

St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Schneider Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 4AA

Inspection dates

27–28 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there has been a decline in the school's overall effectiveness.
- In recent years, pupils' progress in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been variable and often significantly below the national average.
- The quality of teaching across the school is not consistently good. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough and work is too often not well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- The impact of subject leadership is variable. Teaching in some areas of the curriculum lacks depth and so does not develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively.
- Leaders work to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is at an early stage. It is too soon to see the impact of systems to ensure that pupils' targets are appropriate for their needs.
- Governors sometimes struggle to interpret school performance information. This hinders their efforts to hold leaders adequately to account for how well the school is performing.
- Plans for improving the school identify appropriate priorities, but lack both a sharp focus and clear measures of success.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have successfully established an ethos which focuses on compassion for others and prioritises the well-being of pupils, parents, carers and staff. In a positive and supportive environment, pupils become confident learners.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Since being appointed, the headteacher has brought a greater focus to efforts to raise standards.
- Outcomes across the school are showing signs of improvement, particularly in the early years and key stage 1.
- Children get off to a positive start in the early years. They are welcomed into a stimulating environment where they feel safe and secure.
- Pupils behave well and demonstrate respect for others. Instances of bullying are rare.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school, by:
 - ensuring that teaching across the school, and particularly in key stage 2, is consistently effective and that teachers act promptly on feedback designed to improve their practice
 - making sure that targets in the school development plan are sharply focused and measurable
 - ensuring that subject leadership is consistently effective so that the curriculum gives both breadth and depth to pupils' learning
 - ensuring that governors have the knowledge and skills required to understand school performance information, so that they can hold leaders more robustly to account
 - further improving provision for pupils with SEND, including developing effective systems for setting and reviewing targets for pupils so that support better meets pupils' individual needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise outcomes for all groups of pupils, by:
 - making sure that all teachers have the highest expectations of all pupils, particularly the most able, so that more reach the higher standards in their learning
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently well-matched to pupils' learning needs
 - ensuring a greater consistency and depth in the teaching of subjects such as science and geography so that pupils are able to develop subject-specific skills and knowledge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since his arrival in September 2017, the headteacher has taken decisive action to address an ongoing decline in academic standards. This had been most apparent in pupils' attainment and progress in key stage 1. He has introduced a sustained focus on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics and developing the roles of senior leaders. While these actions are beginning to result in improvements in pupils' outcomes, this is not consistent across subjects and key stages.
- The headteacher's positivity and determination to raise standards for pupils has proved infectious, and staff morale is high. Leaders have created a 'can do' approach, which is adopted by almost all pupils. Leaders and staff share the view that teamwork will bring about the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning that they desire. Pupils reflect this in the way they work together in learning activities.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's current effectiveness. They are clear about the priorities for improvement and have a plan in place to address these. However, the targets set in the plan are not closely enough linked to the school's current weaknesses. They are also not measurable, which makes it difficult for leaders to evaluate the progress the school is making.
- Senior leaders have begun to tackle the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and their efforts have led to some recent improvements. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide teachers with feedback to identify how their practice could be moved forward. However, this feedback is not consistently acted upon, nor do staff make the best use of training opportunities available to them. Consequently, improvements in practice are happening more slowly than leaders would wish.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have an accurate overview of their subjects. They are keenly aware that outcomes are too low, particularly at key stage 2. Action plans are in place and developments are now underway. For example, teachers have reviewed teaching sequences in English and mathematics. Pupils now have greater opportunities to write at length and to reason and solve problems in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that these actions are bearing fruit and standards in English and mathematics are showing signs of improvement.
- The curriculum is broadly well matched to the needs of pupils. It provides them with a varied range of enrichment opportunities that extend their experiences in a range of subjects. Leaders of subjects such as music have begun to develop teaching and learning in their subjects. However, the picture is not consistently good. Some subjects, such as geography and science, are not delivered in sufficient depth which restricts their contribution to increasing pupils' knowledge and deepening their understanding.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. Leaders show careful thought and consideration in allocating pupil premium funding, so this is having a positive impact on pupils' emotional, social and academic achievements.
- The school sports premium is used well to increase participation and raise standards in physical education (PE) and sport. Unequivocally, pupils enjoy PE and sport and greatly

value the opportunities they have to take part in a wide range of activities and inter-school competitions.

