

# Holme St Cuthbert School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112112
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	378426
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Naomi Taylor

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevan France
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shelagh Daniel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mawbray Maryport CA15 6QZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 881242
<b>Fax number</b>	01900 881242
<b>Email address</b>	head@hstcuth.cumbria.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspector observed four teachers and visited eight lessons. Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and parents and carers. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, local authority evaluations, records of pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' work. The inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded. The responses from 48 parents and carers, 25 pupils and nine staff were also analysed.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than the average sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. One class contains children in their Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The other class comprises pupils in Years 3, 4, 5, and 6. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils joining during Key Stage 2 and almost all teaching staff have been newly appointed. The school holds the Sports Activemark Award. The school meets the current floor standard.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about it. One parent/carer commented on their child being 'happy, secure and learning well', a view which represented that of the vast majority. Pupils achieve well. From below average starting points, their attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6, although attainment in English is particularly strong and higher than that in mathematics.
- Teaching is good. There were some outstanding lessons taught by the teachers in both classes. Occasionally, pupils do not transfer their mental mathematics skills to working out number sentences and problem solving. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities. As a result, these pupils make good, and in some cases better, progress. The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all groups of pupils are highly engaged in their learning.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They have high levels of respect for each other and for staff and visitors to the school. Inspection evidence confirms this. Those who join the school other than at the usual times are quickly made to feel part of an extremely strong school community. Pupils' academic and personal development are given equal importance which gives them great confidence to move to the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher and staff have a very accurate and precise view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Performance management has been used extremely well to improve the quality of teaching. All teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together in planning a highly engaging curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The governing body plays a significant role in both supporting and challenging the school.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to further raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
  - extending the use of enterprise activities across the whole school to highlight the relevance of numeracy skills in everyday life
  - building pupils' confidence in using mental mathematics by encouraging them to consistently apply these skills when working on number sentences and problem solving.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Evidence from lesson observations demonstrates all pupils are fully engaged in learning and are making good progress. Pupils show excitement and interest in their lessons and their positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour make a significant contribution to accelerating their progress throughout the school.

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are generally lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language development. Through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class, children achieve well; their skills are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2.

Overall, attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average, although standards in English are higher than those in mathematics. The school's actions to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils joining the school during Key Stage 2 are having a positive impact in closing gaps. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities gain much in their development from working in a small school setting. Parents and carers believe that their children are making good progress and this was evident during the inspection.

The younger pupils quickly develop satisfactory reading skills. They were able to use these skills well to break down and sound out difficult or unfamiliar words. They were then able to demonstrate an understanding of what they had read by retelling the story in their own words. Analysis of data shows that attainment in reading is improving. Reading books are correctly matched to the needs of the pupils. Their attainment in reading is average by the end of Key Stage 1. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of reading both for their school work and for their future. They are confident in their reading skills and speak excitedly about enjoying reading a variety of books. Attainment in reading is well above average by the time pupils leave school in Year 6.

### Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good, reflecting parents' and carers' positive views. Some lessons were outstanding: exceptionally well planned, with rapid pace and using a variety of activities drawn from the planned curriculum which fully engaged and

enthused pupils. For example, in a Reception and Key Stage 1 Forest School lesson, pupils were highly motivated in creating their houses for mice living in the city and in the country. Pupils worked exceptionally well together and talked about differences the mice would experience living in contrasting environments. Excellent questioning techniques from the teacher, teaching assistants and volunteers, extended pupils' vocabulary and fired their imagination. Pupils were excited and enthralled and had a raft of language and experience to draw upon to help with writing their story.

