

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Furness Road, Westfield, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3PD

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, though much improved, is not yet consistently good across key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not always cater well, with suitable learning activities, for the different skills and abilities of pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy. As a result, too few pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Too few opportunities are available for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers' feedback is not consistently effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- Due to a legacy of poor teaching, pupils' progress and attainment in subjects including reading, writing and mathematics have been below average at the end of key stage 2 for at least the last three years.
- Standards attained by pupils in 2016, at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 were well below average in writing and mathematics.
- A small minority of governors are still to develop their effectiveness in fully challenging senior leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are highly focused and determined to make St Gregory's a good school. Their new plans, systems and actions are rapidly improving the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Staff morale is high, with the overwhelming majority 'on board' and committed to the task of moving the school forward.
- Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school. They attend regularly, thrive on learning and behave well. Pupils' behaviour in class and attitudes to learning are usually impeccable.
- Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the early years, make good progress and attain well.
- Phonics teaching is good, and vastly improved on previous years.
- The overwhelming majority of parents support the changes initiated by senior leaders. All are of the view that their children are safe, happy and making good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise levels of achievement across key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring that teachers' feedback supports pupils' learning
 - routinely sharing the best practice in assessing pupils work, in order to 'boost' pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils to write for different purposes and practise and develop their writing skills across all subjects
 - helping pupils to achieve to the very best of their ability and making sure that work is always set at the correct level of challenge for all pupils, including the least and most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by rapidly enhancing the skills of the small minority of governors who are still developing in their roles, in order for them to robustly challenge senior leaders.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The quality of leadership and management are good and much improved since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher has consolidated the senior leadership team and galvanised the support of staff to create a positive and purposeful culture in the school.
- Together with senior leaders, and the full support of governors, the executive headteacher has introduced highly effective systems to monitor pupils' progress and 'boost' their attainment. In addition, rigorous systems are now in place to monitor the quality of teaching and hold staff accountable for pupils' performance. As a result of these changes, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, accelerating the progress of current pupils in most year groups.
- New and existing staff fully engage in training to develop their skills and have been open to opportunities to learn from best practice in other schools, most notably Our Lady and St Patrick's, with which the school is partnered through a 'soft federation'.
- Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching are now robust. For example, through their observations of teaching, senior leaders offer succinct advice to teachers on how they can improve their practice. Middle leaders responsible for reading, writing and mathematics play their part too and are increasingly involved in assessing the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils on their work.
- Senior leaders use rigorous assessment information, which charts the progress of pupils in a range of subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics and science, to establish how well teachers are performing in relation to their targets.
- A prime focus for senior leaders and teachers is on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, a group that the school has not served well in the past. During the inspection, leaders were able to provide comprehensive and convincing information indicating that these pupils are currently making good progress in their learning and attaining well.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding very effectively to increase participation in competitive sports such as netball, 'quicksticks hockey' (introductory hockey for 7- to 11-year-olds), gymnastics and 'kwik cricket'. Funding is also used to 'kick start' a range of sporting activities, including football and tennis. Specialist sports coaches help to develop teachers' skills and confidence in teaching a wide range of physical activities.
- Pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum which promotes their reading and mathematical skills well. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum are not as well developed.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Its strong Christian ethos is understood and respected by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils across the school, including those in key stage 1 and the Reception class, have a good knowledge of the scriptures and are respectful towards each other and adults.

