

# Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School

Hawesmead Avenue, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5HB

## Inspection dates

21–22 April

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, leaders and governors have continued to improve the school and sustained the good quality of education.
- The school provides a nurturing atmosphere where pupils develop positive values, grow in confidence and feel extremely safe. 'Pupils feel valued for what they are, not what they can do', was a typical comment from pupils, and characterises the work of the school.
- Teaching is good. It has been adapted successfully to take account of the changes in the national curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, from the time they enter school to the time they leave at the end of Year 6. They attain standards that are above expectations for their age at each key stage.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are highly motivated in lessons and behave with courtesy and consideration around the school.
- Leadership of English, mathematics and special educational needs is effective and successful in raising standards.
- Governors provide rigorous support and challenge to school leaders. They have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement and of national issues.
- Leadership and provision in the early years are outstanding. Children love learning and are inspired to make excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- The strengths in leadership, governance and teaching provide secure capacity to continue to improve the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not as effective in science, history and geography as it is in other subjects. There is also unevenness in pupils' progress in different year groups in writing and mathematics.
- The new approach to assessment is used well but is not being used highly effectively by all teachers.
- The most-able pupils do not find work challenging enough in some classes.
- Leaders do not have in-depth knowledge of the impact of teaching and pupils' progress in all subjects.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching further to enable pupils to make the best possible progress in all year groups and across the curriculum, by:
  - making sure the teaching of spelling, punctuation and mathematical skills builds on previous learning, so pupils make the most rapid progress in each year group
  - ensuring that teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve in science, history and geography as they do in English, mathematics and religious education
  - developing further the new approach to assessment and making sure it is used to the best effect in all year groups
  - making sure the most-able pupils receive sufficient challenge to deepen their learning and make the best possible progress in all year groups.
- Develop middle leadership roles in foundation subjects (those subjects other than English, mathematics and religious education) and make sure senior leaders have an in-depth overview of the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors have continued to build on the school's successes and sustained a good quality of education. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils. The headteacher, who has joined the school since the last inspection, is leading improvements effectively and with the full confidence of staff, parents and pupils. Staff share leaders' high expectations; they are committed, knowledgeable and work together effectively. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate; it identifies the school's strengths and key areas for improvement.
- The school is welcoming and inclusive. Staff and governors promote equality of opportunity very effectively. They make sure that no groups are disadvantaged and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Pupils make good progress academically and exceptional progress in their personal skills as a result of good teaching and excellent support for their personal development and welfare.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed exceptionally well. The school is a happy and safe community, based on Christian values, where staff and pupils feel valued. Pupils show a fascination for learning and are encouraged to reflect on moral issues. Their understanding of the values that underpin British society is extended effectively in lessons and through the running of their school. For example, pupils become familiar with democratic principles through their elections of school councillors and house captains. They develop a good understanding of and respect for different faiths and cultures that extend beyond their school surroundings. Pupils are well-equipped with skills to become responsible citizens in modern Britain.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Teachers say they find feedback from observations and the recently introduced pupils' progress meetings constructive and developing. Salary decisions are linked closely to teachers' performance and training is planned well to develop teachers' skills and support whole-school improvement.
- The school participates in a local cluster of schools, the Kendal Collaborative Partnership, which makes a positive contribution to school improvement. The opportunities for joint review and training enhance provision and enable the school to benefit from external moderation.
- The school engages well with parents. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View (the online Ofsted questionnaire) were very positive in their appraisal of the school and have confidence in staff and leaders. Comments include, 'The headteacher gives off a happy vibe which ripples through the school', 'staff are approachable' and 'We have been extremely happy with our children's education and feel the staff provide the most caring and nurturing environment'.
- Leaders at all levels have developed their roles since the last inspection. Those with responsibility for English, mathematics, special educational needs provision and the early years are very involved in checking teaching and pupils' progress and are leading improvements effectively. Middle leaders with other responsibilities have not yet been able to develop their roles to the same extent, for example, in subjects such as science, history and geography. Consequently, neither middle leaders nor senior leaders have a fully informed view of how well pupils are making progress across all subjects in the curriculum.
- Pupils are provided with a broad and interesting curriculum. They enjoy art, cookery, drama, singing and topic work alongside the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. The varied after-school activities, in sports, music and trips, enrich pupils' learning further. However, subjects such as science, history and geography are not taught as systematically or in the same depth as core subjects, so pupils' progress in them is not as rapid.
- There are a couple of aspects that a small minority of parents would like to see improved, including variability in teaching and some 'coasting' by the most-able pupils. The inspection supports these views; they are identified as areas for improvement, to move the school to outstanding.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body is led well, by a knowledgeable chair who is a national leader of governance. Governors have a good range of expertise and are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They fulfil their duties very effectively, for example, by questioning leaders and making sure they are kept fully informed through regular reports and thorough analysis of the school's data. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They manage the performance of the headteacher effectively and have a good overview of the teachers' performance across the school.
  - Governors check carefully that additional pupil premium and sports funding has the desired impact on pupils' achievement. The funding is spent appropriately to broaden pupils' participation in sports and ensure that disadvantaged pupils make just as good progress as others in school.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed to meet statutory requirements and records are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed relevant training, including in child protection and the 'Prevent' duty. They have a good understanding of the risks that children can face, for example, from extremist views, on social media and in the wider community. The school liaises effectively with external agencies to make sure vulnerable pupils and their families receive the best possible support. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe and happy at school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- Good relationships in all classes help pupils enjoy learning and stay highly motivated. Pupils say, for example, 'teachers make lessons fun' and 'they do extra activities for us that are brilliant'. Pupils especially enjoy workshops in drama, dance and art activities linked to different themes.
- Classrooms are stimulating and classes are organised very well. The school marking policy is followed by all staff and helps pupils know what they can do to improve their work. Pupils develop independence as they are encouraged to access resources and to reflect on what they have learned and what they could do better.
- Teachers are good at explaining new learning and asking questions that probe pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and be able to explain their ideas clearly. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of different groups of pupils in class and in small groups.
- Pupils who are vulnerable or who have special educational needs or disability are supported very effectively; teaching meets their specific needs and barriers to learning are minimised. The special educational needs coordinator has a good grasp of current needs across the school and makes sure pupils are supported appropriately. She has rightly identified that individual plans require further review to make academic targets sharper.
- Reading, writing, mathematics and religious education are taught effectively over time, so pupils make at least good progress from their starting points and attain standards that are above those expected for their age in assessed subjects in Year 6. Mathematics, reading and writing are promoted well across the curriculum. The annual 'mini-enterprise' fair has enabled pupils to apply mathematical skills to buy and sell items in a real life context.
- Although pupils make good progress over time, there is some variability in the impact teaching has from year to year in writing and mathematics, which prevents pupils from making consistently outstanding progress. Pupils do not make even progress in spelling, punctuation and mathematical skills. The most -able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some classes so they do not make the rapid progress they are capable of in every year group.
- Teachers mostly use assessment effectively and the recently introduced assessment system takes good account of changes to the national curriculum. Assessment is not yet entirely accurate in some year groups in writing, however. It also shows that some pupils are not building on their skills in mathematics in line with the expectations for their age at lower key stage 2.
- Some subjects, including science, geography and history are not taught in the same depth or with the same high expectations for presentation and productivity. Consequently, pupils' progress and understanding are not as well developed in these subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff have extremely positive relationships with pupils, so pupils feel valued and grow in confidence. Pupils are articulate and convincing when expressing their views and listen to and respect the views of others. They develop positive values and a moral code that enables them to make decisions that keep them safe and promote their own well-being and that of others.
- Personal skills, such as leadership and enterprise skills, team working and social interaction are developed very effectively.