- The special educational needs coordinator has developed systems to identify pupils' individual needs and assess their attainment. She has begun to make sure that these pupils have appropriate targets which are reviewed regularly. However, these initiatives are at an early stage of implementation and, because of this, leaders cannot be certain that provision is effective in meeting all pupils' needs.
- The headteacher has developed strong links with parents and carers who really appreciate the 'family' ethos and how well the school cares for their children. Parents typically comment that they feel welcome in the school and know that pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. Parents further comment on the positive impact of the school's work in building pupils' confidence, particularly that of vulnerable pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors are enthusiastic and passionate about the school. They are clear that 'there is a steep mountain to climb' and that they are committed to helping 'navigate' the school towards its 'brighter' future. Their vision helps motivate the whole school community.
- Since the previous inspection, governors have undertaken a review of how the governing body works and have implemented an action plan to address areas for improvement. The governing body was reorganised and new governors were recruited based on the skills they could offer, which added capacity to the governing body.
- Governors know both what the school does well and the further improvements needed to raise outcomes. For example, they are aware of the issues relating to the weaker progress of pupils at key stage 2, particularly in reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher about the quality of teaching and the progress of different groups of pupils. They do challenge leaders, but not always rigorously enough, because they do not have a deep understanding of the published performance information available to them.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory policies are in place and leaders diligently check that staff have read and understood them. Inspectors' discussions with staff and governors confirmed that adults involved with the school know how to keep pupils safe and what to do if they have any concerns.
- The headteacher and supporting emotional resilience in schools worker work well with external agencies when there are any concerns for pupils' welfare. They ensure that staff are actively involved in multi-agency meetings about the most vulnerable pupils. This means that pupils' individual needs are met effectively.
- Leaders carry out rigorous checks to ensure the suitability of adults working on site. Governors support this work by checking leaders' actions and ensuring that their own knowledge is up to date by accessing relevant training.

- Strong relationships exist between pupils and staff, and staff are vigilant about any changes in pupils' behaviour which could indicate a concern. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school and that they trust the adults to support them with any worries they may have.
- Leaders have built strong relationships with pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result, parents and carers engage well with the school and communication is strong. The tailored support for families provided by the school is effective in leading to better attendance and outcomes for pupils.
- All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, felt that their children were safe and they praised the quality of care provided by the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school and within subjects. While there are examples of effective practice within the school, particularly in key stage 1, too much teaching over time does not enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Expectations of what pupils can tackle are not consistently high enough. Work for some pupils, particularly the most able, often lacks challenge. They spend too much time on tasks that they can already do. This hinders their progress.
- As a result of recent initiatives, the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is showing signs of improvement across the school, although there are still some inconsistencies in the teaching of these subjects.
- In mathematics, work is not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities, which slows their learning. Where activities are pitched appropriately, inspectors saw that pupils were highly motivated to learn. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were actively engaged in a reasoning and problem-solving investigation. This is because it allowed them to use and apply their learning from previous lessons.
- The quality of the teaching of writing is variable across the school. In some classes pupils consistently use interesting vocabulary and a range of grammar and punctuation techniques to enliven their writing. However, in other classes pupils' writing is often grammatically incorrect and they do not routinely use basic punctuation properly. Activities do not challenge the most able sufficiently or support the least able pupils effectively. This hampers the progress these groups of pupils make in writing.
- Across the school, most pupils say that they enjoy reading. Leaders have raised the profile of reading and reviewed the way that reading is taught. There has been a significant investment in books and resources to engage pupils, and each classroom has a dedicated reading area. However, these changes are recent and have yet to have an impact on standards.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that pupils receive the additional support they need. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support. This is because they have good subject knowledge and understand what is expected of

them. For example, in a mathematics lesson, lower-ability pupils made strong progress because the teaching assistant skilfully questioned and supported them, ensuring that they were challenged to think independently.

- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is not developed in sufficient depth in all subjects. Teaching does not successfully deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding or develop subject-specific skills in areas such as science and geography.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's welcoming and caring ethos is central to its work with pupils. Staff know the pupils well, and pupils benefit from good care and guidance. Leaders are clear about the importance of feeling a part of the school community.
- Pupils talk happily and confidently about their school. They are keen to engage in conversations about how proud they are of it. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities offered, including netball, construction and residentials to London and Manchester. These promote their social development well.
- Pupils know how to manage risks and keep themselves safe. They say that they feel safe. The curriculum promotes health and safety well. For example, pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe online.
- The school ensures that pupils are taught about the different forms of bullying, including online. Pupils are adamant that instances of bullying at St Pius X are rare. They are, however, confident that if it did occur staff would ensure that it stopped.
- Pupils show respect for adults and each other. They have good manners and display a clear understanding of the school's Christian values. Pupils have a strong moral code and understand right from wrong. Consequently, the playground is a happy and sociable place to be. At lunchtimes, adults guide play and help pupils develop their social skills.
- Staff are very aware of the social and emotional needs of pupils and they endeavour to provide high-quality care. There are a few pupils who have difficulty managing their feelings and emotions, and struggle in lessons and on the playground. To address this, the school provides them with calming activities and counselling support. As a result, pupils learn effective strategies to help them regulate their feelings and emotions.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. In many lessons, pupils are eager to learn and participate with confidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' emphasis on developing a compassionate ethos in the school has ensured that pupils are polite, courteous and considerate of others. Pupils conduct themselves well

at breaktimes and lunchtimes, as they play cooperatively with their peers. They are keen to welcome visitors and are proud to be a part of their school.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils respond quickly to adults' instructions. Pupils spoke of the changes in behaviour they have noticed since the new headteacher started. 'Behaviour has improved because we now have to do more work!'
- Pupils attend school regularly; they are punctual and ready to learn. Leaders have introduced incentives for good attendance and pupils understand the importance of attending every day. For the small proportion of pupils who are regularly absent, leaders provide additional support which is proving to be effective in improving their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' learning across the school, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, is not consistently strong. Pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been below or significantly below the national average in recent years, including in 2018. However, outcomes in early years have been steadily improving over the past three years. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 and in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also been improving.
- This improving picture at key stage 1 is confirmed by the provisional outcomes for 2018. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics are now in line with the national average.
- Inspection evidence gained from visits to lessons and looking at work in pupils' books shows that standards in key stage 1 continue to rise and that the picture in key stage 2, particularly for younger pupils, is also improving.
- Over time, too few of the most able pupils in key stage 1 or key stage 2 have reached the higher standards of attainment or been working at greater depth. This is because the work that teachers set does not consistently encourage pupils, particularly the most able, to think hard and to do as well as they could.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils tend to fluctuate between classes and subjects. For example, in Year 6 in 2018 most disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in reading and writing, but far fewer did so in mathematics. Many disadvantaged pupils now benefit from additional teaching, which supports them in making improved progress. Despite this, because of the variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment are not consistently good.
- Pupils with SEND make similarly variable progress as other pupils in school. While there are signs of improvement in the systems for setting and reviewing targets for this group of pupils, these are at the early stages of implementation. Consequently, progress towards their targets for these pupils is not as strong as it could be.
- Variability in outcomes can also be seen in the wider curriculum. While pupils' learning is strong in some areas, in others, such as science and geography, it is weaker. This is because many of these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth so pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their subject knowledge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years make a good start at the school. They enter the Nursery class with skills and understanding below that typical for their age. Children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. When required to assist children's learning, interventions are targeted carefully and support children's progress. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen to be typically close to the national average.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The new early years leader is skilled and knowledgeable and knows the children well. The early years leader is aware of the strengths and priorities for further development. These include the need for further analysis, monitoring and embedding of systems for tracking children's progress.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the children's skills and capabilities. They keep a close eye on children's learning and social needs. They adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the children well and use questions skilfully to encourage children to think and talk. Children are obviously very trusting of adults and feel safe.
- Children play happily alongside each other, sharing and taking turns as they learn and play. Standards of behaviour are good.
- Learning in the early years is fun. Children engage happily in their learning and are confident and busy. Activities cover all areas of learning and take account of children's interests. Good routines are well established and independence is promoted effectively. Resources are of good quality and accessible to the children, allowing them to make independent choices about their play.
- Positive relationships have been established with parents, helping to promote security and consistency in children's lives. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to contribute to their learning. Advice and support are given to parents to support them in developing their children's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	112365
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10042478

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Gallagher
Headteacher	Mr Kevin McGoldrick
Telephone number	01229 828406
Website	www.st-piusx.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-piusx.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is significantly lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of lessons, covering all classes in the school. Leaders accompanied inspectors on some observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector also met the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority general adviser and talked to the senior education advisor for the diocese by telephone.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils on the first day of the inspection. The inspection team also talked to pupils about their learning in lessons and at breaktime.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Inspectors examined the quality of pupils' work in a wide range of books.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, attendance figures, curriculum plans and information relating to pupils' achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school. They also took into account 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 40 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

James Blackwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Brown

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018