- Pupils have a good understanding of different world religions and recently spent a themed week learning about the Jewish faith. Pupils enjoy African dance and mask making, yoga, the theatre, physical education and singing. They regularly raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves, appreciate the importance of British values and know of the cultural diversity that exists beyond the boundaries of their immediate community.
- Parents are highly positive about all aspects of the school. Parents are of the view that their children are safe and well looked after. Typically, parents stated that 'communication has improved', 'staff are always available at the start of the day', 'I know how well my child is doing' and 'the school looks much nicer'. Parents were especially complimentary about the regular 'curriculum in action' days, when they can come into school and celebrate their children's achievements.
- The school has a good and productive relationship with the local authority and has benefited from wide-ranging intensive support since the previous inspection. After a full review of teaching and learning in March 2016, the school was found to be rapidly improving. Further substantial improvements have been made since this time, especially in relation to reading and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Due to this, the school now receives 'targeted' support, moving into 'universal', 'light touch' support.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths, and what it needs to do to improve further. They are steering senior leaders well through a period of rapid change.
- Governors know that the quality of teaching has improved. They have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching because they come into school regularly to listen to pupils read, talk to teachers and look at work in pupils' books. Governors are keen to reward teachers for their good work, but only authorise pay awards if they are satisfied that targets are met.
- Governors know that outcomes are improving, particularly in reading. They are fully aware that pupil premium funding is effectively accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are trained well and take advantage of courses offered through the local authority, diocese and partner school. However, due to the rapidly changing nature of the school and changes to the composition of the governing body, a small minority of governors are yet to refine their skills in order to precisely challenge senior leaders on all aspects of pupils' achievement. The need for development in this area is well understood by senior leaders and is being tackled.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school leaves nothing to chance when it comes to safeguarding. Child protection policies and procedures are up to date and fully understood by staff, all of whom, including those new to the school, know how to identify signs of neglect or abuse.
- Safeguarding training is comprehensive and record keeping is of a high quality. Staff are familiar with the latest government legislation on keeping pupils safe in school.

They know precisely what they should do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. All staff and governors have completed the online 'Prevent' training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, teaching requires improvement because over time it has not led to good enough outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' different skills and abilities. During the inspection, when observing teaching, there were occasions when lower-ability and the most able pupils were not fully challenged because the work was either too easy or too hard. On such occasions, pupils did not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The feedback given to pupils on their work is consistently in line with the school's feedback and assessment policy. Where feedback is less effective, pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Feedback is typically most effective in key stage 1.
- Opportunities available for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum vary between different year groups. Teachers do not consistently build pupils' writing 'stamina' or improve their skills in writing for different purposes.
- Pupils are exceptionally eager to learn. In most lessons observed, teachers had no shortage of volunteers, ready and willing to answer questions. Pupils are usually encouraged by supportive teachers and teaching assistants to persevere and not give up. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are helping to develop their confidence and enhance their performance.
- Teaching assistants are trained well and are well deployed. Where teaching is most effective, teaching assistants focus effectively on helping pupils to develop their skills and deepen their understanding. This was evident in a lower key stage 2 mathematics class, when pupils were inverting operations using divisions and multiplications. Pupils enjoyed their learning because the work was set at the correct level and they were encouraged to work their answers out for themselves.
- Reading is taught highly effectively. Pupils have dedicated daily reading sessions and are encouraged to read out loud in all subjects. Pupils across the school enjoy reading their children's newspaper, which they 'take' regularly. A great deal of excitement was generated in an upper key stage 2 class when the newspaper was circulated. Pupils developed their knowledge of current affairs through discussing news reports on subjects such as WaterAid, the 'migrant crisis' and the work of rescue dogs in disaster areas.
- Teachers' approaches to developing pupils' writing skills are improving. This was exemplified in a key stage 1 English lesson where pupils were writing letters to their teacher to ask if the alien Beegu could visit the school. Pupils made good progress with their letter writing because the work was set at just the right level. For example, some pupils were given words such as 'because', 'but', 'so' and 'therefore', to help them connect sentences, while others had pictures to stimulate their ideas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive, they want to learn, enjoy finding out new things and are eager to participate in classroom activities. As a result of such studiousness, pupils' learning is accelerating.
- Pupils wear the St Gregory's school uniform with pride. Pupils are encouraged to take care with the presentation of their work and do so routinely. Much work in pupils' books is carefully laid out, with good-quality illustrations in science and religious education books.
- The school's Christian values foster a calm and respectful ethos. This helps to promote and develop pupils' appreciation of other faiths and cultures. It also encourages pupils to be considerate, kind and charitable.
- Pupils share excellent relationships with each other and adults. They regularly participate in activities during breakfast and after-school clubs and enjoy inter-school 'cluster competitions'.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe at all times, because their teachers and friends take care of them.
- Pupils are clear that they can raise a concern with any member of staff. They are confident that any worries will be dealt with immediately.
- Pupils know how to surf the internet safely and are fully aware that cyber bullying can take place online. They say that 'you should never respond to nasty messages' or 'message a stranger'. Pupils know to check with parents, or an adult in school, if they are unsure of the safety, or appropriateness, of a social networking site.
- Pupils learn about the harmful effects of drugs and the importance of healthy eating through the personal, social and health aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy their lunches and talks with local police and community support officers and learn about dangers and risks through regular visits from fire service officers.
- Pupils learn about the importance of road safety and how to ride their bicycles with due care and attention.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have devised clear policies and procedures which are fully understood by all pupils. These help pupils make the right choices and manage their own behaviour well. All pupils, and children in the early years, are focused on performing well in class and accumulating as many reward points as they can for their efforts.
- Pupils are courteous and considerate. They like welcoming visitors into the school and talking about their learning. Pupils rarely arrive to school late and their attendance is average. This contributes to the good progress they are currently making.
- Pupils are highly appreciative of the school's 'face lift' and treat school buildings,

