

# St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

St Bridget's Lane, Egremont, Cumbria, CA22 2BD

**Inspection dates** 6–7 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are often well below those expected for their age.
- Children in the Reception class make exceptional progress because they are outstandingly taught in spectacularly well managed, stimulating surroundings.
- Pupils' reading skills are good throughout the school. Those pupils who have experienced difficulties with reading in the past have good, effective support to help them to catch up.
- Nearly all teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. Teachers are particularly good at questioning pupils to establish what they have learned and making them think about what they are learning.
- Pupils are very well behaved; they are friendly and they work and play with equal enthusiasm.
- With good reason, pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Leaders, managers and governors have made sure that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching has improved. Their effectiveness ensures the school has good capacity for further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently outstanding. In some classes, teachers are not renewing individual pupil's targets quickly enough to increase challenge and promote faster progress.
- Attendance is below average; there are a few pupils whose regular absence is affecting their progress.
- In topic work, not enough is done to promote pupils' writing skills.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, two of them jointly with the headteacher. Most teachers were seen at least twice. Inspectors listened to pupils' reading and looked at samples of their work.
- Many informal discussions with pupils took place at lunch and playtimes; in these discussions, pupils talked about the school, their work and their feelings about behaviour and safety.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also talked with nearly all members of staff and scrutinised their responses to a voluntary questionnaire circulated during the inspection.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 10 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of many more who had responded to an earlier survey conducted by the school.
- Many school documents were analysed, including plans for improvement and records of the quality of teaching. Information about pupils' progress and about how the school makes sure that pupils are kept safe was also carefully scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority; in this school it is nearly always for those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through school action. A greater than average proportion is supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher was the acting headteacher at the time of the last inspection.

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

- Improve further the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that the work set in lessons challenges all pupils to make the best possible progress
  - increasing the consistency with which teachers review the individual targets they set for pupils in the light of what they are achieving
  - linking marking more closely to pupils' individual targets and lesson objectives.
- Improve attendance by working more closely with the families of those pupils whose attendance can be improved.
- Improve the contribution that topic work can make to pupils' writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils achieve well; the exceptions are often those with the poorest attendance. Many children join the Reception class with skills and abilities much lower than those typically expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in their first year at school but have not fully caught up by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress, so by the time they leave school they attain broadly average standards of attainment.
- Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in reading. In the Reception class, children make rapid progress in their linking of sounds and letters. In Key Stage 1, phonics is well taught. Many Year 1 pupils exceeded the national average in a phonics check at the end of last year. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is good. Well over a quarter of pupils made better than expected progress last year.
- Pupils confidently use dictionaries and understand how to use contents pages and indexes to access information quickly
- Although there have been significant improvements over the past two years, pupils' attainment in writing remains weaker than in reading and mathematics. However, the work pupils are currently producing is good. Their English books are full of vivid and imaginative work. Teachers are actively teaching handwriting and pupils are being encouraged to think carefully about what they are writing and its purpose. Generally, pupils' writing is promoted well across the curriculum; the exception is in topic work, where too much recording is on worksheets and opportunities are lost to encourage pupils to write factually.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good overall and stronger than in writing but not as good as in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported. Year 1 pupils who did not reach the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of last year have been given extra support and nearly all have caught up. This reflects the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve broadly in line with other pupils. In 2012, they attained better than other pupils in Key Stage 1 but not quite as well as other pupils in Key Stage 2.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are well taught. Very little teaching is less than good and some, particularly in the Reception class, is inspiring. Inspection evidence tallies very closely with leaders' and managers' view of the quality of teaching. It is also supported by the evidence of additional monitoring by the local authority.
- Classrooms are big, bright and stimulating areas. Teachers take great care to create the best learning environment they can. There is a particularly good balance between information and celebration in wall displays. Pupils' best work is presented very well throughout the school.
- Pupils' work is carefully and accurately marked. Teachers take care to add helpful comments to show pupils how they can improve their work, but do not link these comments sufficiently to pupils' targets or to the learning objectives of each lesson.
- Teachers set all pupils individual targets, but some do not pay enough attention to renewing these targets once they have been met, or to getting pupils to record their own views about their progress towards them.
- Teachers ask relevant questions to make pupils think and also to check what they have learned. One of the strengths in a good Year 3 mathematics lesson was that once the teacher had established that two pupils had sufficient understanding of what they were asked to do, they were allowed to get on with that work. This allowed more time to be spent with those pupils

who needed more support.

