

St Begh's Catholic Junior School

Coach Road, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7TE

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Procedures to ensure that children are kept safe are inadequate.
- Staff do not fully understand procedures for ensuring that pupils are well protected. This is because leaders and managers in the school have not ensured that all staff have read and understood the school's safeguarding policies and other required guidance documents.
- Leadership and management procedures to ensure that background checks have been made on the suitability of staff to work with children are ineffective.
- Since the last inspection, improvements to the quality of teaching have not been sufficiently rapid to ensure that pupils' achievement is good.
- Governors and senior leaders have not checked the accuracy of the information provided to them and have interpreted the messages inaccurately.
- Strategies used to monitor improvements in the school are weak. Time gaps between evaluations of the impact of improvements are too wide. It takes too long to identify that improvement is too slow.
- Criteria used to measure the effectiveness of different school improvements are vague.
- As a result of imprecise evaluations, senior school leaders and governors have an over-generous assessment of the rate of school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Some aspects of the school are improving. The quality of teaching is better than it was and, similarly, pupils' achievement is improving.
- Well-managed provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- The behaviour of most pupils is good. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils follow instructions well. There is virtually no disruption to learning in lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a high priority in this school and it is a strength.
- Relationships are strong between pupils and adults in the school. Staff are very caring and pupils say that they are very well looked after.
- Parents, on the whole, are very happy with the work of the school.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- With urgency, ensure that:
 - staff know the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns about the safety of a pupil or the behaviour of a member of staff
 - a complete, simple, single system is in place, enabling governors and leaders to know that all background checks have been made on adults working in the school.

- Improve the effectiveness of school leaders in increasing the rate of improvement in teaching and, consequently, in pupils' progress by:
 - improving the skills of staff and governors to accurately evaluate the impact of the work of the school on pupils' achievement
 - measuring the impact of the school's work using information about pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that checks on the school's work are frequent enough to quickly identify slow improvement
 - ensuring that leaders' responses to any identified slow progress are more rapid.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Those responsible for running the school have not ensured that mandatory requirements to protect children have been fulfilled.
- At the start of the inspection, there was no single efficient system to ensure that recruitment checks on all those working with pupils had been completed. In January 2016, the school received advice on how to fulfil this statutory requirement, but no action was taken.
- Leaders of the school do not have systems in place to ensure that staff fully understand school policies on how to protect children. Furthermore, leaders do not know whether all staff have fulfilled their requirement to read and understand fully other key documents on how to keep children safe.
- Some staff, including at senior level, do not know the required procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child or if they are concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff.
- Leaders do not evaluate the quality of the work of the school with accuracy. Therefore, they have an overly generous opinion of how well it is performing. They have relied on a range of reports written by external agencies and experts. These have been very variable in quality and generally not helpful to the school. In the main, the reports are vague and non-committal. This has resulted in leaders and governors not fully understanding the messages conveyed.
- Teachers and those responsible for leading subjects do not accurately evaluate the progress that pupils are making. This too has contributed to inaccurate school information about pupils' achievement.
- Improvement planning is weak. The school has identified an appropriate range of improvements that need to be made. However, the specific desired impact of each of these improvements on pupils' achievement is not clear. Leaders are, therefore, unable to evaluate the effectiveness of each of these developments accurately.
- Some developments are anticipated to take a long time to complete. The impact of these developments is not systematically evaluated at regular intervals. This slows the rate of school improvement.
- The headteacher, with the governors, has led many improvements across the school. There is a strong caring culture, behaviour is good and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural and personal development is very strong. Pupils are happy in this school. The headteacher has ensured that parents engage well with the school. However, the headteacher has neglected key responsibilities in ensuring that children are safe, and has not ensured that improvements in pupils' progress have been achieved rapidly.
- The school has introduced good systems to monitor the overall progress and attendance of pupils. Staff at all levels have not yet developed sufficient skills which would enable them to monitor closely the progress and attendance of different groups of pupils.
- Systems are in place to manage the performance of teachers. However, the inaccuracy of evaluating the impact of the work of teachers and leaders limits the effectiveness of these systems.
- Much work has been done in the school to introduce a new curriculum. Sufficient time is given to different subjects. Teachers find opportunities that enable pupils to apply their knowledge in practical and real-life situations.
- Additional funding to enhance physical education and sporting activity has enabled pupils to enjoy a wide range of additional activities, including swimming and after-school sports clubs. Care has been taken to ensure that a large proportion of pupils benefit from this funding. The funding is spent effectively.
- The quality of teaching continues to improve. It is not yet good because it is improving from a low base and improvement has not been quick enough. However, the key leader in improving teaching is well equipped to build on recent success and to drive further improvement in the quality of teaching. This year's programme of professional development is well targeted to improving teaching. Training has been particularly effective in improving the teaching of writing and developing teachers' questioning skills. An extensive programme of improving the teaching of mathematics has been undertaken and this has improved the confidence of teachers across the whole school.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. This aspect of the school is very well managed. The needs of these pupils are accurately identified, and teachers and teaching assistants are given good guidance on how to support these children. Pupils' welfare and achievement are closely monitored, and effective interventions are introduced if any underachievement is noticed.
- The support provided by the national leader of education (NLE) assigned to the school has been highly

