

# St Cuthbert's C of E Voluntary Controlled Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123777
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	380727
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Anna Sketchley

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Keward Avenue Wells Somerset BA5 1TS
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	4–5 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380727



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 10 lessons and observed six teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils and the inspector spoke informally to parents and carers. 56 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement and reports about the school written by the local authority. Questionnaires completed by 100 pupils and 18 staff were also evaluated.

## Information about the school

St Cuthbert's is a smaller than the average-sized junior school. Pupils come from the City of Wells and outlying villages. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the government's minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools Plus during the last year. Since the last inspection there has been a high turnover of staff.

**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>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- St Cuthbert's is a good school. It is not outstanding because although attainment in mathematics is improving, pupils perform better in English.
- All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. Teaching is good with some high quality practice in observed lessons. At regular pupil progress meetings teachers and subject leaders use accurate assessments to ensure that teachers focus on pupils who are not making enough progress. Strategies to help pupils make the best progress they can are rigorously monitored and individual targets are set with pupils so that they are clear about how to improve their work.
- The school has successfully introduced a skills-based curriculum that engages and interests pupils and ensures excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise literacy skills across different subject areas but few opportunities to practise numeracy skills.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They say that they feel very safe in school and parents and carers agree. All safeguarding procedures are rigorously implemented. There is a very real family feel to St Cuthbert's and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Bullying is rare and attendance is good.
- After a period of significant staff changes a strong senior leadership has emerged and is well established. Working together with a supportive governing body they have built the school community into an enthusiastic team dedicated to improvement. The management of performance is good and the systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching has clearly identified opportunities for teachers' professional development. This has led to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection and demonstrates that the school has the capacity for further improvement.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in mathematics by July 2013 by:
  - ensuring that the recently revised calculation policy in mathematics is used consistently across the school
  - ensuring that teaching assistants and parents and carers understand the methods used to teach mathematics
  - creating more opportunities for pupils to practise their basic mathematical skills in other subjects.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - ensuring that there are more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching
  - ensuring that, especially in mathematics, tasks are short and frequent, allowing teachers to respond more quickly to pupils' learning in lessons.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

A very large majority of parents and carers correctly believe that their children are making good progress at the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is broadly average although in the current Year 6 there is an above average number of pupils who have special educational needs; some of these needs are very complex. This is also the case in some other classes. Despite these difficulties, all groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school and pupils' attainment in Year 6 is average in mathematics and above average in English, including reading.

Provision for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well organised. Pupils' needs are identified early and six-weekly monitoring of interventions ensures that they make the necessary progress. Gaps in attainment are closing over time. This ensures that these pupils make the same good progress as all other pupils, including those who are supported by a nurture group. This nurture group benefits pupils' social development and provides a positive climate in which to learn.

The school liaises with the nearby infant school to ensure continuity in the teaching of phonics (learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent) for those pupils who need it. Pupils use their phonic and other reading strategies well and less-able readers have good strategies with which to tackle unfamiliar words. By Year 4, pupils are reading fluently and with expression from books appropriate to their abilities. The more-able pupils are able to read such words as 'derelict' and 'embroidered' without hesitation. All pupils use the school library and they say, 'The school encourages us to read a lot, they think it's important.' Homework diaries keep a very well-recorded history of pupils' reading at home and these are checked regularly by teachers.

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Resources for reading are excellent. Appropriate books and a regular junior newspaper are helping to raise reading standards for boys. By Year 6, pupils read with sensitivity and real enjoyment and the good progress pupils make shows that the teaching of reading is well organised and effective. The high focus reading has enjoyed throughout the school this year has brought about rapid improvement in the development of pupils' reading.

Good reading skills enable pupils in Years 4 and 5 to enjoy a wide range of poetry while looking for similes and metaphors in preparation for writing their own poems. By Year 6, pupils' writing books show that significant progress has been made. They write interestingly and at length and their work usually includes correct punctuation and spelling.

The school is working very hard to improve pupils' calculation skills in mathematics. In a Year 3 lesson using a computer program, pupils confidently used their mental strategies when recalling multiples of 50 up to 1,000 and then 2,000. By Year 6, pupils understand how to use ratio when creating a scaled plan of their ideal bedroom. There has been some improvement in mathematics this year but more time is required for new strategies to take full effect. Currently there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills within other subjects.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good. The vast majority of parents and carers believe that their children are well taught, making comments such as, 'My child's class teacher has helped her progress well and settle easily after a difficult time in her last school.' Teachers expect pupils to work hard, listen attentively and behave well in lessons. Due to the well-planned curriculum, learning is stimulating and imaginative and teachers take every opportunity to use information and communication technology (ICT) to engage and motivate pupils, especially at the beginning of lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use a number of strategies for pupils to practise their social skills as they give explanations, discuss books and take part in short discussions about their learning. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the quality of teaching although their understanding of current methods of teaching mathematics is variable.

