

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Aviemore Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L13 3BB

## Inspection dates

17–18 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, leaders and governors work very well as a team in partnership with their federated school. Skills and expertise are freely shared and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. The school continues to get better.
- All groups of pupils achieve well from their low starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those supported with extra funding known as the pupil premium often make very good progress because of the help they receive.
- Teaching is good with examples of excellent teaching. Many lessons are exciting and include activities that make learning fun.
- This is a very caring school and pupils say they feel extremely safe. Newcomers describe their warm welcome from both pupils and staff.
- Behaviour overall is exemplary. Those who have difficulty controlling their actions are managed effectively and do not disturb others.
- The headteacher puts into practice his great determination that pupils should have every opportunity to flourish. This leads to an extremely rich curriculum that provides opportunities to succeed academically and in a wide range of sport and artistic activities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although most achieve well in writing and spelling and handwriting are improving these skills are not yet as high as other aspects of writing.
- There is some variation in progress between classes, especially boys in Key Stage 1 who do not make as much progress as they could.
- Occasionally, teachers do not provide activities that are at the right level for pupils and lessons are too slow to keep pupils interested.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 17 lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a parent and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils from different classes read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with a focus on writing in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's plan for future improvements, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website, including video clips showing pupils' experiences.
- The views of eight parents were analysed through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents shared their views about the school with inspectors at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed 25 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Murphy

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average. An increasing number of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The number of pupils who start and leave the school at different times during the school year is high.
- The school is part of a Federation (established under School Governance (Collaboration) (England) regulation 2003), with St Sebastian's Catholic Primary School situated about a mile away. The schools share the same headteacher, governing body and some staff work in both schools.
- The school has achieved many awards including Investors in People Gold Award, Eco-Green Flag, the Activemark, International School status and the Naace mark for information and communication technology.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially in writing, to outstanding by:
  - improving pupils' skills in handwriting and spelling
  - ensuring that in Key Stage 1 activities capture the enthusiasm of boys and so increase their learning and progress
  - making sure that throughout lessons activities are suitable for every pupils' needs so that they make as much progress as possible
  - keeping up the pace of teaching so that pupils always give their full attention to their teachers and produce their very best work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are lower than those typical for their age, although this varies with the size of the group. Speaking and listening skills are often limited and these are given priority. Children gain in confidence and express their ideas both in speech and writing. Progress is good and very good in physical development because resources for outdoor play are greatly improved.
- Letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are taught effectively. The impact of this is clear in the results of the national assessment in reading in Year 1 which were slightly above the national average in 2012.
- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. There is some variation between classes and boys in Key Stage 1 are not always enthusiastic learners and their attainment is lower than boys nationally. Excellent teaching in Year 6 accelerates progress for older pupils.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average but varies with the different cohorts. Results of national tests in 2012 were above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and progress in mathematics was very good. Pupils enjoy the additional small group teaching which is very practical and increases their progress.
- Attainment in writing is average with examples of high quality work in Year 6. Evidence in books in other classes indicates handwriting and spelling are improving. However, this is not yet consistent in all classes and remains an aspect for some that requires improvement. Pupils enjoy reading and attainment is average with a good number reaching beyond this and gaining pleasure from books.
- Standards are affected by pupils who start at the school at different times during the year and who have not always benefited from the same positive experiences as other pupils. Many of these pupils are new to speaking English. Their needs are swiftly assessed and help is provided by pupils as translators, together with professional guidance. As a result, these pupils settle quickly and make good progress.
- The school provides very good support for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Staff are trained to offer expert advice both individually and in small groups. Assessment information shows these pupils often make better progress than other pupils and attainment is in line with the national average and higher than is usual for this group.
- Similar effective support is provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Although in lessons their needs are not always met precisely, overall they benefit from specific help and make good progress. Parents describe how these pupils are encouraged to overcome social difficulties so that they can take advantage of the effective teaching on offer.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with some examples of excellent teaching, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, very imaginative ideas make learning exciting. Children were enthralled with the story of a giant and eager to write a letter to him. Very effective questioning led them on to deliver their letters to him by balloon. This type of experience is common place for these children and shows a thorough understanding of how young children learn.
- In most lessons in the rest of the school, teachers also provide a variety of activities. Role play is popular during introductions to stimulate enthusiasm, although this is not always exploited throughout the lesson. Occasionally, the pace of learning peters out and pupils do not produce enough work.
- Teachers usually use their knowledge of pupils' learning to plan work that is hard enough for all abilities. In a few lessons, the work set for some pupils is too hard, for others too easy. This is

