

George Romney Junior School

Cobden Street, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria LA15 8SE

Inspection dates	4–5 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a highly effective school, where senior leaders, teachers and all staff have very high expectations of pupils. Together they ensure that learning is exciting and memorable, and that all pupils reach their potential.
- The headteacher is exceptionally well organised and highly ambitious. With a capable senior leadership team and knowledgeable governors, he has ensured that the school has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection.
- Governors are highly challenging and supportive in equal measure. They work together well to ensure that the school continues to strive towards excellence.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are respectful, welcoming and inquisitive. Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy coming to school and learning with their friends.
- Pupils benefit from an outstanding curriculum which fires their imagination and prepares them well for the next stage of their learning.
- Senior leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of British values is good. Pupils know their rights and have a good understanding of the culturally diverse nature of British society.
- There is a strong team spirit in the school. Staff morale is high. There is a shared determination to continually improve and provide the best for pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well and are highly skilled at deepening pupils' understanding and developing their skills.
- Standards attained by pupils are high. By the time pupils left school at the end of Year 6 in 2015, their attainment in reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling was high, and above average in mathematics.
- Good assessment and tracking procedures ensure that pupils, regardless of their background, ethnicity or starting point in their learning, make at least good progress across the school in all subjects.
- Innovative engineering projects, partnerships with employers, colleges and other schools, reflect the school's 'outward facing' approach to enriching the lives of pupils.
- Parents are highly complementary about every aspect of the school. All parents who gave their views during the inspection said that their children were safe, well looked after and making good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils can say exactly what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum are not as readily available as in reading and writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so that they are outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their learning
 - making sure that the wide range of opportunities available for pupils to practise and refine their reading and writing skills across the curriculum are also available in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has made significant and successful improvements since the previous inspection. School improvement plans are precise, tracking systems for monitoring pupils' performance are robust and systems for checking on the quality of teaching have been refined. As a result of these developments, the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils have improved in the last two years.
- Senior leaders have the support of staff and there is strong teamwork throughout the school. Staff morale is high and teachers are appreciative of opportunities to develop their teaching skills and learn from good practice in other schools. This helps them to meet identified school priorities and improve their teaching.
- The school's own checks on its performance in all areas of its work, including evaluations of the quality of teaching, are accurate and provide a clear direction for further improvement. All members of staff know where the school's strengths are and are fully aware of its priorities for further development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are set challenging targets as part of the school's system for managing their performance. These form the basis for professional discussions with senior leaders and are shared with governors.
- Senior leaders responsible for English and mathematics play a central role in improving the quality of teaching. They do this through regular observations of teachers' practice, assessing the quality of work in pupils' books and establishing how well pupils are progressing through half-termly data 'check-points'. Other leaders, including those responsible for science, special educational needs and topic work, also check on the quality of teaching, providing support and advice to teachers on how they can further improve their practice.
- Pupils benefit from a lively and exciting curriculum. During the inspection there was a palpable sense of excitement as Year 5/6 pupils reported to the whole school on their visit to the theatre, Lowry Gallery and a Jewish school, all of which formed part of their Manchester residential which takes place every two years. Pupils' excellent art skills are evident in the outstanding quality of their work displayed around the school and in their books. Pupils enjoy playing musical instruments, including the guitar, learning about other cultures, such as ancient Egypt, and discovering the history, culture and achievements of people from Cumbria.
- Reading and writing are promoted exceptionally well across the curriculum, with teachers providing many opportunities for pupils to, for example, practice writing in different styles and research various topics of interest. Cross-curricular mathematics work is not quite as strong. Senior leaders are well aware of this and have made it a priority area for development.
- Work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils know that there is a wider community outside of their immediate locality. They celebrate the lives of the world's greatest leaders during 'international fortnight', observe 'black history month' and have a good understanding of the principles of the major world religions. Pupils have a good grasp of British values. They can empathise with those less fortunate than themselves and regularly raise money for various charities. Pupils are entrepreneurial, as demonstrated through funds raised through the 'ten pound challenge'.
- The school's regular checks on the performance of disadvantaged pupils show that the gaps between their performance and that of their peers in school are constantly narrowing. No pupils miss out on any aspect of school life because of their family circumstances. Effective support tailored to the specific needs of each and every pupil ensures their good progress across the school.
- Leaders have used the additional government funding for primary school sports well to increase participation in competitions and a range of sports, such as dodgeball, basketball and gymnastics and to develop the skills of staff in teaching sporting activities.
- Parents are highly positive about all aspects of the school and describe it as a place where 'laughter can always be heard in the corridors'. They judge that their children are happy, safe and making good progress.
- Because of the school's rapid improvements, the local authority now provides 'light touch' support. However, most recently it has delivered effective support with planning, use of assessment information and data. A national leader for education has worked closely with the school to develop the role of middle leaders and observe and share good teaching practice.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body both supports and challenges the school well. Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise. They know how much the school has moved on since the previous inspection and use their

knowledge and understanding to good effect, to both challenge leaders to maintain the school's strengths and secure continuous improvements.

