

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Heyscroft Road, Withington, Manchester, M20 4UZ

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2014

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 in Key Stages 1 and 2 do not make enough progress in all subjects, particularly in writing.
- The quality of teaching, over time, is inconsistent. The work set for pupils is sometimes too easy, particularly for the most able.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn how to write with accuracy and to redraft and develop their writing are limited.
- Marking does not always help pupils to understand how to improve. Not enough time is given for them to learn from and correct their mistakes.
- What pupils are going to learn is not always made clear to them. Pupils' targets for improvement are not used well enough to help them learn as well as they should.
- The headteacher has been able neither to check on teaching sufficiently well nor to encourage teachers to make better use of the new data systems because he has been covering for colleagues who are not in school.
- Not all middle leaders are involved in checking fully the progress pupils make and improving the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have not always had an accurate picture of performance in order to ask thought provoking questions.

The school has the following strengths

- This school is now improving because the headteacher, with support from the governors, has put in place some key actions to help secure and improve pupils' progress. His drive and ambition is having an impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe and cared for well.
- The leadership and quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress.
- The school has a strong sense of community and the pupils are proud to welcome visitors to their school. All pupils are precious to the school and are taught respect for each other.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, including five observations carried out jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, four members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, two colleagues from the Diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a wide range of pupils' progress data and performance management information, scrutinised behaviour and attendance records, as well as documents relating to safeguarding and observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work books, listened to pupils reading and talked to groups of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses on the on-line survey (Parent View), a recent school survey and spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Account was taken of the eight questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.

Inspection team

Pauline Pitman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Potter	Additional Inspector
Pamela Davenport	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school clubs.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and management and staffing since the last inspection. Shortly after the headteacher was appointed, the deputy headteacher left the school. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013. A number of teachers left the school and there are several newly qualified teachers. Two new middle leaders have been appointed for September 2014. A newly constituted governing body has recently been put in place. A local Leader in Education is supported the school's leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is good or better by:
 - making sure that the work set is hard enough for all pupils, particularly the most able
 - ensuring pupils' targets for improvement are used to make learning more precise and better matched to the learning needs of all pupils
 - improving marking so that it more clearly shows how pupils can make their work better and by giving them enough time to respond to advice
 - supporting pupils to develop greater confidence as learners by encouraging them to assess and redraft their own work.
- Raise pupils' achievement in all subjects, especially in writing, by:
 - improving pupils' skills and accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation to support them to write for different purposes
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, using exciting and varied vocabulary, in English and in other subjects
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who make and exceed the progress expected of them in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management at all levels in order to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring middle leaders are involved fully in checking and developing the quality of teaching and improving pupils' progress in all classrooms
 - making good use of the school's improved data systems to regularly and rigorously check on teaching and learning so that it brings about rapid and sustained improvement
 - making sure all governors have an accurate and secure understanding of the school's performance in order to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for improving

teaching and pupils' achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection the attainment of Key Stage 1 pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics, has ranged from below average to broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment has been below the national average, particularly in writing, for the past two years.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' progress has not been rapid enough in writing. Their ability to accurately use grammar, punctuation and spelling has been underdeveloped. This is because pupils, particularly the most able, have not always been given hard enough work to help them to do their best and reach levels above that expected for their age.
- School data, show that pupils in the current Year 6, have improved rates of progress, especially in writing. This is because of the effective actions taken by the headteacher. The deputy headteacher has also developed a more robust school tracking system and teachers are now more aware of the drive to raise pupils' standards.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, made similar progress to other pupils. This year however, the gap in attainment between pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and those who are not, is narrowing rapidly. This is because there are higher expectations for all pupils and better use of data, which is being used to check pupils' work and provide information to set work at the right level.
- Pupils with English as an additional language do better than their peers in literacy. This is because they are well supported and encouraged to develop their English language skills quickly.
- Improvements in the identification and tracking of achievement for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, means that progress is now good for this group.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in their self-confidence and in literacy and mathematics. They make good progress and most achieve the skills they need to make a good start in Year 1.
- Last year the achievement of Year 1 pupils in the national phonics screening check, which tests pupils' ability to link letters to sounds, was above others nationally. The school makes effective use of technology and reading games, to encourage pupils to pronounce sounds and to read key words accurately.
- Pupils are improving their reading skills because there are well-structured activities which are matched to their reading abilities. More time is provided for pupils to practise their reading skills and to make good use of phonic skills to help them sound out new words.
- Work in pupils' books and in teachers' assessments shows that pupils are making better progress in their mathematical skills compared with reading and writing. All pupils, especially the most able, are not always encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and to use their skills in other subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements of late, the quality of teaching requires improvement because, over time, not enough teaching has been consistently good.
- Work set is not always hard enough, especially for the most able pupils, to enable them to move on to higher levels. For example, in one class, pupils were writing simple sentences but the most able were not encouraged to use more interesting vocabulary or to join sentences together. This sometimes leads to pupils not being interested in or excited by learning.
- There have not been enough opportunities for pupils to develop, practise and redraft their writing, not only during English activities, but also in other subjects. There has not been enough emphasis on the teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation nor on an expectation for boys as well as girls to enjoy writing for different purposes.
- Marking includes lots of praise to help motivate pupils. However, it is not always constructive in