There was a great sense of excitement in a Key Stage 2 class when, as pupils were reflecting on what they had learnt about Henry VIII, Ann Boleyn (their class teacher in costume) entered the room. She spoke only in French, so the pupils had to draw on their understanding of the language as they engaged in a dialogue with her to find out more about her life. This experience had an exceptionally strong impact on their engagement in writing later in the lesson. All ability ranges were given well-matched challenges to maximise their learning. These lessons also demonstrate the strong impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In lessons that fall short of outstanding, learning activities for pupils of different abilities were not always so precisely met. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the pupils who were not yet secure in applying their mental mathematics skills joined the rest of the class for the plenary. They struggled to find the correct answers to the teacher's questions. Enterprise activities promote pupils' numeracy skills but are currently only planned for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Marking frequently and regularly provides pupils with clear information about the next steps to improve their work. The tracking system allows teachers to set realistic and challenging targets which pupils know and understand. There is effective use of peer- and self-assessment by the older pupils which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own work and this was demonstrated in lessons and in their work books.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils overwhelmingly say they feel extremely safe in school and they are confident that they can turn to any adults if they have any concerns. They have an outstanding understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed. This was evident during the inspection from the risk assessments seen and also from the way that pupils engaging in Forest School activities were able to place the red cones in areas to be avoided and explain the dangers that these areas present. Attendance is above the national average and pupils arrive punctually to school.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in and around school. Pupils, parents and carers agree that behaviour is of a very high standard. There is no evidence of bullying and there is great confidence that it would be dealt with efficiently and effectively should such occurrences arise. The curriculum includes raising awareness of different types of e-safety and those parents who were unable to attend a session on this have been sent a disc to inform them of e-safety both within school and at home.

The highly effective behaviour policy has ensured that pupils joining the school are securely aware of boundaries and consequences. As a result, the school maintains its outstanding caring and respecting environment. Parents and carers, together with staff, acknowledge the improvement in behaviour and attitude to learning, from pupils who have joined the school during Key Stages 1 and 2. One parent commented that the 'buddy system is lovely for the young ones and the older children enjoy the responsibility'. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, staff and governing body have focused very successfully on identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, there have been significant improvements in progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Tracking of pupils' progress is very secure and the impact of new initiatives are closely monitored to drive whole school improvement. There is a significantly improving picture in the quality of teaching and learning as a result of ongoing and effective professional development. This is having a strong impact on pupils' progress and quality of their work which is much improved. New staff have adapted exceptionally well in taking on multiple responsibilities in such a small school which has also helped to secure the improvements seen. Safeguarding procedures are very rigorous. All these factors, together with the upward trend in attendance and pupils' outstanding behaviour, reflects the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum is outstanding and significantly contributes to pupils improving progress. It is vibrant and includes highly engaging enterprise projects for the older pupils. There are appropriate interventions to accelerate the progress of pupils who join the school other than at the usual times or those identified as in danger of falling behind, thereby promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

Highly effective work with other small schools in the area ensures the curriculum gives many opportunities to gain a greater understanding of the experience of other children in contrasting environments to their own both within Britain and overseas. There is a highly successful link to a school in France and further links with Africa to develop pupils' experience and understanding of other cultures. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on respecting each other and knowing right from wrong. Pupils talk very thoughtfully about their responsibility to support those less fortunate than themselves. They are highly engaged with their local community.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Holme St Cuthbert School, Maryport, CA15 6QZ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you to those of you who gave your time to talk with me about how much you enjoy your work and the activities you take part in outside of lessons. Some of you who read to me demonstrated how you work out unfamiliar words and told me why reading skills are so important.

You attend a good school where the staff do all they can to encourage and support you. The teaching you receive is good and improving and you achieve well. Your behaviour is exceptional in lessons and around the school and the school ensures that you have a very safe environment. You are extremely good at looking after each other and this helps the younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to settle quickly into school. School leaders are very successful in helping all these things to happen.

I have asked that the school improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise your attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:

- extending the use of enterprise activities across the whole school so you all understand the importance of numeracy skills in everyday life
- building your confidence in using mental mathematics by encouraging you to always apply these skills when working on number sentences and problem solving.

You can help by attending school regularly and continuing to work hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor  
Lead Inspector

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