

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Wigan

Thorburn Road, Norley Hall, Wigan, Lancashire , WN5 9LW

Inspection dates 11–12 April 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics especially in Reception and Key Stage 1. Although some pupils catch up at Key Stage 2, too few reach expected levels by the time they leave.
- Teaching is not yet good. Work is not always set at the right level. Teachers' questions do not challenge pupils enough or probe their understanding. Time is not used well in some lessons and learning slows.
- Methods for checking on the quality of teaching are established but have had too little effect on ensuring that it is consistently good over time.
- Achievement has fallen since the last inspection and, although leaders are tackling it, they have had too little impact in Reception and Key Stage 1. Leaders have not gained sufficient skill in checking and improving teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and respectful.
- Pupils feel safe. Attendance has improved.
- Governors provide good challenge and support to school leaders. The headteacher is leading a clear strategy to raise achievement and gains are being seen at Key Stage 2. Consequently, school leaders demonstrate that they have the capacity to sustain further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 23 lessons.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books to get a view of current achievement and progress over time. They did this jointly with the deputy headteachers. The inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to get their views on, amongst other things, how teaching helps them to learn and what they think about behaviour and safety in the school.
- The inspectors checked the responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). However, there were only 4 responses, which is too few to enable the data to be useful.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, teaching and classroom support staff, school leaders, a representative from the local authority and an external consultant who has been working with the school to improve mathematics.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, records of the quality of teaching, the improvement plan, results in 2012 standardised assessment tasks, and the school's tracking of pupils' progress. The inspectors also looked at safeguarding documents and the school's records of behaviour and bullying incidents.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and checked the school's records of reading progress.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| David Law, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Sheila Loughlin | Additional Inspector |
| Maria McGarry | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The school also provides facilities for 0-3-year-olds in the form of nursery provision and baby and toddler groups but this is separately registered with Ofsted and was not part of this inspection. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds although a small proportion comes from other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- Staff have identified a larger than average proportion of pupils who are supported through school action because these pupils have a disability or special educational needs.
- An above average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much larger than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so most is good or outstanding by:
 - matching work more carefully to pupils' different needs so learning is pitched at the right level
 - developing teachers' use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and challenge the more-able
 - making sure time is used well so lessons proceed at a brisk rate.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics so most pupils reach at least expected levels of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 by:
 - making sure pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 learn different ways to read confidently and accurately, including making good use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics)
 - providing more opportunity for pupils at Key Stage 2 to use their reading and writing skills when undertaking work in other subjects
 - making sure pupils at all key stages are able to remember key number facts and solve mathematical problems with understanding.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing training and support for the deputy headteachers and phase leaders, to develop their skills for checking on the quality of teaching and evaluating its impact over time
 - developing leadership of the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes to promote improvements in teaching methods and facilitate brisker progress in learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children join the Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding below those typical for their age and in some aspects, such as speech and language, well below. They learn to follow routines and play well together but children do not learn quickly enough so at the end of the Reception Year, attainment remains below expected levels.
- Pupils' progress from their individual starting points continues to require improvement at Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 have fallen continuously for three years. Pupils are not confident in their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics). By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in reading are well below those seen nationally.
- By the end of Year 2 standards of attainment in writing are below those seen nationally and few reach beyond expected levels. In some lessons, pupils make good progress, for example Year 1 pupils used exciting vocabulary to describe 'life under the sea.' However, this good progress in writing is not consistent across the key stage.
- In mathematics, more pupils in Year 2 are currently on track to reach nationally expected levels but some remain unsure of key number facts and understanding of how to solve problems is frequently uncertain.
- Standards of attainment in the end of Year 6 national tests fell to below average levels following the last inspection. Current school data and work in pupils' books indicate that recovery is under way. Pupils' progress is quickest at Key Stage 2, being particularly strong in Year 5 where teaching is of good quality.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils read accurately but many are not as skilful at drawing inferences by reading between the lines. Pupils' books currently show good progress in writing and older pupils are starting to write at length in their English books. However, many pupils find it difficult to use their reading and writing skills as confidently in subjects other than English, partly because there is too little opportunity to do so.
- In mathematics, pupils at Key Stage 2 have a sound grasp of how to use taught methods of calculation but are insecure in their understanding of some key concepts such as place value and this impedes their progress. For example, pupils in Year 6 struggled because they did not understand the value of fractions.
- In some lessons, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of helpful support from teaching assistants but over time their progress is similar to that of other pupils. Pupils for whom English is not the first language make progress similar to that of others in the school.
- Pupil premium funding targets extra teaching and support to pupils eligible for free school meals. In the 2012 end of Year 6 tests, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was lower than that of similar pupils nationally being around five terms behind. They made less progress in mathematics than those pupils who were not known to be eligible for free school meals pupils but better progress in English. Recent data indicate an improvement and pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding are currently making similar progress in both mathematics and English so this is soundly promoting better equal opportunity to learn.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is some good teaching, for example in mathematics, but not enough overall to ensure good progress over time. The best teaching is usually in Key Stage 2 although good teaching was also seen in Year 1.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils' progress is quicker. In one good Year 5 lesson, challenge for the more-able helped them to make brisk progress in writing. However, too often the match of work to different abilities is not appropriate so pupils do work that is too hard or too easy.
- Teachers usually explain things clearly but questions are not used consistently well to check

pupils' understanding so sometimes misconceptions go uncorrected.