Lessons are very carefully planned and, in particular, the well-organised setting by ability for mathematics is a positive response to pupils' needs. Teachers typically begin each lesson by displaying the learning objective and sharing it with pupils. As they recap on previous learning they use good questioning skills, often probing and asking for explanations so that pupils have an opportunity to show what they remember and can do. The pace of learning accelerates in outstanding lessons because teachers hold small plenaries, dividing the lesson into short sharp learning opportunities. This allows teachers to assess how well pupils are doing during the lesson and at the end. Homework tasks are an especially good feature as they are interesting and support the development of pupils' learning skills. However, parents and carers are not always able to offer sufficient support in mathematics because

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some are unsure of current methodology. Individual learning targets are set with pupils so that they are clear about how to improve their work.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are well supported in the nurture groups and in lessons by teachers and experienced and skilled teaching assistants. Small-group work and one-to-one teaching in English and mathematics, concentrating on basic skills, enable this group of pupils to make similar progress to all others. Learning ladders and individual targets help pupils to assess and improve their work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Very good relationships between adults and pupils help to ensure good behaviour in lessons and a positive climate for learning. The school manages the challenging behaviour of a very small minority of pupils very well. Recorded incidents show a trend of good behaviour over time. A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned about disruption to lessons but no evidence of this was seen during the inspection. Pupils' behaviour observed during an assembly was exemplary and pupils say that they get on very well together in the playground. Bullying is rare and pupils know that if it did arise, teachers would 'jump on it immediately'. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, for example physical, emotional or cyber-bullying.

All parents and carers who returned the questionnaires and also those spoken with informally comment that their children feel safe in school and the vast majority think that the school looks after their children very well. This was corroborated by discussions with pupils, who have a good understanding of how to avoid hazards, for example, on the adventure playground equipment and when using the internet.

The school's 'house' system makes a significant contribution to pupils' attitudes to school. Working towards coveted badges for work, conduct, community involvement and culture helps them to make good progress in all areas of school life. House meetings, leadership responsibilities and the school council all provide excellent opportunities for pupils to practise their social skills. Attendance is above average and pupils say they enjoy coming to school.

### **Leadership and management**

The strong and experienced leadership team, assisted by supportive governors, has ensured that the school is firmly committed to improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate because it is based on a regular monitoring schedule of the school's effectiveness. The leadership of teaching is good. The school's initiatives to improve the teaching of reading have successfully raised attainment in this subject. There has also been a significant amount of professional development to improve the quality of teaching of mathematics but this has yet to have an impact on lifting attainment in this subject. Performance management is used well to support whole-school targets and to identify groups of pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Pupil progress meetings play a central role in identifying gaps in pupils'

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learning and are used effectively to plan lessons and interventions to meet these needs. Governors regularly monitor the school's work and are knowledgeable about its strengths and weaknesses. They offer the school a good level of support and a good degree of challenge when acting as a critical friend.

The well-organised, skills-based curriculum engages and enthuses pupils. It provides them with frequent opportunities to practise their literacy and ICT skills in a range of different subjects. The curriculum also ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well supported. Connections with other cultures are particularly strong through the school's links with a school in Uganda and a school in Clevedon.

The promotion of equal opportunity for pupils is good and the school does not tolerate any kind of discrimination. Safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements and are followed rigorously. Staff and governors receive regular training about their roles in safeguarding pupils and this ensures that a high quality is maintained.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Cuthbert's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School Wells BA5 1TS**

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently and for spending time talking to me. I really enjoyed meeting you. I found St Cuthbert's to be a good school. These are some of the best things I found.

- You are achieving well, especially in reading.
- You receive good teaching, enjoy lessons and have a good attitude to your work.
- You enjoy coming to school and are very polite and well behaved. Your attendance is good.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and feel very safe in school.
- Your school is well led and managed.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. I have asked them to do two things to make your learning even better.

- I have asked them to improve your calculation skills in mathematics by the end of the next school year. I would like the whole school community, including your parents and carers, to know the methods you are being taught. I have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to practise your mathematical skills in other subjects.
- I would also like all the teachers in your school to become even better at teaching you by watching some of the outstanding teaching that takes place in your school.

Please keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley  
Lead inspector

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