

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Balmain Road, North Kenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE3 3QR

**Inspection dates** 4–5 March 2014

<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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The excellence of the creative curriculum and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provide pupils with a wealth of experiences and opportunities to develop into confident and reflective members of society.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils work and play together harmoniously and older pupils delight in their roles to help and support younger children. Pupils show growing responsibility for themselves and for others as they move through the school.
- Pupils feel very safe. They are happy in school and are quite adamant that any kind of bullying is very rare. Parents believe that the staff care for their children very well and any concerns are rapidly addressed.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The drive to further improvement is clearly evident in the active commitment of all staff and governors to play their individual part. No-one is complacent in this continually improving school.
- There is an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A finely detailed plan of action clearly identifies where development is needed and how to achieve this.
- Pupils make good progress to achieve standards which are significantly high in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading.
- Actions to improve the quality of teaching have been very effective. Training is pertinent to individual teachers' needs and has led to consistently good teaching, better progress and rising standards across the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, expectations for the most able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, have not always been high enough.
- The information about the attainment of pupils in different key stages and the progress they make is not as clear as it could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to other lessons and listened to pupils reading. The headteacher took part in two joint observations with an inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of 20 members of staff were also considered through their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, staff planning journals, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime, and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

## Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Gater

Additional Inspector

David Wilson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care or from service families, is below average.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased over recent years.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of non-English speaking children has increased over recent years.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a 52-place nursery. Not all children move on to the Reception class from their nursery placement. Children who have not attended the nursery can enter the Reception class, in keeping with the school's admission procedures.
- The present headteacher took up post in September 2013.

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

- Increase the expectations for the most able pupils, especially at Key Stage 1, so that more attain the higher levels for their age, by ensuring that these pupils know exactly what they need to learn next and are set tasks which fully challenge them to make the best possible progress.
- Ensure senior leaders provide a clearer, simpler overall picture of the progress all pupils and different groups of pupils make across the different key stages, so that this information is more effectively shared with staff, managers and the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills below those expected for their age, most particularly in speaking and listening and in reading, writing and number. They leave the Reception class with skills in line with expectations. Overall progress is good. Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and become confident and independent learners. The present Reception class children show well-developed skills in reading and writing because of the excellent provision for learning letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- The successful teaching of phonics continues into Year 1 and pupils achieve levels above average in the end of Year 1 national screening test. Older pupils, identified as unable to break words into smaller sections and sound them out, have been given specific support to overcome this particular difficulty. This means that all pupils are able to read independently and have an enjoyment of books.
- The focus upon reading skills is proving to be very successful and pupils now leave Year 6 at levels above those expected for their age.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils have consistently achieved levels in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although in the past, progress in Years 1 and 2 has been as expected, current assessments and inspection evidence indicate that progress is accelerating and more pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels in all subjects.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment in writing and mathematics is significantly above the national average; in reading, it is above average. Currently, standards are being at least maintained at this level in writing and mathematics, and reading improved upon. More pupils are expected to achieve at the higher Levels 5 and 6 this year.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their reading and writing skills are linked to an exciting and creative curriculum which provides real experiences for pupils to relate to and to read and write about, across many subjects.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress, and often better progress in writing and mathematics. Progress in reading is accelerating and more pupils are making better than expected progress.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress in line with other pupils. By the time they leave Year 6, there is no difference between their attainment and that of others. The needs of these pupils have been successfully addressed through carefully allocated funding to support their good achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in line with other pupils. Support is skilled and focused upon their specific needs through individually tailored learning activities and small-group work.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those for whom English is an additional language, benefit from individual language support where needed and make good progress.
- The proportion of the most able pupils attaining at the higher levels increased last year. Teachers now provide greater challenge for these pupils and the school's current assessments and inspection evidence indicate that even more pupils are set to achieve the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Across the school, challenge for the most able pupils is still somewhat variable but work is underway to ensure that teachers have the highest expectations of this group of pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Mutual respect and trust enable pupils to gain confidence and independence from an early age. As a result, they respond well and have excellent attitudes to learning. They settle quickly into lessons and always work hard, trying their

best.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly become confident and inquisitive learners because of the exciting experiences they have. They love being involved in 'real' activities, such as when measuring out and mixing the ingredients for pancakes. Children made excellent use of their phonics knowledge to read the ingredients and the recipe, and counted carefully the number of spoonfuls of flour needed.
- Pupils benefit from teachers' excellent subject knowledge. The teaching of music, art and physical education (PE) is of a high standard.
- Much of the learning observed showed pupils engaged in interesting activities which involve and motivate them to build on their previous learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and '.... don't want to stop'. This was clearly evident when Years 5 and 6 pupils were asked to work out the costs for a 'Fun Fitness Day'. Pupils examined the problems and worked together successfully to consider how best to tackle these using their knowledge of different strategies. Pupils were enabled to quickly correct any misunderstanding and were helped to succeed through effective support and questioning.
- Mostly, the work that pupils do is set at the right level to challenge them to achieve well. The support for pupils with particular needs and those of low ability is especially well focused. However, in some cases, the most able pupils are not expected to work at a level that will ensure that their progress is at least good.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and they receive clear feedback in line with the school's marking policy. Pupils assess their own and others' work to help them to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants are highly trained and work closely with teachers to support learning in a variety of ways. Their expertise is such that they are entrusted to take responsibility for leading some lessons, as well as complementing teachers' work through small groups and within classrooms. Teaching assistants have a considerable part to play in supporting those who find aspects of learning more difficult.
- Parents believe strongly that their children progress well because of the good teaching they receive.

