

St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112370
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	384852
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. This inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Daley
Headteacher	Pauline Moss
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2010
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out at no notice. Teaching was observed in all classes; six teachers were observed teaching 12 part-lessons. Pupils' work was analysed in each class. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the Governing Body, local authority representatives and a group of parents. A parent and carer questionnaire was not issued but the inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies and procedures, improvement planning, monitoring and self evaluation.

Information about the school

St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School is a small primary school serving the Botcherby community, Carlisle. It has undergone significant changes since its last inspection in March 2010 when it was judged to require special measures. The previous headteacher left the school shortly after that inspection. The local authority acted swiftly to put interim leadership arrangements in place until a new permanent headteacher took up her post in September 2011. A number of teachers have left the school and new teachers have joined. Classes have been reorganised and there are now four mixed-age classes across Key Stages 1 and 2. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided through a morning Nursery class and a Reception class.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than three times the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is over twice the national average. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage, with small numbers from other ethnic groups. A small number of children are in the care of the local authority. The school exceeds the current floor standards for achievement at Key Stage 2.

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

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- The school provides pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The learning environment has been transformed, morale is high and all staff are dedicated to bringing about further improvements. Pupils are happy to go to school and keen to do well.
- The new headteacher is working very effectively with the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers to create an environment conducive to learning. Together, they have successfully tackled weaknesses and improved teaching and behaviour. Pupils' achievement has improved significantly as a result and is now satisfactory.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points, with many children making more rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are making better than expected progress in English across the rest of the school. Their progress in mathematics is slower but improving. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen and is close to the national average.
- Teaching is satisfactory, with some good practice. Stimulating and well planned learning experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage help children get off to a flying start. Consistently good teaching in the Year 5/6 class sets high expectations and prepares pupils well for secondary school.
- There is still some teaching that is not good enough to promote the rapid progress needed if pupils are to attain average levels in each class. Where this is the case, teaching does not always take full account of pupils' prior learning before moving on to something different, nor does it give pupils the opportunity to consolidate their learning on independent tasks.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed and is no longer a barrier to achievement. Behaviour is satisfactory overall; pupils feel safe and their attendance is much improved. There is

scope for pupils to take on more responsibility around the school, to support each other and promote good behaviour, and they are keen to do so. However, there are occasions when pupils' lack of engagement in lessons slows the pace of learning, particularly where activities do not capture their interest.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from satisfactory to good and raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - planning units of work to build on pupils' prior learning and consolidate new learning
 - giving pupils time to develop their skills on longer pieces of independent work
 - ensuring that assessment is used to plan tasks at precisely the right level to extend learning
 - planning activities that enthuse, engage and motivate pupils to learn for themselves.
- Improve behaviour from satisfactory to good by:
 - giving pupils more responsibility and engaging them in maintaining good behaviour
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical of children their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which provides a firm foundation for further learning. Nevertheless, many children have lower than average social, communication, language and number skills when they start Year 1. They make satisfactory progress across the rest of the school because teaching is increasingly well matched to their learning needs. They make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is good. Lesson observations and work scrutiny indicate that satisfactory progress overall is being sustained.

The gap between the attainment of pupils at St Cuthbert's and all pupils nationally have closed over the last two years. Pupils attained broadly average standards and exceeded national floor standards for the first time in some years in the Year 6 tests in 2011. Attainment has also improved at Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress in reading and attained broadly average levels in the 2011 standardised assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics lags behind but is much improved.

The school has relatively high proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with special educational needs. Those entitled to free school meals achieve as well as this group

nationally. Pupils with special educational needs, which amount to almost half the cohort in some classes, make similar or better progress than comparable pupils nationally.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is mostly satisfactory and there is some that is good. Positive relationships are a feature of all teaching. Teachers are patient and encouraging so that pupils feel confident to contribute their views. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised with stimulating activities that enable children to practise and develop their skills. This ensures that teaching arouses children's curiosity and engages their interest fully. The most effective teaching across the rest of the school takes full account of pupils' prior learning and provides plentiful opportunities for them to practise their skills independently. Activities are at precisely the right level to provide challenge, but enable pupils to experience success. Where teaching is less effective, the activities fail to fully capture pupils' interest and curiosity, because they are too difficult or pupils find them boring. Consequently, pupils are not fully engaged in the tasks and the pace of learning slows as teachers seek to regain their attention.

Revisions to the curriculum, including the introduction of a structured approach to teaching letters and sounds and guided reading, have had a positive impact. Teaching is more systematic and this has quickened pupils' progress in developing key reading and writing skills. School leaders have rightly identified the teaching of mathematical skills as a priority. There has been an increased focus on promoting pupils' social and moral understanding through all lessons and assemblies.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support. Their progress in lessons is assured through effective team working between teachers and teaching assistants. A comparatively high number of pupils have behavioural special needs and these pupils are supported very well through interventions and planned strategies in class. This helps them to achieve satisfactorily.

