

Grayrigg CofE School

Grayrigg, Kendal, Cumbria, LA8 9BU

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Early years provision is good. As a result, children enjoy school, achieve well and are ready to make a good transition into Year 1.
- Pupils across the range of abilities make good progress across the school. Many are making rapid progress in response to more stable and consistent teaching and additional support.
- The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2, and by the end of Year 6, reflect their good achievement.
- Teaching is typically good across the school. Teachers plan well for the different abilities of individual pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils mix and learn well together. They show good attitudes to their work. These qualities help to sustain pupils' good and improving learning.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils are treated equally and benefit from high quality care.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. For example, all participate in dance performances and, in addition, almost all take part in a wide range of after-school sporting activities.
- The inspirational headteacher has effectively led several whole-school changes. In a relatively short space of time, there have been significant improvements. Staff work well as a team in supporting pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have secured improvements in the achievement of all groups of pupils and in the quality of teaching. The school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always do as well in writing as they do in other subjects. They do not always check their work before it is marked. As a result, they make too many errors in their spellings.
- Occasionally, teachers do not check that spellings have been accurately corrected.
- For a small minority of pupils there is a lack of fluency when applying their numeracy skills to mathematical problems.
- The space for learning outdoors for children in early years is limited.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons taught by teachers. Sessions led by teaching assistants were also observed. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, the headteacher, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: safeguarding documents; the school's procedures for evaluating its own performance; development plans; records of pupils' attainment and progress; and documents relating to attendance and behaviour. She also scrutinised pupils' work in their books.
- There were 21 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which were taken into account. The four responses to the staff questionnaire were also reviewed. In addition, the inspector spoke informally to parents at the start and end of school and took account of three letters received from parents.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grayrigg CofE School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally. 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 proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Provision in early years is full time.
- Most pupils are taught in mixed age classes.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual point of admission.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school receives support from a headteacher who is a Local Leader of Education from Gyllside Primary School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing strengths in teaching and increase the proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress by:
 - developing pupils' confidence and skills to check and edit their work before it is marked
 - ensuring that, when pupils respond to teachers' marking, they have corrected spellings accurately
 - building pupils' fluency in applying their numeracy skills when they are solving problems
 - improving the outdoor area for children in early years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows every pupil at the school very well. She is highly ambitious for each pupil's personal development and academic achievement. She deservedly has the full confidence and support of staff and governors. She demonstrates her expertise, skill and determination by leading school improvement. For example, she has ensured that the dip in standards following the previous inspection has been reversed as the quality of teaching and eradicating inadequate teaching have been raised.
- The school's improvement plan clearly states the school's priorities and the systems to judge the school's performance are both realistic and rigorous. The headteacher has developed the role of middle leaders effectively so that they now track closely the progress of pupils in their areas of responsibility. When additional support is required, this is put into place swiftly and monitored closely.
- Staff are given goals to ensure pupils make good progress. Teachers' salary progression is directly linked to the progress pupils make. The headteacher is highly effective in building a strong team of staff while holding them to account for high standards in all that they do. She leads by example.
- Care is taken to promote good achievement for all, including the very small numbers of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium. The funding for these pupils is spent well to meet their needs. This confirms the school's commitment to making sure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. The school community is harmonious and good relations flourish.
- Pupils experience a rich and vibrant curriculum. Learning outdoors, trips and visitors to the school capture the imagination of pupils. For example, caving forms an integral part of the science investigation for Key Stage 2 pupils this term. All pupils participate in weekly outdoor learning, usually in a nearby forest. This teaches pupils to assess risks in their own locality, while learning about science, natural history, geography and enhancing their skills in design and technology. When learning is brought to life in this way, pupils are highly stimulated and eager to find out new things.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed. A Muslim family recently visited the school and provided opportunities for pupils to explore a religion and culture which is different to their own. Whole-school performances bring music and dance to the village community. Pupils also experience the thrill of performing in professional theatres.
- Pupils engage in agreeing school values and developing their understanding of what it means to be British. For example, a recent visit by a local member of parliament brought the importance of Britain being a democratic society to life for pupils.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to broaden sporting opportunities for pupils, while developing the expertise of staff, using specialist coaches. This has, for example, led to increased opportunities in activities such as archery, cycling and gymnastics. Records show that almost all pupils now engage in after-school sporting activities, ensuring a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Effective support from the local authority and Ghyllside School has helped the headteacher and staff to make whole-school improvements.
- School leaders including governors make sure that staff and pupils are kept safe and statutory requirements including safeguarding are effective and fully met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly committed to and supportive of the school. Since the previous inspection, they have had the support of the local authority in making the appointment of a new headteacher.
 - Governors know the school well, including the quality of teaching, because they receive very detailed information from the headteacher, visit the school as often as possible and question what they do not understand.
 - Governors analyse a range of data on pupils' achievement well and they make comparisons with national test results. Governors know the requirements relating to the management of teachers' performance and make sure that salary increases are linked to how effective staff are. For example, they ensure that staff only receive salary increases if their pupils meet their achievement targets.
 - Recently, there have been some changes to membership of the governing body, bringing more expertise to the role. There are governors who now take the lead in analysing pupil progress data and ensure value for money in how the budget is spent. They engage in a range of training opportunities to ensure their skills and understanding are fully up to date.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parents believe that behaviour is good at Grayrigg. There is a calm atmosphere around the school. In lessons, pupils are attentive and usually focus well on their learning. Pupils say that they enjoy school. They try hard and take care in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils have recently been involved in writing the behaviour policy and school values. Older pupils monitor behaviour during break times. The school is successful in helping those pupils with social and emotional issues to make appropriate choices and improve their behaviour.
- Pupils eat together at lunchtime and demonstrate good table manners. This is a very sociable time for pupils and adults to chat together and demonstrates how well everyone gets on with each other.
- Staff and pupils have worked together in designing the new school logo and colours for their uniforms. Pupils look very smart and wear their uniforms with pride.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire unanimously agreed that their children are safe and looked after well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils who spoke with the inspector reported that they were adamant that there is no bullying and had confidence that if there were concerns, adults would sort them out quickly and fairly. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View believe bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Several parents referred to their children having 'great affection' for the staff because each individual is 'nurtured and celebrated'.
- The school is determined to keep every pupil safe and take care of their well-being. As a result, the support available for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable is exemplary. School staff work closely with parents and other agencies to address barriers to learning that pupils and their families sometimes have to overcome.
- Attendance for most pupils is above national levels. This reflects how much pupils enjoy being at school and the positive way in which the school works together with parents.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils now make good progress because of the effective quality of teaching and assessment in a wide range of subjects. This is further confirmed by work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to assess pupils' learning throughout lessons. Pupils discuss their ideas and learn from each other. Classrooms are organised well and the content and timing of activities are planned effectively.
- Phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make) is well taught and this was seen in the early years and Key Stage 1. Not a minute was wasted as Reception children went about learning a new sound, 'ur'. They demonstrated how well they can blend letters and the sounds they make to work out new words to broaden their vocabulary. Pupils who read to the inspector also demonstrated how well they used this method to work out unfamiliar words. They develop a love of books from a young age.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils were seen working out which coins they needed to buy various items from a shop. They each worked out which coins they were going to use and were then fascinated when they could see how they could reach the same total using different combinations of coins.
- The older pupils were developing their persuasive writing skills as they formulated an argument in response to a debate on the need for more houses and hospitals and where these buildings should be located. They considered a video clip of party political leaders and how they addressed their audience and the language that they used. This provided lots of material for discussion before they embarked on their own writing. It also made their learning relevant to real life and gave pupils an insight into British values and democracy in the run up to the general election.
- Pupils' books demonstrate they are experiencing writing in a wide range of genres. However, pupils make too many careless errors with spellings because they do not always thoroughly check their work. Although teachers mark work regularly, they occasionally miss going back to check that pupils have corrected spellings accurately.
- There is now a systematic approach to teaching mathematics across the school. However, some pupils

