

# Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Springfield Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0EA

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Inspection date:

8 January 2020

## Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

### What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They work hard and enjoy the challenges that new learning presents. Pupils behave well. Pupils said that behaviour is good and much improved this year. They said that name-calling and bullying do not happen. They said that leaders deal with any poor behaviour fairly so that it is not repeated.

Pupils try their best to live out the gospel values of the school. They said that they try to be resilient and show perseverance. They said that this helps them to power through the day and not to get disheartened when they make mistakes.

Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 reflects leaders' high expectations. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve much better than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and sports offered. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a national project that enabled them to showcase their design and technology construction skills.

Pupils feel safe in school because teachers look after them well. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe while walking and cycling to school. They know how to stay safe online.

### What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to learn more and remember more. Teachers consider how trips and visits improve pupils' understanding. A recent trip to London helped pupils understand aspects of the monarchy. Pupils increase their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. They are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Governors know the school well. Their roles have developed since the last inspection. They now challenge leaders about the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics. Governors do not challenge leaders about the achievement of pupils in other subject areas.

Many parents and carers are very supportive of the school. However, some parents have concerns about recent changes in staffing and leadership. They would also like to know more about what is being taught.

Pupils enjoy the varied range of learning experiences. They have developed a keen interest in looking after the environment. Pupils have planted young trees on the school field. They understand that they have a part to play in looking after the environment. They have shared their work with other pupils through presentations and posters. Catchy phrases, such as 'Be the solution to the pollution', exemplify this determination. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions present in Great Britain. The choir performs at national and local events. Many charity fundraising experiences enable the pupils to help those in need.

Leaders have ensured that staff are experts in the teaching of reading and phonics. Phonics is taught systematically. Teachers plan lessons that build upon what pupils know. Most pupils succeed in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Those who fall behind receive support from well-trained teaching assistants. Most pupils read well. However, some of the youngest pupils in key stage 1 and the early years lack fluency in their reading. This is because the books they read do not allow them to apply the sounds they know. The oldest pupils in school have a sound understanding of a wide range of texts and authors.

The mathematics curriculum meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND, well. Leaders have ensured that staff have the skills necessary to deliver mathematics. Pupils enjoy their learning. Regular revision of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division helps pupils to build on what they already know. Pupils apply what they have learned to a range of mathematical activities. Children in the early years have regular opportunities to apply their skills in a wide range of well-planned learning activities. They shared resources well while discussing the weight of objects, using mathematical language.

The history curriculum is a strength of the school. Leaders and teachers know the subject well. The logical planning of lessons helps pupils to remember prior learning. Pupils show great enthusiasm for the subject. They discuss the impact of workhouses and inventions during the Victorian period. They understand the order of major events.

Staff feel valued and supported. They acknowledge the efforts leaders have taken to reduce marking and assessment. Staff benefit from regular training opportunities. This has included teachers working alongside a consultant to develop the approach to the teaching of vocabulary in different year groups.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in and knowledgeable about safeguarding. Staff are aware of the role they play in keeping pupils safe. Work with a range of agencies ensures that staff and pupils are kept informed. Pupils benefit from visits from the police and the fire service to learn how to stay safe outside school. Pupils know how to stay safe near water and roads. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that families and pupils receive appropriate support in a timely manner.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Governors hold leaders to account for standards in English and mathematics because they know how well pupils achieve. Governors do not know how well pupils achieve in the other subjects. This means that governors are unable to hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement in other subjects. Governors need information about the achievement of pupils in the wider curriculum. They should use this information to hold leaders to account for the achievement of pupils across the curriculum.
- Governors should explore ways to enhance communication with parents so that parents are better informed about changes in staffing and life in school.
- Many pupils achieve well in phonics. Pupils apply their blending and segmenting skills effectively. Although pupils in key stage 1 and the early years know the sounds that letters make, some lack fluency to help them improve their reading further. Leaders should ensure that books are appropriate so that all pupils can practise the phonics they are learning and apply these skills to their reading.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 18–19 November 2010.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112358
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122110
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Isabel O'Donovan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Rielly
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-marys.cumbria.sch.uk/">www.st-marys.cumbria.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 May 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation of two schools. The headteacher is the executive headteacher of both schools.
- The school had a section 48 inspection carried out by the Diocese of Lancaster on 22 June 2015.
- Most members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, have been appointed since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- We evaluated the school's approach to the curriculum. We considered the teaching of reading, history and mathematics. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons and held discussions with teachers and pupils. We scrutinised examples of pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning. In reading, we observed a member of staff listening to pupils read.
- We met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- We checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. We met with staff and pupils to check their understanding of the safeguarding procedures.
- We scrutinised documentation relating to behaviour and attendance, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- We spoke to parents and considered the 42 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We considered the 36 free-text responses and the 17 responses to the staff survey. We considered the one response to the pupil survey. We considered the one letter and the one email we received from parents.
- We met with pupils throughout the inspection. We observed their behaviour in lessons and around school.
- I held a telephone conversation with a parent.

### **Inspection team**

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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