- Pupils feel extremely safe and know they can approach staff for support if they ever need it. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being and health and safety are high priorities in teaching and all aspects of the school's work. All pupils gain from this approach and vulnerable pupils, especially, make excellent progress in their personal skills. Pupils develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in school, outside, and on the internet.
- Bullying is not an issue that concerns pupils in school. Those who spoke to inspectors and responded to the online questionnaire say that bullying happens rarely and is dealt with appropriately if it does occur. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of different types of bullying and know where and how to seek support if they ever need it. They understand that bullying extends to calling people names or using derogatory language.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to take responsibility and make an excellent contribution to the school, for example, as head boy and girl, house captains and on the school council. Older pupils help younger ones in class or in the playground and both the older and younger pupils benefit from this. Older pupils have enjoyed being trained as sports coaches for the younger pupils.
- The 'Mini Vinnies' and the school council raise funds successfully for a number of charities and local causes in a way that is fun for everyone. Pupils really enjoy 'special days' such as the 'crazy hair day'. Their fund raising for victims of local flooding has benefited many people.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly motivated and are rightly proud of their work and achievements. Their enthusiasm and positive attitudes make an excellent contribution to their learning. They listen attentively, concentrate and persevere with their work in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary. They show consideration for each other and maintain a calm and well-ordered atmosphere. They are sociable at breaktimes and play together constructively.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the above average attendance by all groups of pupils. Exclusion is very rare and when it has happened, there has been good liaison with parents and effective support to prevent further problems.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, which are usually in line with expectations for their age when they enter school. They make excellent progress in the early years and reach standards that are above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. They continue to make good and sometimes better progress in the key subjects of reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2. From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress across key stage 2 are close to or above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils attain consistently high scores in the phonics screening check and attain above average standards in the standardised assessments at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress over time in key subjects because they are taught well and provided with additional support to help them develop their personal skills. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs similarly make good or better progress. Where needed, they are provided with additional support in small groups or individually to help them catch-up and develop confidence.
- Outcomes are consistently good but are not yet outstanding because pupils' progress is uneven in different year groups in writing and mathematics and their progress in subjects other than the key subjects of English and mathematics is not as rapid. For example, standards in spelling and punctuation are not as good as the content of pupils' writing in some classes.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than key subjects or religious education is similarly variable across the school. Expectations for presentation and productivity are not as high and some work is not completed; for example, science investigations and 'what we found out' sections in geography are not concluded.
- The most-able pupils make good progress across their school career but their progress is uneven in different classes. Pupils who grasp concepts quickly are not given work that challenges them enough in some classes. They start with work that they find too easy before progressing to more challenging, thought-provoking tasks. This limits the time spent on the more challenging work.

