

St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119615 |
| Local authority | Blackburn with Darwen |
| Inspection number | 379853 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 February 2012 |
| Lead inspector | David Byrne |

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

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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 | 202 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jill Gibson |
| Headteacher | Janet Grime |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 May 2009 |
| School address | St Albans Road Darwen BB3 0HY |
| Telephone number | 01254 701336 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Byrne
Elaine Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed eight teachers teaching 10 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. Observations were made during lessons of the support provided for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Inspectors checked pupils' reading skills. Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff, parents and two community police support officers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the safeguarding policies, and minutes of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. During the inspection 86 parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed together with others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. Across the school, there is a high percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The percentage of pupils receiving help from beyond school for their learning needs and having statements of special educational needs is almost twice the national average. One reason for this is that the school incorporates a resourced provision class for 10 pupils with statements of special educational needs. Pupils usually join this class partway through Key Stage 2 from other schools. This gives the school an above average percentage of pupils joining it at times other than normal. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a below average proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has exceeded the government's current floor standards.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some staff changes, most notably the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. The school currently holds an International Schools Award and Healthy Schools status.

It is a fully extended school with wrap-around care for pupils attending the school and others from the community. This provision is inspected separately by Ofsted and reports from its inspection are available on the Ofsted website.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school. High levels of enthusiasm for learning are reflected in the pupils' above average attendance. Due to an excellent ethos of care throughout the school, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This contributes to outstanding behaviour and excellent relationships throughout the school.
- Achievement is good. From starting points in Early Years Foundation Stage that are below what is typical, especially in language, attainment rises to average by the end of Year 6. Key factors in this success are good teaching, a good curriculum and well-targeted support for the high proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils in the resourced provision class benefit from good teaching and a skilled leader.
- Progress is good overall but is faster in mathematics than English. This is because some pupils, mostly boys, find writing difficult and unappetising. Recent improvements to the curriculum, backed by staff training, are rectifying this. Some pupils, particularly boys, are not sufficiently inspired to write in a wide enough variety of contexts. Marking is regular but pupils are not always given adequate guidance about how to improve. This is because their targets are not sufficiently personalised to match individual needs. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are limited with just a few occasions when pupils make choices about their learning. This reduces the capacity of some to do as well as they can.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are ambitious for the school and show good leadership. They are fully aware of what they need to do to move the school forward and have brought about good improvements since the previous inspection. All staff are increasingly using data to set challenging targets for pupils and all have high aspirations for them. These factors contribute to the school's good capacity to improve in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress further in English so that it matches mathematics by:
 - widening the opportunities for boys to write independently in a variety of contexts
 - setting targets to guide pupils' improvement which are more closely aligned to individual needs.

- Promote pupils' ability to reach their full capacity in academic achievement by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions about what they learn to build their confidence in working independently.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good and pupils make good progress from their starting points. This judgement agrees with the views of parents and carers who returned their questionnaires. Some groups of pupils, in particular disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do very well and reach standards of attainment that are above those for similar pupils nationally. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are below what is typical for their age and with particularly weak skills in communication, language and literacy. They make effective progress in the Reception Year. Between Reception and the end of Key Stage 1, attainment rises at a good rate. By the end of Year 2 attainment is average overall, although pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as reading and mathematics. Between Years 3 and 6, progress is more variable and affected by the high movement in and out of this key stage by pupils.. Standards attained in reading are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, with improvement underway due to the successful embedding of strategies to develop pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters (phonics). Progress is stronger in mathematics than English because some pupils, mostly boys, are reluctant to write. The school is aware of a difference between the performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others. Strategies in place are narrowing this achievement gap. The overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 generally matches the average for pupils nationally. Pupils who have been at the school a long time, and have not joined partway through the Key Stage 2, reach above average standards.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers are very complimentary about the quality of teaching. They give particularly strong praise for the support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The inspectors agree with these positive views. Teaching is good with some outstanding elements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers and teaching assistants work together in a very productive way. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. These contribute enormously to the excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development evident throughout the school. Teachers plan carefully using

their good knowledge of each pupil. This information, coupled with a good knowledge of the primary curriculum means that pupils' work is usually matched closely to the needs of the different ability groups. Sensible adjustments to the curriculum are increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning but writing remains an area to develop. Teachers are working hard to make writing more appealing particularly to boys. During a Year 3 lesson looking at adventure stories, pupils responded with great enthusiasm to an overnight 'invasion of frogs' to their classroom. This topic, together with the visit of the community police support officers to follow up the 'burglary' spurred pupils to want to write. This imaginary approach secured good learning because it gave learners a reason for writing.

