

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School

Victoria Road, Botcherby, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2UE

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement and the rate at which they make progress, particularly in reading, is below that found nationally.
- The way in which reading is taught is not consistent across the school and work in phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not always precisely matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Although the school now works more closely with families, this partnership is not yet strong enough to ensure that all parents send their children to school regularly and listen to them read.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school and in some lessons the progress pupils make is not yet fast enough. The skills of the best teachers are not fully shared.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning regularly enough during lessons and some marking in pupils' books does not give them sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.
- Although most pupils behave well at school, the attitudes to learning of some older pupils are not always positive and this hinders their progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The leadership and management of the governors and headteacher are good. The headteacher is successfully developing the leadership skills of a recently appointed senior team. Consequently, the school is improving and has the capacity to improve further.
- Staffing is more stable, teaching is improving and is now often good, and new teachers have brought additional skills to the school.
- Improvements initiated by the headteacher, which were in their infancy at the time of the last inspection, are now gaining momentum. They have resulted in improvements in the way in which pupils' progress is tracked and in their achievement in writing and mathematics.
- The school is a calm and welcoming place where the views and talents of all individuals are respected and nurtured. Consequently, children feel safe and morale is high.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and part-lessons which included shorter visits to classrooms with the headteacher. She also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire 'Parent View'. The inspector considered parents' views which were expressed in the school's own parental survey.

## Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils make at least good progress in all lessons by:
  - checking pupils' learning regularly throughout the lesson and reshaping tasks in the light of what they can do
  - ensuring teachers' marking of pupils' books clearly identifies the next steps they need to take to improve their work
  - sharing teachers' best skills more widely across the school.
- Raise attainment and speed up pupils' progress, particularly in reading, by:
  - developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school
  - providing pupils, especially weaker readers, with a wider variety of books to engage their interest in reading
  - further improve the teaching of phonics by matching work more closely to the needs of individual pupils.
- Further develop partnerships with parents so that they:
  - send their children to school regularly
  - are better able to support their children's learning, especially by listening to them read.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In reading, pupils' progress from their individual starting points is below that expected nationally. In phonics, pupils' attainment, although improving, is well below that found nationally.
- Year 6 test results in 2013 showed an improvement in writing and mathematics but were lower in reading. However, cohorts of pupils are small and results vary from year to year depending on the range of ability of the pupils.
- The school now tracks pupils' progress very carefully. This data, the work seen in lessons and in books confirm that the progress of current pupils, although still requiring improvement, is now accelerating.
- Home visits, a smooth transition between the classes and clear routines all help children to settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes. After just three days in their new class Reception children were becoming confident learners. They made good progress as they counted groups of objects and matched them with the correct written numeral.
- Many children enter the nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age and their attainment up to 2012 had remained significantly below average at the end of Year 2. However, in 2013, pupils' assessment results in writing and mathematics have improved markedly, although reading remains weaker. Good progress is being made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and although progress at Key Stage 1 still requires improvement it is now beginning to speed up.
- Test results show that pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding make the same progress as their classmates. Extra funds have been spent well on providing, for example, small group and one-to-one tuition so the gap between the achievements of different groups of pupils has closed. The most-able pupils are making the progress expected of them from their individual starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language have the same levels of achievement and progress as other pupils because they receive extra help from teachers and teaching assistants.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good enough to promote good progress in all lessons.
- The school recognises, rightly, that the teaching of both phonics and reading is not yet sufficiently well-structured and lacks a consistent approach in all classes. Work in phonics is not always targeted precisely enough to the needs of individual pupils. The range of books available is not sufficiently varied to interest all pupils, particularly older boys and weaker readers.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not always check pupils' learning regularly enough. This means that pupils who have mastered a task are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough while others need more help to understand the current task.
- In some lessons pupils' progress slows when they become disinterested because they have a short concentration span and work is not sufficiently fast paced and interesting to overcome their less positive attitudes to learning.
- Much good teaching was seen during the inspection and new teachers are bringing valuable skills to the school. In the good lessons seen pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. Teachers forge good relationships with their pupils, have high expectations of them and plan interesting tasks which capture pupils' interest. Year 2 pupils really enjoyed learning as their teacher and teaching assistant worked seamlessly together to give them a range of lively and varied singing, investigative and practical activities in both literacy and numeracy lessons.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in assemblies and lessons. They are successfully encouraged to share resources and work in groups and pupils clearly value rewards given for good work and behaviour.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and good work is praised frequently. However, there is not always enough guidance given to pupils on exactly how they can improve their work and take the next steps in their learning.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour and safety of pupils is judged as requiring improvement because the attitudes to learning of some, particularly older, pupils is not always positive and because attendance is low.
- However, it is recognised that the behaviour of most pupils around the school and in classrooms is good and attitudes to learning among the younger pupils are much improved. Exclusions have reduced markedly in the last two years.
- The school has a very clear system of sanctions and rewards which is implemented consistently. Pupils are well aware of the differences between right and wrong and most pupils are kind and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors. They are particularly welcoming to new pupils who join the school.
- Records show that incidents of poor behaviour are carefully recorded and any incidents of bullying are swiftly dealt with.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They and their families are particularly appreciative of the personal support the school gives. Children whose circumstances make them vulnerable are particularly well supported and receive expert help when this is needed.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and understand the dangers there may be when, for example, they are using the internet.
- Older pupils like being given responsibility. They were seen enjoying being paired up with younger pupils and helping them to learn to read.
- Attendance was just below average in 2012 but has dropped markedly this year and, despite the school's efforts, is now low. The school is aware of the need to work even more closely with parents to ensure that pupils are sent to school regularly even when home circumstances may make this difficult.