- Governors know that George Romney School is a happy and safe place where pupils achieve well because they come into school to talk to pupils and teachers, participate on various committees and have a good understanding of data on pupils' performance.
- Governors are determined to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well, this includes disadvantaged pupils. They ask probing questions about the impact of tailored small-group teaching activities which additional government funding supports and have made it a priority to regularly check on the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Governors know that the quality of teaching is good and rapidly improving because of pupils' good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and feedback from various reviews on the quality of teaching and learning. They are prepared to act on the headteacher's recommendations for pay awards and promotions, but only if they are satisfied that teachers have met their targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors benefit from regular training which ensures that they are up to date in relation to, for example, the 'Prevent' agenda and *Keeping children safe in education*.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Due to good teaching, outcomes for pupils are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers are enthusiastic, resourceful and intent on providing the very best for pupils. They are open to learning from good and outstanding practice, both within school and through various local school partnerships, and are fully up to date with developments in their various subject areas.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of pupils. They bring learning to life by making it stimulating and fun, and through ensuring that pupils always know its relevance and importance. Pupils say that they 'love learning' because it is always interesting.
- Teachers encourage pupils to pursue their own interests. Many pupils are prepared to go the 'extra mile', in their own time. This was shown during the school's 'Cumbria day', which was celebrated during the inspection. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 carried out independent research to find out about the lives of famous Cumbrians. They came into school dressed as various famous people, past and present, including Stan Laurel, Emyln Hughes and Beatrix Potter, including some of her characters such as Peter Rabbit.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in English, as demonstrated by their well-honed skills in extending pupils' thinking through good questioning. This was exemplified in a Year 5/6 class where pupils were reflecting on their recent theatre visit to see *Shrek the musical*. After using interesting adjectives such as 'hilarious', 'stupendous', 'amazing' and 'outstanding' to describe the production, pupils were asked to consider the essential elements necessary to make a musical. On taking feedback the teacher skilfully extended pupils' language by asking them to consider using 'orchestra' instead of 'band', 'choreography' instead of 'dancing' and 'good diction' instead of 'talking clearly'.
- Teachers use assessment information on pupils' prior learning to plan different challenging activities, ensuring that pupils of all abilities make good progress. This was demonstrated in Year 4, where pupils were split into several different groups for mathematics. In one group pupils used 'easy' and 'tricky' methods to divide three digit numbers by single digit numbers, in another pupils were asked to solve different parts of a three digit calculation while, in a third group, pupils worked out sequences of two, three and four digit numbers. At the same time the most-able pupils demonstrated their excellent computer skills as they competed with each other in a series of online mathematical challenges.
- Teachers set very high standards in the classroom, ensuring that pupils listen intently and follow instructions carefully. These good listening skills were put to the test when all Year 3 pupils took their place in the 'guitar orchestra'. Pupils picked up their instruments to play their parts at the right time and put them down again as soon as they were told.
- Pupils' books show many examples of extended writing in science, history and religious education, with instances of pupils using mathematics in geography, for example, to compare the characteristics of the population of Dalton-in-Furness with other towns in the region. However, opportunities are not as extensive in mathematics as they are in English. Senior leaders are well aware of this and have made it a priority area for development.
- Pupils' work is marked to a very high standard. All teachers consistently apply the school's marking and assessment policy. The quality of work in pupils' books is also of a very high standard and some is