- Pupils' good key skills in literacy and mathematics and their exceptionally well developed personal skills equip them very well for the next stage of their education.

## Early years provision

## is outstanding

- Early years practitioners have developed the indoor and outdoor areas to provide inspiring learning opportunities that capture children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. Children learn happily as they investigate and explore.
- Children receive a well-balanced combination of teaching and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through activities they choose for themselves. The teacher skilfully helps children to make links in their learning and provides meaningful examples by relating new learning to their interests.
- Assessment is accurate and informs teaching very effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants know just when to add challenge or support. Their effective engagement and positive relationships with parents support children's learning successfully. Parents also benefit from workshops and close liaison with practitioners so they can support their children at home successfully.
- Children love investigating how mini-beasts live and grow in the 'mini-beast lab' and develop excellent knowledge of the natural world. They apply their literacy and mathematical skills successfully in a range of situations; for example, when timing their friends doing exercises or playing together to 'build a road' in the sandpit.
- Children's personal and social skills are developed exceptionally well. The highly positive relationships help children to grow in confidence and feel able to 'have a go' at anything. Children feel entirely safe and secure. All welfare and safety requirements are met.
- Children's excellent behaviour makes a highly positive contribution to their learning. They are attentive and focused when listening to adults and each other and confident and curious when accessing activities for themselves. They have highly developed social skills, and learn and play together happily.
- Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are mostly as expected for their age or above, although there is wide variation between cohorts. A few children have more limited experience when they start school and this was particularly evident in the cohort that was assessed at the end of the Reception year in 2015. All groups, including those who are disadvantaged, make excellent progress in all areas of learning; those with lower skills on entry are helped to catch up quickly. Their communication, literacy, mathematical and phonics skills (understanding about the sounds linked to letters) are taught very effectively. Children are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- The success of the early years is due to highly effective leadership. The early years leader has a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development, so improvement planning is focused on the right priorities. Staff training is planned well to meet the needs of staff and children. Staff work together effectively. Teaching assistants have a thorough understanding of the early years curriculum and support children's next steps in learning skilfully. Additional funding is used effectively to make sure disadvantaged children achieve as well as others.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112341
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10000473

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Maureen Calnan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Tansey
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 723363
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.deangibson.cumbria.sch.uk">www.deangibson.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@deangibson.cumbria.sch.uk">admin@deangibson.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 November 2011

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Children in the early years are provided for in a Reception class.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.) The school is in a relatively advantaged area.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school participates in a cluster network with other primary schools in the area.
- An after-school club is provided on the site. This is not managed by the governing body and receives a separate inspection report which is published on the Ofsted website.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and teaching in all classes. The headteacher conducted some observations jointly.
- Inspectors carried out a full scrutiny of pupils' work in their mathematics, writing, science, religious education and topic books. The pupils' books were selected randomly and represented a spread of ability from each class. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors for the work scrutiny. Inspectors looked at children's learning journeys from the early years and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and took account of their views about their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 31 parents' responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents at the school entrance at the start of the day. They also took account of 10 written responses from staff (who were not able to access the online questionnaire during the inspection) and seven responses from pupils.
- Inspectors discussed the school's work with leaders, four governors, including the chair and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding, assessment, informational about pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and action planning.
- The inspection was conducted as a Section 8 inspection of a good school by one inspector on the first day. The inspection converted to a full Section 5 inspection because there were signs of improvement in the data relating to assessments at the end of each key stage. Two Ofsted inspectors joined the inspection for the second day.

## Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector  
Anne Marie Dimeck  
Kevin Ward

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Ofsted Inspector  
Ofsted Inspector



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