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

- This happy school provides a harmonious and caring environment in which pupils thrive. Staff know their pupils very well and understand their individual needs, responding quickly to any concerns they may have. Because of this, pupils feel happy and safe. Parents support these views and recommend the school wholeheartedly.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils understand the concept of right and wrong and have great consideration for the feelings of others. They believe that there is no poor behaviour in the school because everyone understands, and keeps to, the rules of the school. They are adamant that poor behaviour is not a problem. Those pupils who are recognised to have particular needs are supported very well to help them to socialise successfully.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons and eager to learn. They take care with the presentation of their work and strive to achieve their best. They listen carefully to teachers and to each other and engage in thoughtful conversations. Pupils quickly settle to tasks and can be trusted to work independently.
- Pupils show kindness as they care for one another. They are polite and well mannered to staff and visitors. They are proud of their duties as play leaders, reading buddies, chaplains and members of the school council, playing their part to support the school and keep themselves, and each other, out of trouble.
- Attendance is improving and is now good. On the days of the inspection, it was high and the only lateness for registration was due to medical appointments.
- The school's work to keep its pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to learn to take responsibility for their own safety as they move through the school.

Residential opportunities in Key Stage 2 increase confidence and self-esteem as pupils overcome their fears and insecurities through challenging experiences at outdoor activity centres.

- Pupils fully understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that bullying is rare but that friends do sometimes fall out and call each other names. Such situations are quickly resolved because of the successful interventions of friends and staff on the few occasions they happen.
- Parents are very pleased with the support the school gives to their children. They firmly believe their children to be very safe and do not consider behaviour or bullying to be a concern.

## **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher very successfully ensures that everyone truly has a part to play in improving provision for pupils. She has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and works highly successfully with other leaders and governors to identify weaknesses and address these.
- Leaders and managers are in no doubt about their purpose to continue to raise standards even higher. They have successfully addressed the areas of development from the last inspection and have a clear action plan to tackle identified areas of weakness. There is regular review by senior leaders.
- Senior leaders carefully check that planned improvements have happened and successes can be seen in the improved teaching of phonics and reading, writing and mathematics. The checks on the quality of teaching are extremely rigorous and where weakness is identified, highly effective support and training are put in place.
- There is an excellent use of assessment and individual pupils' attainment and progress are closely tracked. There is a wealth of information; however, there is no overview to show clearly and succinctly the proportions of pupils making expected or better than expected progress across the school.
- Outcomes for pupils, the quality of teaching and the degree of success in addressing their roles and responsibilities, are all considered in teachers' annual review and are linked to pay awards. This process is rigorous and there are high expectations for staff to meet the required levels in order to advance through the pay structure.
- Pupils take great joy in their learning because the outstanding curriculum is rich, vibrant and creative. The individual qualities of staff are recognised, developed and used to support learning in a range of areas from drama to basketball. Specialist staff in art, sport and music are used to extend pupils' skills and to develop other teachers' skills. A number of staff, including teaching assistants, hold middle leadership roles and fully take up the reins of responsibility to improve the curriculum and increase pupils' progress.
- Discrimination is not tolerated and there is a clear commitment to enable all pupils to succeed to the best of their ability.
- Personal development is at the centre of learning and pupils are guided successfully to become reflective and conscientious citizens. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven into the daily diet for pupils. It is reflected in the thoughtful nature and excellent behaviour of pupils.
- The additional pupil premium funding is carefully allocated. The successful impact of this funding is shared with parents on the school's website.
- The primary school sport funding has been used to train teachers in the teaching of sports and dance, and to increase and extend physical activities for pupils, including competitive sports. Leaders have measures in place to monitor the improving fitness of pupils, their uptake of activity and the improved quality of teaching PE.
- The local authority supports the school effectively. The extension of the roles of middle managers has been particularly successful. The school makes good use of the local authority training and specialist advisers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A number of them have considerable expertise and provide good support for the school. They recognise the improvements to teaching and the impact this has had upon pupils' outcomes. They probe staff about the progress of pupils and use the school development plan to monitor improvements. Governors are unafraid to challenge leaders and do so regularly, using their understanding of national comparative data to measure the school's performance.
- Governors carefully manage the way that staff are rewarded. Finances are overseen well and the school is held to account for the spending of additional monies such as the pupil premium and primary school sport funding. Safeguarding practices are well documented and meet statutory requirements.

## 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>	108506
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	431568

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>	256
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hastie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Bullerwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 286 0129
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