- Teachers manage behaviour in their classrooms well. They rarely have to deal with misbehaviour because they make lessons interesting and know and understand pupils well.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They offer sensitive support to lower-attaining pupils but also, frequently support higher-attaining pupils in order to allow teachers to give extra attention to pupils who need it most.
- There are rare occasions when teaching is less than good; this happens when not enough thought has been given to making sure that all pupils are being equally challenged by the tasks set in order to fully reflect the wide range of abilities.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are happy, feel safe and behave well. Behaviour in class is good. Pupils work hard and concentrate. They work well together either in pairs or small groups. Many lessons are characterised by sensible, constructive discussions between 'talk partners'.
- Playtimes are delightful. Pupils are energetic and full of life. They play together well and no pupil is left on their own. Pupils fully understand the range of threats to their well-being, including bullying in all its forms. They have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation. Pupils are unanimous in saying that everyone is friendly, there is no bullying or nastiness and they feel safe.
- Most pupils attend well, but there are a few persistent absentees and also a few who have occasional days off when they do not really need to. The school has not sufficiently explored the possibilities of how to work more closely with the families of those children whose lack of attendance is a concern.
- School records show that the behaviour observed by inspectors is typical of what is normally the case. Serious misbehaviour is almost unheard of at St Bridget's. Staff and parents have no concerns about behaviour.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Staff, parents, governors and the local authority hold the headteacher in high esteem. They have every confidence that she is leading the school to greater things. Inspectors agree that that their confidence is well merited.
- The quality of teaching is being improved through a systematic drive of training and appraisal. The increasingly accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and of the quality of teaching has been central to leaders' and managers' efforts to demonstrate the improving effectiveness of the school.
- Teachers are set realistic targets for improvement. Senior managers and the local authority regularly check on the performance of staff. There is a minor weakness in that some targets do not link closely enough with priorities identified in the school improvement plan.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has given help when it was most needed but has allowed the headteacher to develop a good capacity for improvement within the school with very little interference.
- School leaders are fully committed to equality of opportunity. No discrimination is tolerated and the funding for pupils entitled to the pupil premium is carefully used to make sure that no pupil misses out on any opportunity or experience on account of their circumstances.
- Leaders and managers take great care to make sure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are regularly reviewed and meet all legal requirements.
- The curriculum is good. It focuses well on promoting English and mathematics. It is also very well enriched with activities that help to broaden pupils' horizons. This is of particular importance given that children's knowledge and understanding of the world is extremely limited when they join the Reception class.

- The importance of promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school's ethos. There is a very good understanding that without this, no amount of learning will make the pupils good citizens.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They keep a close eye on its effectiveness and the way it supports the community. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' performance. Some governors, most noticeably the Chair of the Governing Body, visit the school regularly and often accompany pupils on school trips.
  - Governors use many of their own strengths to help improve the school; for example, using skills such as financial management to ensure that the budget is carefully managed. Members of the governing body undertake training to help them to keep up-to-date, for instance in child protection and the safe recruitment of staff. They contribute well to initiatives to make sure that the pupil premium funding is used appropriately.
  - The governing body sets the headteacher challenging performance targets and makes sure that they are met. It recognises the importance of rewarding the best teachers proportionately but understands that in the past there have been instances where pay was not sufficiently linked to performance.
  - All statutory duties are properly fulfilled.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112348
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	411730

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	William Moran
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Douglas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 820320
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-bridgets-pri.cumbria.sch.uk



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