effective in creating good transition arrangements with the feeder infant school. Information about transferring pupils is communicated efficiently. This leader has also supported the school in providing aspects of training and leading sessions in which local schools come together to moderate their assessments of pupils' progress. The NLE has provided the school with an external evaluation of its work. This support has helped some of the areas for improvement detailed in recent Ofsted reports to be realised.

- The headteacher believes that the local authority has provided good support through visits to the school to evaluate its improvement. However, the most recent local authority report proved of little value to the school as it did not give a clear evaluation of how well the pupils are performing.
- Parents who chose to complete the inspection questionnaire and who wrote to inspectors or spoke to them were generally pleased with the school. Comments were particularly supportive about the caring and nurturing approach of the staff. Most parents felt pupils behaved well. While most were happy with the progress their child has made, a small proportion did not agree. The strongest criticism parents made was about the lack of homework their children received.
- Staff who chose to complete their inspection questionnaire were very strongly supportive of the work of the school and of the quality of the school's leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are passionate about providing a high quality of education for their pupils. In many respects, they achieve this. However, they have failed to ensure that safeguarding is effective. Neither have they ensured that improvements to the quality of teaching have happened rapidly enough.
 - Governors rely on the information given to them when assessing how well the headteacher and other staff are performing. Unfortunately, this information lacks precision or accuracy. Governors do not look for themselves enough at key documentation, nor do they use their broad and extensive experience to evaluate the impact of the work of school leaders.
 - Nevertheless, governors work very hard and show great commitment. They frequently listen to teachers and leaders. They evaluate many reports presented by staff.
 - Governors are instrumental in creating a very positive and caring ethos around the school. They are justifiably proud of the strong personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers do not take sufficient account of what their pupils already know and understand or can do. Consequently, some pupils repeat the same level of work some months later even though they have clearly mastered it. On occasions, the work on a topic may be even easier when it is revisited. This slows progress especially for the most able who are not moved on to more challenging work fast enough.
- Some teachers pitch learning activities for least-able pupils which are too challenging.
- Middle-ability pupils are well catered for.
- Teachers use marking and feedback to pupils with varying effect. Some follow the school's policy on marking and, when pupils follow their teachers' advice, they make good progress. However, the marking that some teachers do is less effective because the guidance that they give is not clear enough.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because the culture in classrooms is highly positive and teachers provide the pupils with a wide range of interesting learning activities. Pupils participate in discussion work enthusiastically and maturely. They listen well to each other.
- Teachers use questioning well to help pupils deepen their understanding. Teachers give pupils time to formulate their ideas. When they explain their ideas to the class, other pupils are respectful and encouraging.
- Teachers take opportunities to improve pupils' literacy skills in different subjects. Pupils also apply their mathematical skills in different situations and subjects.
- At the previous inspection, teachers were asked to increase the opportunities that pupils have to write at length. They now do this. Most children enjoy writing and reading. However, some teachers do not encourage all children to read often.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Procedures to ensure that children are safe are inadequate.
- However, there are many strengths in ensuring all pupils are well looked after on a daily basis. Those pupils who are known to be vulnerable are cared for very well. Key school staff work well with external agencies to ensure that these pupils thrive. This level of care is extended to pupils who may, on occasion, attend off-site alternative provision.
- A few pupils call other pupils names. Pupils reported a few incidents of derogatory language, for example, linked to race or perceived sexuality. Pupils who witness these rare incidents are dismayed and are quick to report the event. They are confident that staff will deal with these incidents effectively and sensitively.
- The strong caring culture prevailing in the school ensures that pupils look after each other well. The relationships between adults and pupils are strong, and pupils trust adults to do the very best for them. Despite leaders being lax in ensuring that mandatory safeguarding procedures are followed and, as a result, pupils are potentially at risk in the school, pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' personal development is a very strong aspect of their education in this school. Activities that enrich the curriculum provide high-quality opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development and confidence and to broaden their experience. Residential visits that focus on outdoor education are particularly popular with pupils. Pupils readily take on responsibilities.
- Pupils are taught how to behave safely. They are aware of potential dangers, including when using the internet, and know how to respond if they have a concern.
- Due to pupils' strong personal development and their positive attitudes to learning, they are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In classes, pupils work enthusiastically and generally take pride in their work. Incidents in which learning is interrupted are very rare.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and enjoy the bright and positive environment. They are punctual to school and line up quickly at the end of break and lunch times. Pupils respond positively and quickly to adults' instructions. Pupils are respectful to adults.
- Those pupils who need additional support to behave are skilfully managed.
- Attendance has been steadily improving over recent years and is currently broadly average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong and the gap between their attendance and that of their peers is widening.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' books across a range of subjects show that the progress they make is too variable to be considered good. Overall, the progress pupils make in Year 6 is not as strong as that made by pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in mathematics. However, the progress that pupils make in mathematics across Year 6 requires improvement. Teachers in Year 6 do not plan well, taking into account what pupils already know. Pupils make better progress in Years 3 and 4, where learning is systematically built over time.
- The school's achievement information points to pupils making better progress in reading than in writing. However, inspection evidence found that reading was not as well taught as writing. Inspectors found that weak and reluctant readers are not sufficiently encouraged to read frequently.
- Middle-ability pupils make the strongest progress because the level of work that they are expected to do is well matched to their abilities. This is not the case for most-able or low-ability pupils and so the

