

St Cuthbert Mayne School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113551
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	378729
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2011
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,078
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Erica Dunn
Headteacher	Cathy Gilfillan
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2009
School address	Trumlands Road Torquay TQ1 4RN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 35 lessons taught by 33 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, groups of students and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, records, assessments and questionnaires from staff, students and 223 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does the school's latest assessment information confirm that attainment and achievement are improving?
- How well has the school closed the gap between attainment in English and mathematics?
- What is the effectiveness of the school's work to improve teaching? To what extent is teaching consistently good?
- Do the school's improvement plans provide a good template for future developments?

Information about the school

St Cuthbert Mayne School is designated a specialist mathematics, computing and science school. It is a larger than average voluntary aided joint Catholic and Church of England school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are below average but are growing. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but is increasing; the largest group of these students has specific learning difficulties.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Cuthbert Mayne is a good school. It has some outstanding features and has improved in significant areas. Attainment is slowly rising but remains average. Better teaching has led to improvements in students' progress, which is now good. Very effective personal and academic support means the school is highly inclusive so the achievement of all groups of students, including those facing specific learning difficulties, is good. Recent developments in the sixth form have improved provision and led to better academic outcomes for students. Sixth form achievement is good.

The school rightly takes pride in the exceptional care and support it provides, including its excellent arrangements for ensuring students' safety. This is reflected in the many outstanding elements in students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students enjoy excellent opportunities to take on responsibility, both in the school and local community. This includes setting up and fully managing dinners to which local councillors are invited so that their views can be canvassed. Parents and carers hold very favourable views of the school. One typical comment made was, 'The staff always follow up on any queries and concerns and my son has made excellent progress since joining the school.'

Teaching has improved and now has numerous strengths. Lessons are well planned, run at a good pace and offer varied activities. In combination with a good curriculum, teaching provides interesting experiences for most students and they are generally eager to learn, relate warmly to one another and their teachers and behave well. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long, students become distracted and their progress slows. Marking is variable and, although students are aware of their targets, marking provides only inconsistent advice.

Leadership and management are good and the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher has successfully embedded the drive for a better school. This is based on more effective self-evaluation; for example the school is now data rich and uses this information constructively to support learning. The monitoring and promotion of teaching have improved classroom practice and promoted higher achievement than at the time of the previous inspection. This and other information feeds well into the relevant development plans that are proving a successful strategy in the school's improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By June 2012, ensure greater consistency in teaching and learning through:
 - making sure that all lessons provide the correct mix of teacher-led and student-initiated learning so that interest remains high
 - developing marking so that it is analytical and offers students constructive advice on how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is steadily rising but, overall, it remains close to the national average. Changes in staffing have helped the school close the previous gap in attainment between GCSE mathematics and English, so that there are now no significant differences. By some measures, attainment is above average. For example, the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE is above average, while the inclusion of other equivalent qualifications in national comparative information (which the school does on a very limited basis) reduces the attainment judgement to average. Strong academic support and care ensure there are no significant variations in attainment between groups of students; this is because they are quickly addressed before they develop.

An improving pattern of teaching and learning promotes good progress. Students are keen to do well, enjoy learning and usually work hard to meet lesson objectives and to reach their personal goals. Good teaching is fun, but keeps a strict focus on learning objectives. A Year 7 history lesson was typical; teaching was enthusiastic and good planning meant that students enjoyed a variety of brief, stimulating activities. They collaborated well with one another, working rapidly to meet strict deadlines and quickly gaining a good grasp of the nature of historical sources. The sophisticated use of assessment to identify and support students facing barriers to learning ensures that the progress of all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is equally good. Given their starting points, this pattern represents good achievement for all students.

Behaviour at the school is positive and welcoming. Students enjoy school and behave with mature consideration towards one another and adults, responding very well to guidance. Bullying is rare and students report that occasional occurrences are firmly dealt with. Attendance is above average. Students have an excellent grasp of what is safe and unsafe and agree with parents and carers that St Cuthbert Mayne helps to keep them safe at all times. They have very clear opinions on what promotes good health and many adopt healthy lifestyles, eating a balanced diet and taking part enthusiastically in the numerous opportunities for exercise, both during and after the school day.

Students are proud of their school, relishing the opportunities to take responsible roles and the numerous forums where their views are listened to and acted upon.

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They cooperate closely with staff in planning their future learning and the best paths to success. Students’ work in the local community is highly proactive; for example they take the initiative to raise funds for charitable causes, both local and international.

Spiritual growth and understanding are central to the school’s ethos and students show a deep interest in their own beliefs and those of others. Positive behaviour is a convincing testament to students’ good moral and social development. Students share the school’s values about what is right and wrong and keenly investigate moral issues, such as slavery. They show great curiosity to learn about other cultures, enjoying the experiences offered by the school to interact with those from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The great majority of teaching is securing good progress. Teachers show good subject understanding and share their enthusiasms with students. Careful planning to a common school format ensures lessons have varied activities, most of which are conducted briskly. This ensures that most sessions engage students’ enthusiasm and they are usually keen to actively engage with their learning. In the best lessons, students work closely with their peers in groups to discuss, research and plan. This develops their independence. However, in some lessons teachers talk for too long. When this happens there are limited opportunities for students to explore their subject independently.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Centrally maintained assessment data, fully accessible to all staff, fully track each student’s progress. They help to provide clear targets for students and are used very well to initiate interventions that boost the progress of those in danger of falling behind. Good oral feedback is a feature of many lessons and promotes students’ understanding. A new marking policy aims to introduce greater consistency but its benefits are not widely visible in students’ exercise books, where advice given is inconsistent.