Where teaching is less effective, expectations are not high enough for pupils to work independently, for example by following their own lines of enquiry. This holds back progress for some pupils in achieving their capacity for making choices and decisions about their work. Assessment has improved significantly since the previous inspection. All staff now understand its value in tracking progress and identifying those at risk of falling behind. Pupils are increasingly aware of how well they are doing and developing the important skill of understanding for themselves how to improve. Marking, although systematic and prompt, varies in quality and does not always offer precise enough targets to guide improvement. The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. In the resourced provision class, strong teaching enables pupils to feel fully included and to develop their personal and academic skills well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

This school has an exceptional ethos of care and support. The very caring leadership of the headteacher has created a school in which everyone is valued, no one is pre-judged and all have the opportunity to participate in all the school offers. Parents and carers feel that the school is: 'Just like an extended family', and say that it works closely with families in times of crisis. Everyone understands the behaviour policy and sees their role in supporting it. This is one reason why pupils' behaviour is exemplary; at all times they are courteous and helpful. They hold doors for others, willingly help other pupils during play and maturely act as monitors, house captains or school councillors. Pupils enjoy school and attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils say that school is great fun and this level of enjoyment is evident in their above average attendance. One parent reported that their child saw school as a treat and always wanted to get there each morning. Pupils understand how to stay safe and they are adamant that bullying or aggression of any sort is almost unknown. Pupils respect others who are less fortunate than themselves; disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are included in all on offer in the school and pupils with different cultural backgrounds are appreciated and valued.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads the school effectively by sharing with staff a vision which is underpinned by the school's strong caring ethos. This entails caring for pupils and working closely with families to provide a safe and secure environment, while promoting personal and academic development. As a result of improved procedures for recording pupils' progress, leaders have a clear picture of where the school is

doing well and how it can do better. This information is used to establish realistic and pertinent areas for school improvement. The school's self-evaluation leads into good strategies for the continual professional development of staff. Leaders are increasingly looking outward to share expertise and ideas with other schools, for example in securing accurate assessment in writing. The school has successfully improved since the previous inspection and it has the capacity to improve further.

All pupils benefit from a good curriculum. There is a good focus on the basics of English and mathematics and there are strengths in the provision for Spanish and physical education. One area of relative weakness is that too few opportunities are planned for pupils to learn independently. One pupil, for example, told an inspector that he would love more investigations in science. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from good management of available resources. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thrive in the strong sense of community, and in the excellent partnerships they make with each other and staff. They value the school's code of behaviour. Links with a school in Spain and the cultural diversity within the school enable everyone to respect one another. Governance is good. Members of the governing body work alongside staff and the headteacher to enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to have equal opportunities for success and to ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Senior leaders and governors ensure that all requirements related to safeguarding and child protection are effective. The school is very efficiently run on a day-to-day basis. A key factor in this is the excellent contribution of the school bursar and administration staff. The school makes good use of its budget and gives good value for money.

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

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| 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.



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School, Darwen,
BB3 0HY**

Thank you for welcoming myself and Mrs Maloney to your school. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and outstanding attitudes to learning. Your school is good because it prepares you well for your next stage of life. You benefit from a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As you move through the school, you make good progress but some of you could do better in writing. Your teachers and support staff are exceptionally caring and those of you who need help benefit from good support. Many lessons are exciting but at times you are not given enough time to work on your own and follow your own interests. Everyone in your school is treated equally and you rightly told us that you feel safe. By the end of Year 6 you grow into caring young people who respect others.

Your headteacher, teachers and support staff are constantly seeking ways of making the school even better. The school has improved since its previous inspection and with your support, should continue to get better.

Part of my job is to suggest how the school can be improved. I have asked the school to provide more opportunities for all of you, but particularly boys, to write about a wider variety of exciting topics and help you to understand your targets for improvement better. In addition, I feel that more can be done to create opportunities for you to develop your ability to work on your own without too much adult direction.

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne
Lead inspector

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