progress that they make is weaker.

- In 2015, there was a large gap in achievement between those pupils who were disadvantaged and those who were not. Disadvantaged pupils did not do well. The school's information indicates that disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 6 are making slightly better progress than their peers last year. The work in pupils' books and records of their progress suggest that this gap in achievement is much less apparent in other year groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities perform well and make good progress. This is because their needs are well understood and staff are skilled in meeting these needs. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to supporting these pupils and helping them to learn quickly.
- Over time, pupils' achievement has improved, albeit from a low base. In 2015, attainment was broadly average. However, outcomes for pupils are still not good because they are not improving quickly enough and, as a result, a substantial proportion of pupils continue to underachieve.

School details

Unique reference number	112354
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10012186

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Scott
Headteacher	Catherine Mallard
Telephone number	01946 696959
Website	www.stbeghs.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-beghs.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

Information about this school

- St Begh's Catholic Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school is currently supported by an NLE.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school makes use of alternative provision provided by West Cumbria Learning Centre.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school's website does not comply with requirements as information about governors is incomplete.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lessons and at a further sample of pupils' written work including English and mathematics.
- An inspector visited an assembly.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. Inspectors met members of the governing body. They also spoke to a representative of the local authority and the NLE supporting the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in formal interviews, during lessons and informally at lunchtimes and break times.
- Inspectors considered a large variety of documentation relating to the school's work: improvement plans, the school's view of its performance and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.
- Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors analysed 40 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, 'Parent View'. Inspectors also took into account 18 written responses from parents and spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors analysed 20 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.

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