grounds and property with respect. This ensures the maintenance of an attractive and well-kept learning environment.

- Pupils move around the school with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly and safely during playtimes. Pupils' behaviour is good during lunchtimes, which are calm and well organised.
- Pupils say that behaviour is usually good. They know exactly what bullying is and say that it very rarely, if ever, happens in school. Pupils are well versed in the consequences of any such inappropriate behaviour, which they say would be dealt with severely.
- Pupils have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying such as racism, which they agree is 'when someone with a different colour skin is picked on'. They say that such treatment is unfair and insist that discrimination does not happen in school. Their knowledge and understanding of other forms of prejudice, such as homophobic bullying, is less well developed.
- Pupils' behaviour during collective worship is impeccable. Characteristically, pupils enter the hall in silence, listen intently and are alert to any questions asked. This was demonstrated in a key stage 2 assembly, where pupils showed their good knowledge of the scriptures and the meaning of the story of the Good Samaritan. Throughout the assembly they were encouraged to reflect on the story and carry its message within them throughout the day.
- The overwhelming majority of teachers, all parents who spoke with inspectors, as well as those who completed the school's own survey of parents' views, are of the view that behaviour is good. The school's own records of pupils' behaviour indicate that pupils rarely break school rules and show that behaviour is typically good over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- National data indicates that historically pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mathematics has been below average across key stages 1 and 2. This was due to teaching that was not good enough.
- The legacy of previous teaching impacted on outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2016, when too few pupils made the progress expected of them. Similarly, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was below average for most groups of pupils. However, comparisons with national data show some positive signs. For example, pupils' attainment in reading was above average at the end of Year 6 in 2016. Many more pupils met the expected standard in phonics at the end of Years 1 and 2 than in 2015.
- The school's own data and assessment information for 2016 indicate that pupils' attainment varied from class to class, depending on the quality of teaching. In addition, some pupils, older pupils in particular, had significant gaps in their skills and knowledge which hampered their learning so that, while progress was increasingly good across the school, attainment remained low.
- A comparison to national data shows that in 2016 the school's disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was not as good as that of other pupils nationally. However, this picture is rapidly changing. The school holds

compelling evidence showing that across all year groups disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress. In Year 6, most of these pupils are working at least to the expected standards. Pupils' current good progress is evident in their workbooks.

- As with other groups, the performance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in national tests in 2016 was not as good as it should have been. Senior leaders have responded to this by enhancing the role of the special educational needs coordinator and ensuring that teachers are fully accountable for the achievement of all such pupils. Early indications are that these pupils are making rapid progress.
- There have been marked improvements in the rate of progress of all groups of pupils since February 2016. This is due to senior leaders' determination to drive standards forward, to implement sharper systems for monitoring pupil progress and to hold teachers accountable for pupils' performance.
- Good phonics teaching increased the proportion of pupils secure at the national phonics screening check considerably, from 52% in 2015, to 78% at the end of Year 1 in 2016. At this time, 89% of disadvantaged children were secure in their phonic skills and knowledge.
- Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are rapidly improving. Evidence of good progress in these areas can clearly be seen in pupils' workbooks, where work is carefully laid out and checked by teachers. Regular 'checkpoint' assessment and daily practice sessions are boosting pupils' performance.
- Few of the most able pupils exceeded expectations at the end of Year 6 in 2016, or secured the higher standards in reading, writing or mathematics. Senior leaders are fully aware of this and have made it a priority to ensure that teachers provide the most able pupils with challenging work in class.
- Work in pupils' books and assessment information indicate that progress in mathematics is improving. As with all subjects, assessments of pupils' progress in mathematics are being used increasingly effectively to plan relevant learning experiences that build on pupils' prior learning.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not yet as good as it should be because too few opportunities are available for pupils to practise and refine their skills across all subjects.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for their future learning. For example, the urgency with which senior leaders have tackled weaknesses in teaching is having a marked impact on Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Senior leaders are fully aware that there is still more to do to make up for lost learning and improve the pupils' life chances.