The well-organised curriculum provides a flexible and personalised set of learning opportunities. Individual needs are addressed across the school. For example, those in Key Stage 4 with specific needs often benefit from a more vocational mix of activities accessed from a wide range of partners. Tailored curricula for students with specific learning difficulties are very effective in ensuring their good progress. The curriculum is very effectively adapted to ease transition between different stages. For example, students in Year 9 embark on GCSE studies at different times through the year to enable them to make a confident start onto their new courses. The school’s specialist provision has been used to develop mathematics teaching and promote higher attainment. A very wide range of enrichment activities as well as lunchtime and after-school study groups are very popular and much appreciated by students.

Very well-targeted support enables all groups to make the best of the available opportunities. The school rightly prides itself on its caring ethos and this is particularly reflected in students’ often exceptional personal development. Students, parents and carers exhibit high levels of trust. Students are well known as individuals and the most vulnerable receive excellent support and guidance from staff at all levels. Students receive comprehensive guidance about their transition into and out of school and between the key stages, enabling such changes to be made with the minimum of disturbance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has developed more comprehensive self-evaluation and this is starting to bring about improvements. For example, more detailed assessment and recording thoroughly track each student’s progress. These data have initiated interventions and other forms of support that improve students’ progress and raise attainment. More systematic lesson monitoring and higher expectations of staff lead to better teaching

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across the school. The outcomes of these and other monitoring activities are considered in the drawing up of future plans. These are clear and pertinent, and include relevant strategies to tackle weaknesses, providing a good template for the future.

The headteacher shows a quiet determination to ensure the school provides effective education. Improvements in staffing mean that staff share her ambition to improve the school. The senior leadership team and many middle leaders and managers work well together, setting high expectations of colleagues and students alike.

Exceptional care and strong academic support have improved outcomes for students and eliminated any unevenness in achievement. Evidence of inequality and discrimination is tackled exceptionally well and equality of opportunity at the school is outstanding.

The governing body employs a variety of methods to evaluate provision. It works closely with staff and its links with each department are informative and supportive. Members are increasingly confident in analysing assessment data and use this information to ask challenging questions. The school improvement plan is a joint project with senior staff and its progress is subject to rolling review. The governing body works well to ensure students’ safety. Excellent safeguarding procedures include close working with outside agencies, the regular review and updating of relevant policies and very thorough staff training. The school has excellent quality assurance and risk assessment systems that take full account of students’, parents’ and carers’ views.

The school is highly committed to working in partnership taking a leading role in a number of links, such as those with fellow post-16 institutions. These enhance the curriculum by, for example, enabling some elements of the Diploma to be offered. As a specialist school, St Cuthbert Mayne offers strong assistance with science teaching to a number of local primary schools. Close liaisons with various outside agencies add to the exceptional care students experience at school. The school is a highly cohesive institution which engages closely with a number of local community groups and students take part in a number of community projects, such as participating in the planning of a local youth centre. Close international links, for example with a South African school, encourage multicultural understanding but the school is aware it has too few partnerships with communities in contrasting areas of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	2

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met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy life in the sixth form and make a highly positive contribution to the school and local community. They take leadership roles in a large number of activities, for example through the mentoring of younger students. Their personal development is outstanding. Encouraged by more effective teaching, students increasingly take responsibility for their own learning and there is a trend of improvement in their attainment and progress, which is good. Attendance is above average.

Consistently good teaching enables students to develop as effective learners. Lessons are well planned and characterised by positive relationships. However, some are too teacher dominated. Thorough assessment procedures keep staff and students well informed about progress and enable students to identify and work towards clear curricular targets. The school offers a broad range of courses and a number of effective enrichment activities, helping students to develop a good range of life and employment skills.

Leaders and managers have developed well-structured plans to address areas for improvement. Their implementation has improved teaching and learning and is strongly improving outcomes for students. Staff engage well with students, parents and carers. Students report they feel safe and well supported in their academic and personal development.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires. Most questions had a very favourable response. A very large majority of parents and carers reported that the school keeps their child safe, children are well prepared for the future and they are happy with their child's experience of school. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns over the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that, on the few occasions when behaviour is less than good, the school deals with it well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert Mayne School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 223 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,078 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	35	122	55	12	5	6	3
The school keeps my child safe	81	36	129	58	8	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	72	32	122	55	19	9	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	27	127	57	13	6	8	4
The teaching is good at this school	56	25	132	59	25	11	2	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	49	22	127	57	30	13	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	20	146	65	27	12	3	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	58	26	139	62	14	6	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	24	136	61	23	10	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	22	111	50	32	14	15	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	17	126	57	25	11	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	48	22	135	61	20	9	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	79	35	124	56	14	6	3	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



30 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St Cuthbert Mayne School, Trumlands Road, Torquay
TQ1 4RN

Many thanks for the courteous welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. It was a great pleasure talking to you and we were pleased to hear how much you enjoy school life.

St Cuthbert Mayne is a good and improving school. In some respects it is outstanding. The exceptional care and support it offers to all of you leads to some outstanding outcomes, especially in your spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, your knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe and in your community involvement. The school provides you with excellent equality of opportunity.

You make good progress. Your attainment, although slowly improving, is similar to the national average. Teaching is good, helped by well-planned, varied lessons and your positive approach to learning. However, it can be inconsistent. Good leadership and management maintain a strong focus on promoting higher attainment, and monitoring of the school is much improved.

We have asked the school to focus on making lessons more consistently good by:

- ensuring that teachers do not talk for too long at the expense of providing you with interesting activities to do
- marking work more carefully so that it provides additional guidance on how you could improve.

You can help by maintaining your good behaviour and positive attitudes. Once again, many thanks for all your help.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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