also the case when pupils are taught as a whole class with some new learning being too difficult and, therefore, confusing pupils.

- There is a consistent approach to making clear to pupils what they are going to learn. Teachers also link subjects most effectively and this makes learning more purposeful. For example, Year 6 pupils planned a budget for items to place in a Pharaoh's tomb, skilfully combining their numeracy skills and knowledge of ancient Egypt. This led to most effective learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, especially in literacy and numeracy. These skills are taught effectively. The new focus of teaching letters and sounds and spelling patterns, in small groups led by teachers and support assistants, is improving pupils' reading skills. The impact on spelling is not yet fully evident. In writing, teachers' expectations of handwriting are not always high enough. In mathematics, the use of practical activities, such as sorting items into hoops, clarifies learning.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Staff very skilfully defuse problems for those pupils who find it difficult to sustain concentration. As a result, lessons run smoothly and pupils' academic and social skills prepare them well for the future.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- This is an extremely friendly school. Year 6 pupils are a credit to their teachers. They reflect all that is positive about the school and are excellent role models. As a result, pupils are polite to visitors and each other. They are justifiably very proud of their school.
- The vast majority of pupils work hard and behave very well in lessons and at play. They collaborate, share resources and invite others to join in their games. One newcomer explained that on the first day he knew he would be happy because his classmates welcomed him.
- Pupils say they feel safe because staff are so caring and they know help is readily available. They are taught how to look after themselves and avoid dangerous situations. The anti-bullying week informs them about different types of bullying, including the use of the internet. Pupils felt this is not a problem. Minor incidents of name-calling are swiftly resolved.
- Attendance has improved to just above average in response to the school's rigorous work with pupils and parents. Most pupils arrive punctually and the Education Welfare Officer is involved with the few families who struggle to arrive on time.
- The school council summed up their school as 'brilliant because we are all treated equally'.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has great determination to provide equality of opportunity and ensures there is no discrimination. His focus is always on making education fun. He knows the pupils and their families well and is highly effective in raising the school's profile in the community. Collaboration between governors and leaders from both schools contributes significantly to the school's success. All share the same ambition and the school is well placed to improve.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher check on the quality of teaching. Although this is not always formal it leads to support when it is needed. As a result, teaching is good with only a few variations between classes. The monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough. Teachers are expected to explain their plans to help a pupil who is not making enough progress. Teachers have targets to improve their work based on pupils' progress and this influences the award of salary increases.
- The school is clear about the future. Although the school's development plan is rather long it identifies effective actions to raise pupils' attainment. Staff training is linked closely to priorities. The impact of this is seen in the improvement in mathematics following guidance about new approaches.
- The amazing display of trophies alerts visitors to the richness of opportunities available to pupils. Pupils are awarded a diploma for involvement in extra-curricular activities and take part in a

graduation ceremony with cap and gowns. The very effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the way they socialise together.

- Links with the local authority are effective. Monitoring and support is provided, including training for newly qualified teachers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are aware of the school's strengths and future developments. Data about performance is reviewed and questions raised about any possible lack of achievement. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and seek support from the local authority when setting performance targets for the headteacher. They review the staffing structure taking regard to performance and salary awards. Governors manage the budget effectively and know that the pupil premium funding supports pupils academically, as well as improving their wider experiences by subsidising school trips. They know this has had a positive effect on the progress of these pupils over time, but are not as well informed about the impact of specific activities. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, particularly ensuring safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Governors attend training, especially dealing with safety.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104649
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	402951

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Laird
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dennis Hardiman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2284137
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