impeccable. This is because teachers encourage pupils to take pride in their work and reward them for their good effort. Teachers give clear advice to pupils on how they can improve their work and this advice is usually taken. However, not all pupils can say what they need to do to improve their learning, preventing some from making the outstanding progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are confident, enthusiastic and interact with both their peers and staff exceptionally well. Pupils are very familiar with the school's core values of, 'honesty, responsibility, respect, integrity, consideration, fairness, acceptance, determination and cooperation'. They take these values seriously and apply them to everything that they do in school.
- Parents, staff, pupils and governors are exceptionally positive about all aspects of school life. All parents who completed the inspection questionnaire and the school's own surveys said that they were happy that their children are safe and well cared for.
- The school considers and caters for all areas of pupils' development, including the academic, social and emotional aspects. This helps to develop pupils' resilience and prepares them well for both current and future challenges.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. They are exceptionally confident that they can speak to any member of staff if they have any concerns and know that they will always be taken seriously.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their achievements. They present their work impeccably and strive to be the best they can be. Pupils are especially proud of their art work which is displayed around the school in the form of, for example, Caribbean-influenced papier mâché masks and Lowry-inspired industrial scenes and cityscapes.
- The school's outstanding 'experience days' at local colleges, and visits to regional and multi-national industries, give year 5 and 6 pupils an early opportunity to consider their future hopes and aspirations.
- Pupils have a highly developed understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet. They are exceptionally well-versed in internet safety and have an extensive knowledge of cyber bullying, which they know can occur on the internet, phones and hand-held games.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of safe and unsafe situations. All pupils have the opportunity to learn how to ride their bicycles safely and know of the dangers of playing near lakes and waterways. They develop a good appreciation of healthy living through the personal, social, health and emotional aspects of their curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils, parents, staff and governors are of the view that behaviour is good. Pupils say that bullying rarely, if ever, happens in school. The school's behaviour logs, observations of pupils in class, at play and during lunchtimes indicate that pupils' behaviour is typically outstanding.
- Pupils have an excellent attendance record. They attend school regularly because they love learning and do not want to miss out on the excitement of school. Pupils are punctual and enjoy attending the breakfast club and after-school clubs. Here they can play table tennis and chess, engage in a wide range of sports and socialise with their friends.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of prejudice and discrimination. They know that racism is when someone is 'judged unfairly because of the colour of their skin'. They are adamant that there is no racism in school. Their knowledge of homophobic bullying is not as well developed. However, pupils are well aware that it is wrong to treat people unfairly because they are different.
- Pupils' behaviour during assemblies is exemplary. They take great pleasure in celebrating the achievements of their class-mates and routinely come to the front of the assembly hall to share their views and experiences. Pupils look forward to their weekly celebration assembly where they applaud each other for their outstanding ideas, exceptional behaviour, smart dressing, good writing and good art work.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' good and outstanding progress ensured that by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2015, their attainment was high in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling and above average in mathematics.
- At the end of the year in 2015, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the most able, made good and often outstanding progress across the school in reading, writing, mathematics and subjects such as art and science.
- The school's new assessment system rigorously monitors pupils' progress across each year group and in all subjects. Regular 'check points' provide teachers and senior leaders with the information they need to plan different activities for pupils and support any in danger of falling behind their peers.
- The school's work to develop pupils' reading skills is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading poetry. They have a full appreciation of the work of many authors and enjoy different adventure, fiction and factual books. Pupils who read for the inspector interpreted with expression and were delighted to read in character. Pupils were keen to explain that anyone who reads more than four times per week at home is entered in a prize draw, putting them in with a chance of winning a book of their choice.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they make outstanding progress in writing across most classes. This is because they can research topics of interest, are skilled at writing for different purposes and have exceptionally well-developed punctuation, grammar and spelling skills. Pupils often write up the results of their experiments in science, as seen, for example, when they recently engaged in independent planning to investigate the load bearing capacity of boats of different construction.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They regularly engage in problem-solving activities and apply their calculation skills to solve real-life problems. This is evident in their mathematics books and in cross-curricular activities such as Ordnance Survey work comparing the geography of Manchester to that of the South Lakes.
- It is not possible to make any meaningful comparison between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally due to their small number in the Year 6 cohort in 2015. However, the school's own tracking data and assessment information show that disadvantaged pupils are exceptionally well supported. As a result of this they make at least good progress in all subjects. Any gaps between them and their peers in school are rapidly narrowing.
- The most-able pupils are challenged and make at least good progress. This was shown in a Year 5/6 class where pupils confidently tackled a series of tricky calculations to work out various percentages of different amounts of money. The oldest pupils regularly attend the local high school to, for example, study algebraic equations and refine their writing skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported by skilled, nurturing staff. As a result, they make good progress and attain well. While the special educational needs coordinator has an overview of pupils' provision and progress, all class teachers are responsible for ensuring that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. Transition arrangements for these pupils, from the infant school into George Romney and to secondary school at the end of Key Stage 2, are good.

School details

Unique reference number	112234
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10002263

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joy Lowes
Headteacher	David Reddy
Telephone number	01229 463002
Website	www.georgeromney.cumbria.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@georgeromney.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–13 November 2013

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are English speakers of White British heritage.
- 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.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of appointments, including a deputy headteacher and a newly qualified teacher. The governing body has been reorganised. Two new members have joined since the previous inspection.
- A before-school club is based on the site. This is managed by the governing body.
- All pupils learn in mixed year groups, with three Year 3/4 classes and three Year 5/6 classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector 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 learn to read.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with the headteacher.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 22 text responses, and letters and voicemail from parents. The inspector met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. The school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views were also taken into account, as well as responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 19 pupils and six members of staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also held meetings with school leaders responsible for English and mathematics and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority and a national leader of education.
- The inspector examined a range of documents. This included information about pupils' progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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