Parents and carers who met with the inspector said that they are pleased with the changes that have been made and feel that teaching has improved. They have been concerned about instability in staffing which inevitably has an impact on the continuity of teaching. Staffing is more stable, although there are still some temporary arrangements in place which are being resolved as a matter of priority.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour has steadily improved and is satisfactory overall. Their increased engagement with school is reflected in their improved attendance and punctuality. Attendance is broadly average and persistent absenteeism has significantly decreased following intensive support for families who were struggling to get children to school. The majority of pupils behave very well, showing respect and consideration towards each other and their teachers. They do their best to uphold the school's behaviour code, both in the classroom and in communal areas. Behaviour in the playground is mostly good. Pupils are kind to each other and play happily. However, there is little for them to do and school leaders have identified improvement to the outdoor facilities as a priority.

There are a few pupils who struggle with their behaviour and their outbursts can very occasionally disrupt lessons. Incidents are always dealt with quickly and sensitively so that

they cause minimum disruption. Support from the learning mentor is highly effective in helping pupils manage their behaviour so that such incidents are increasingly rare. Pupils say they feel safe; they report that bullying has reduced and it is not seen as a problem. They have full confidence in staff to sort out any concerns. Pupils understand dangers and know how to keep themselves safe. The school's records and the views of parents and carers who met with the inspector confirm that behaviour has improved and is consistently satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have also improved since the last inspection and are no longer a barrier to learning. However, there are still occasions when some pupils find it difficult to engage in lessons fully. Most pupils are keen to do well and try their very best, but a few lack self-motivation and perseverance. This results in the pace of the lesson slowing as teachers try to redirect their attention. It is clear that pupils are most engaged and sustain concentration where the teaching is good.

Leadership and management

After a period of interim arrangements, a permanent headteacher is providing good leadership. She has built on the good work done by the interim headteachers and introduced rigorous systems to monitor provision and pupils' progress. Staff, parents and carers, the governing body and pupils are highly supportive and share her ambitious vision for the school. Although at early stages, the systems provide a good foundation on which to plan further improvement. There are clear action plans for development supported by well-targeted professional development.

The roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders have been reviewed so that they have a more strategic role in improvement planning. Subject leadership is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and curriculum planning. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils and provides adequate preparation for the next phase of their education. The main focus, for the last two years, has been on ensuring that key skills are taught systematically with the result that pupils are making more rapid progress in literacy and numeracy. There are appropriate plans in place to broaden the curriculum to include more independent, creative and investigative work and broaden pupils' opportunities to reflect on their learning. Social and moral development is promoted well in lessons and through personalised support. Pupils show increasingly effective personal and social skills and many are keen to take on more responsibilities. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is adequately promoted through lessons and assemblies.

The school's strategies to safeguard pupils fully meet statutory requirements and include robust recruitment procedures and thorough assessment of risks. The school has established effective partnerships with outside agencies and families to protect children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. It is highly inclusive and welcoming of all pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, are well supported so that they make good gains in their personal and social development.

The governing body has been strengthened with additional members and support from the local authority to develop skills in monitoring and evaluation. The Chair of the Governing Body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

The local authority provided good support for the school at the early stages. The level of support has appropriately reduced as the school has established itself under the new headteacher and governors have developed their role in challenging the school. The stronger leadership and teaching have brought improvements in achievement and behaviour and provide the school with a strong capacity to improve further.

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).

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.
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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School, Cumbria, CA1 2UE

I have enjoyed talking with you and observing the school's work over the last two years. I have seen many improvements and am pleased to say that your school no longer requires special measures. It is providing a satisfactory quality of education.

These are the main findings:

- Your headteacher, teachers and all staff have worked very hard to improve teaching and create a happy learning environment.
- Your new headteacher is doing a good job in leading improvement. All staff are dedicated to making the school even better.
- Your achievement has improved significantly. You are making satisfactory progress in your learning and you do very well in English.
- Teaching is mostly satisfactory and there is some that is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a flying start because activities are interesting and stimulating. Those of you in Year 5/6 work hard and rise to the high expectations of your teacher.
- The majority of you behave very well and your attendance is much better – well done! However, a few of you find it difficult to sustain concentration in some lessons.

I have agreed some areas for improvement with your headteacher. These are:

- Improve teaching so that it is all good and raise your achievement further by:
 - making sure teaching builds on what you know and gives you time to practise your skills independently
 - planning interesting and exciting activities at just the right level.
- Improve your behaviour even more by:
 - giving you more opportunities to take responsibility and support each other to behave well.

You can play your part by always trying your best in all your lessons. You can be proud of your school and your achievements – you are an asset to your school.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

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