- Time is not always used well, particularly in Reception classes where pupils spend too long following routines such as getting ready for break, or in Year 2 when it takes too long to organise resources, thus losing time for more learning. When this happens, pupils are too passive and progress is not brisk enough. The pace of learning is quicker in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils say teachers are 'kind and caring.' Pupils enjoy physical education because 'we get lots of exercise and work hard.' However, they also report that writing is difficult because they are not sure how to begin and mathematics is sometimes 'too hard.'
- Relationships are positive in all classes and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Class assemblies help pupils to think about the needs of others. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development.
- School policies for teaching reading and writing include the learning of letters and sounds (phonics). This takes place regularly but the impact on reading standards is variable. School leaders have correctly identified the need to provide training for teachers and classroom support staff to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can teach reading more effectively.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and carefully and this is a good feature of all classes. Teachers show pupils how they can improve, often through detailed comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good grasp of how to stay safe, for example when crossing the road or when near water.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility such as being members of the school council or prefects. They work hard to raise money for particular things such as the 'danceathon' to raise money for the 'friendship bench.'
- Behaviour in lessons is usually good. Pupils frequently listen quietly, try their best and co-operate well with others. In some lessons, where teaching requires improvement, pupils begin to lose interest and their learning slows. Around the school, pupils are thoughtful and respectful towards each other so a calm and positive atmosphere prevails. Pupils fully understand the school rules and think they are fair.
- School records show that there is little bullying and pupils are confident that if there is anything, such as name-calling, then adults can be relied upon to sort it out quickly. Pupils have a firm grasp of different types of bullying because the school has a relevant programme to teach them about this.
- Attendance has improved to average levels since the last inspection following some good quality work by the learning mentor. Pupils are keen to get to lessons on time at the start of the school day but a few pupils do not get to school on time in the morning, despite the school's efforts to improve this.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Soon after the last inspection, improvement stalled, in part due to the absence of the headteacher and some changes of staff. However, the headteacher, with effective support from governors, has set out a clear strategy for recovery and gains are now being seen, for example mathematics is improving.
- The headteacher makes sure that the plan to raise achievement is known to all staff, that planned actions are carried through and that progress against the actions in the plan is reviewed regularly. Methods for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have been revised as part of the strategy for improvement and are now more securely established. However, evaluations drawn from this monitoring are sometimes too positive about the quality of teaching.
- Even so, leadership and management require improvement because the drive for improvement

rests too much on the headteacher. Not all leaders have yet acquired the skills to check the impact of teaching over time on pupils' progress. This is particularly the case in Reception and at Key Stage 1 where the decline in standards of attainment has been most pronounced. However, all leaders are keen for pupils to achieve well and everyone is working together to achieve this.

- The appraisal of teachers takes place appropriately. The governors support the headteacher well in making sure that pay rewards are properly linked to performance.
- Further training for teachers is related to school priorities, for example training in the teaching of mathematics has been provided by an external consultant and this, together with the effective work of the mathematics subject leader, is contributing to better pupil progress.
- There are regular meetings to check pupils' progress and this leads to intervention to help pupils catch up. The establishment of leadership posts focussed specifically on boosting achievement is beginning to engender better progress at Key Stage 2.
- Leaders and governors successfully make sure learning is exciting for pupils by providing opportunities for participation in a range of sports. Pupils are also enthusiastic about opportunities to play musical instruments and attend residential visits. There are secure links with the church and breakfast- and- after-school clubs are provided to support pupils and their families. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders and governors make sure the pupil premium provides additional teaching and, as a result, pupils eligible for free school meals are making better progress and the gap between them and others is narrowing. Governors and leaders value the help of the local authority and there are strong links with schools locally.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits from a strong and committed governing body astutely led by the Chair and Vice-Chair. Governors quickly grasped the need to raise achievement and improve teaching. They have supported the headteacher in making sure that this proceeds with a sense of urgency. Governors challenge school leaders firmly and make sure resources are available to facilitate improvement. Governors know the school and its community well, have a clear strategic view and are thorough in carrying out their role.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 131228 |
| Local authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 412069 |

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 | 341 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ruth Fisher |
| Headteacher | J Bruen |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 November 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01942 222721 |
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