### **The leadership and management**

### **are good**

- Under the skilled leadership of the headteacher, well supported by governors, weaknesses are being tackled and the rate of improvement is gaining pace. Accurate self-evaluation, clear priorities for future development and effective management of the performance of staff are all contributing to this improving picture.
- A new senior leadership team is rapidly and successfully developing its skills and, guided by the headteacher, is already bringing about improvements to pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing. For example, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress in writing by the end of Year 6 in 2012 was greater than the proportion that did so nationally. Improvement in reading and phonics is slower and these areas require improvement.
- Careful monitoring of the quality of teaching and well-targeted professional development are all helping to build the school's capacity to address the areas which require improvement and move it forward. However, teachers' best skills and innovative ideas for teaching good lessons have yet to be fully shared.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is now carefully tracked. Pupils who join the school partway through their education and often speak English as an additional language settle well and make the same progress as their peers. Extra funds to support pupils eligible for free school meals and that earmarked for school sport are having a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, their participation in sport and their physical well-being.

- All pupils are given good opportunities to succeed. In this very welcoming school the views of all pupils and staff are valued. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully met. Staff are well trained and aware of risk assessment and child protection procedures.
- The local authority provides valuable support for the school through the general adviser. He has given specific advice on, for example, improving the quality of teaching and brokered support from a local leader of education for both the headteacher and the nursery teacher.
- The curriculum is balanced, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and meets the needs of the pupils. It has an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy and improving the teaching of reading and phonics are a current priority. In addition, it adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning through a range of school trips as well as inviting interesting visitors to come into school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about varied activities such as a visit to a temple, sporting competitions and taster days at a local secondary school.
- The school has forged increasingly good links with parents in the last two years. Parents say they are happy to come into school and feel that their children are well cared for. However, the school recognises the need to strengthen this partnership further to encourage all parents to send their children to school regularly. Further information sessions about phonics and reading are planned to give parents confidence to support their children's learning and to listen to them read regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have received good training and are now clearly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are able to provide both support and challenge. They are knowledgeable about the school's performance data, the quality of teaching and how staff performance is managed and teachers rewarded. Finances are carefully managed and governors provide appropriate challenge to the way extra funding such as the pupil premium is spent.

## 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>	112370
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	426130

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>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Daley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Moss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01228 818201
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