware that there are different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, but have complete confidence that should bullying occur at their school it will be quickly sorted out.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They understand the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and are aware of possible dangers when using the internet.
- Pupils speak very warmly of staff who know them well and who they can turn to if they have personal worries or concerns. The school liaises well with outside agencies to ensure pupils get expert help and support when this is needed.
- The school's monitoring shows that pupils attending alternative provision are kept safe and behave well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books and that displayed on walls shows clearly that all groups of pupils make good progress over time as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Teachers make good use of various resources and provide a range of tasks which engage their pupils' interest. Year 5 pupils made good progress and enjoyed learning in mathematics as they worked to a tight budget and calculated costs when supermarket shopping and planning a party.
- In reading and literacy, boys make particularly good progress because texts are carefully chosen to appeal to their interests. Perceptive teaching builds their confidence in talking about the books they are reading and successfully encourages them to read for pleasure. The school is working closely with parents to encourage them to listen to their children read but recognises that even more can be done to encourage parents to support their child.
- Knowledgeable teaching and clear explanations deepen and extend pupils' understanding. Teachers ask perceptive questions which allow pupils to think carefully and give more detailed answers.
- Work is well planned. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, particularly in the early years, to ensure that the results of frequent assessments are used to plan lessons and small group teaching which builds upon what pupils already know.
- Sometimes the pace of learning is a little slower when pupils repeat examples of work they already understand rather than being moved on quickly to the next challenging task.
- Work in pupils' books is marked thoroughly and consistently so pupils understand clearly the system teachers' use. However, pupils do not always respond to the advice given by teachers and do not always have sufficient opportunities to correct their work. In a minority of books teachers' marking does not give pupils clear enough guidance on how to take the next steps in their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. They are given constructive and sensitive support when working in small groups and individually.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Work in pupils' books and the school's own data on pupils' progress all confirm that pupils at St George's achieve well. From their starting points in Nursery which show that they are weak in most areas of learning they make consistently good progress as they move through the early years and both key stages. They achieve well.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards close to national averages. Attainment is rising. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in English and mathematics rose by 24%. The proportions of pupils making expected progress also rose, and in reading and writing the proportions making better than expected progress were above national averages.
- The large numbers of disadvantaged pupils are approximately a year behind all pupils nationally in mathematics and English. The very small numbers of pupils not eligible for this funding makes consideration of figures for the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the school misleading. The additional funding is spent wisely on high quality, well-targeted small group and one-to-one tuition. Consequently, gaps in attainment are narrowing and current disadvantaged pupils are making the same good progress as their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. Their progress is tracked very carefully and they are given specialist extra help when this is needed. Those pupils who join the school partway through their education also make good progress because their needs are quickly assessed and they are given good personal and academic support. The school's monitoring shows that pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress. They are given more challenging work and specialist help so that they can achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6. They particularly benefit from attending special literacy and numeracy days where they solve problems and learn about, for example poetry, in greater depth.

The early years provision is good

- When children start in the Nursery class, many are not ready to start learning because their skills are weak. They are particularly low in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. After they settle into school routines they begin to make good progress particularly in developing their speech and language skills.
- They respond well to the good teaching they receive and detailed learning journals carefully record the good progress they make. Teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour and an exciting range of activities both inside and outside the classroom enable children to achieve well. In numeracy, for example, most children in the Reception class leapt about eagerly to place their numbered frogs in the right order and demonstrate their understanding of numbers 1 to 20.
- Children behave well. They know how to share and take turns. Most listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions. They are kept very safe. Well-trained staff are keenly aware of safeguarding issues.
- Children who need extra support are identified very early and are given good support to catch up quickly if they are in danger of falling further behind in their learning.
- The early years is well led and managed. Resources are well used to provide a very vibrant and exciting learning environment. Good links with the school's toddler group allow children even more opportunities to work at a level suited to their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together to carefully monitor children's progress, assess their needs and plan interesting work pitched at the right level for all groups of children. Staff have clear, well-thought-out priorities for improving the provision even further.

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	112289
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	452024

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Mease
Headteacher	Elaine Kent
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2013
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