have gaps in their learning and lack fluency in using mental mathematical skills when solving problems.

- Effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at Grayrigg and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- For the last two years, all pupils who have been at the school from the start of Reception have reached the expected levels in Year 1 phonics screening checks. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics. The very few pupils who struggle to read are given very effective support and this leads to rapid improvements. Pupils develop a love of books from an early age.
- Assessment and test results at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 tend to vary because they are dependent on the attainment of very small groups of pupils. These small cohorts often include pupils who have started school at times other than expected and who have not benefited, therefore, from the good start in the Reception.
- Standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen and are continuing to rise since the headteacher instigated whole-school approaches to the teaching of these subjects. All pupils reached at least the expected levels in 2014. The proportion reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics showed an improvement on previous years and were in line with the national average. Attainment in writing was not as strong. However, overall attainment was higher than the national average and continues to rise.
- As with Key Stage 1, standards are rising in Key Stage 2. Published data can be deceiving because the numbers of pupils in each year group are in single figures and this skews percentages. In 2014, all pupils reached at least the expected level in reading and over half reached the higher level. In mathematics, almost all reached the expected level and there was an increase in the proportion reaching the higher levels compared to previous years. Writing was not as strong but there is now an improving picture across the school. Attainment overall was in line with the national average in all of these subjects combined.
- Results from tests in spelling, punctuation and grammar were disappointing in 2014. The school has identified that spelling is a particular weakness and the timetable in Key Stage 2 now provides more opportunities for improving this area.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their additional needs are identified early and are fully met through one-to-one and small-group sessions delivered by highly skilled teaching assistants. Strong links with external agencies also support both the academic and personal needs of individual pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and is directed towards supporting the very few disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that they make equally good progress as their classmates. The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is too small to compare meaningfully the standards they reach with others nationally or in the school.
- The most able pupils make good progress. For example, in the last two years there have been pupils working at levels normally associated with Key Stage 3 in mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- Since the previous inspection, new teachers and a teaching assistant have been appointed and the local authority has provided support. This has led to significant improvements in provision with the result that all aspects are now good.
- Links between school, home and nurseries are strong. Prior to starting in Reception, most children spend several half days in school. This helps pupils to settle quickly into school routines and learn to behave respectfully towards each other and the adults around them. Behaviour is good.
- Staff are available at the start and end of the school day ensuring that communication between school and home is strong. The 'Learning Journals', which are records of a child's achievements during the early years, are informative for parents and staff. They build a good picture of each individual child and are well used by teachers to help them to plan activities that support children to make good progress.
- Good care is taken to keep children safe. For example, pupils who were cutting farm animal pictures from a newspaper demonstrated they knew how to use scissors carefully and how they should be carried when returning them to be stored safely.

- The early years is now well led and managed. Staff work as a team to assess how well children are doing and plan activities around the interests of the children.
- Teaching is of a good quality. There is scope for pupils to develop their literacy skills which was seen as some embarked on designing and writing an invitation for an aqeeqah party, a Muslim naming ceremony for a baby. This fully engaged pupils in gaining an insight into naming ceremonies across different religions while developing their writing.
- There is a good balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to explore and find things out for themselves. Although the outdoor area is limited, Reception children join the rest of the school in weekly trips to a nearby forest to explore nature and wildlife.
- An extremely variable but small number join Reception each year. As a result, their skills when they start and the standards they reach at the end of early years fluctuate considerably. From their varied starting points, children achieve well and good levels of development are evident. They are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112320
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	462337

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Davis
Headteacher	Kirsty Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2013
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