Early years provision

Good

- All aspects of the leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Though there have been recent staffing changes in both Nursery and Reception classes, children are settled. They enjoy their learning, behave well and are highly cooperative.

- The early years leader, the deputy headteacher and experienced teachers and teaching assistants make sure that children are kept safe at all times. Staff are trained well and have a good understanding of how young children learn.
- Staff assess and monitor children's progress regularly. They document children's journeys through the Nursery and Reception classes carefully, recording the skills children acquire. This information is logged in the form of photographs and post-it notes, which indicate children's achievements in areas such as phonics, writing and mathematics. Records of children's learning are shared with parents, who are encouraged to come into early years classes to find out about their children's learning.
- Staff use assessments of children's progress effectively to plan various learning experiences that build on children's prior learning. Staff ensure that the skills and abilities of children are assessed at an early stage; this ensures that all groups of children, including the most able and disadvantaged children, are appropriately challenged. Interventions to support in areas including language development and phonics are available when needed, to ensure that no child falls behind in their learning.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data and assessment information indicate that children enter the Nursery class with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Children's language and communication skills are especially weak. However, they make good progress through the early years. In 2016 the majority entered Year 1 with the skills and abilities necessary for the next stage in their education. This year children have got off to an excellent start and are attaining well in all areas of learning.
- Children are very proud of their achievements. They have a real passion for learning and finding out new things. This was evident as the most able children in the Reception class used coloured pebbles to help them with their counting. Children were proud to demonstrate that they could add $8+3$ to make 11 and $8+9$ to make 17.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff have high expectations of children and make learning fun. This was exemplified in the outdoor learning and playing area, where children in the Reception class were encouraged to use their imagination to construct a tractor out of crates and wheels.
- As with the Reception class, the Nursery class is well organised, with lots of opportunities for children to develop their creative and early writing skills as well as their understanding of shapes and measurement. Nursery children enjoy drawing independently, looking at books with their friends and creating their own stories.
- Outdoor learning areas, though limited, are well utilised. Here children can play on wheeled toys, learn about letters and shapes and engage in various physical exercises using climbing frames.
- Children behave well at all times. They immediately stop what they are doing as soon as they hear the sound of maracas and follow instructions well. Children move around indoor and outdoor learning areas safely and with due consideration to their friends and staff.
- Parents are of the view that their children are safe, happy and making good progress. They are increasingly taking advantage of the school's 'open door' policy and opportunities to get involved in their children's learning.

- Children's safety is given the highest priority. The same effective safeguarding procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are applied in the early years. Welfare requirements for the early years are met.
- To improve the quality of provision even further, senior leaders are looking at ways of creating better physical links between the separate Nursery and Reception classes. To develop relations with parents even further, staff are exploring electronic means to help parents record and share their children's learning and development at home.

School details

Unique reference number	112339
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10019808

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Greenhow
Executive Headteacher	Jacqueline Hampson
Telephone number	01900 606050
Website	www.stgregorys.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stgregorys.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The senior leadership team has been reorganised and includes an executive head teacher, who has been in post since February 2016, a newly appointed deputy headteacher and an inclusion manager, an existing staff member newly appointed to this post. The executive headteacher is also the headteacher of a local school, Our Lady and St Patrick's.
- Since the previous inspection the governing body has been reorganised to include a new chair of the governing body, foundation governor and parent governor.
- Major refurbishments to classrooms, the library and reception area have taken place this year.
- A large proportion of staff are new to the school, including several teachers. Two are newly qualified teachers.

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school, with a well above average proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.
- Children in the early years are taught on a full-time basis in the Reception class and a part-time basis in the Nursery class. A large proportion of children attend additional nursery provision in the afternoon. This is provided by Educare, which is based on the school site. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which was evaluated as part of this inspection.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Joint observation were carried out with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors read four text responses submitted by parents during the inspection and met both formally and informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised the school's own surveys of parents' views. There were too few responses from parents to the online survey Parent View to be considered. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 15 members of staff were also considered, as were questionnaires completed by 21 pupils.
- A meeting was held with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with various leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for assessing pupils' learning and progress, the early years provision and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A meeting was held with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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