showing pupils exactly how to improve their work. There is not enough time for pupils to learn from teachers' advice and to correct their mistakes.

- The purpose of the activities is not always made clear and expectations are not high enough. Pupils are not set consistently ambitious targets, which precisely guide them to know what they need to do to move to the next level.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils respect each other and enjoy praise and encouragement and opportunities to share humour.
- The teaching assistants provide valuable care and support for pupils with special educational needs, both in the classroom and in small group work. This helps these pupils to achieve well.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because good partnerships are built with parents and other agencies. The vast majority of parents say that they trust the staff and they are approachable. Children have well-established routines, learning has good pace and the children have very good attitudes to their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered and respond well to visitors by genuinely welcoming them to their school. Pupils to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are proud of their school. The majority of parents feel their children receive good guidance regarding behaviour.
- Occasionally, a small core of pupils behave less well but the school is working persistently to minimise this. A recently appointed play therapist works with targeted individuals to help them establish strategies to manage their emotions and behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and are enthusiastic when tasks are interesting and they are not afraid to take risks in learning. They relate well to each other and support each other. For example, a nursery child was supporting a younger child to write in specially made booklets. When activities are not hard enough or if the pace of learning is too slow, some pupils switch off and become restless.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and any are acted upon immediately, with support from parents. Assemblies, circle time, anti-bullying weeks and stories help reinforce the values, beliefs and attitudes within the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents acknowledge this aspect of the school's work. Younger children are well cared for in the dining room and older pupils know how to protect themselves against the potential dangers of cyber bullying.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked successfully to improve attendance which is now broadly average. Parents' meetings are held to encourage some parents to bring their children to school. Regular class attendance updates are posted on the school's website. This is very effective in highlighting the relationship between attendance and achievement.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement. Although there is evidence that improvements have been made recently, particularly in writing, standards are still not as high as they could be.
- Significant changes in staffing, including in the senior leadership, led to delays in addressing weaknesses in performance. As a result, the school has not always been able to take effective action to eliminate weaker teaching in order to improve achievement.
- The headteacher, with support from the newly appointed deputy headteacher, is determined to raise standards. He has put in place well-considered actions, such as better analysis of assessment data and regular meetings to discuss pupils' achievement. There is now a more

robust system in place to review teachers' work. All teachers have key information about where pupils are in their learning and some are beginning to track pupils' progress more closely. This is having an impact on pupils' progress.

- Middle leaders have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching. A number of new middle leaders have been appointed for September 2014 to strengthen the leadership team.
- Leaders, with appropriate support from the local authority, a Local Leader in Education and the local Diocese, have improved the quality of self-evaluation and have started to put into action a range of measures to raise standards rapidly and consistently across all subjects, particularly in writing. For example, teachers have recently had training from a literacy consultant and support from an inspirational writer. They have worked with local schools to improve their accuracy when assessing pupils' work.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good because there have been improvements in the tracking and recording of children's development. Parents are also encouraged to post examples of their child's development onto a special area of the school's website.
- The curriculum is well balanced and provides a range of topic-based themes to support pupils' learning. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in experiments in science, which they very much enjoy. However, in some classrooms, activities do not sufficiently inspire some pupils, particularly boys, to be fully involved and motivated by learning.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school and say they are kept informed about their child.
- This is a school where everyone is valued. There is effective provision and support for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being of pupils.
- The school is making good use of the primary school sports funding to improve physical development and pupils' enjoyment of sport. The involvement of a specialist sport's coach has led to increases in pupils' participation and the school has invested in a wide range of additional sporting activities, which are well publicised on the school website. St Cuthbert's was fully involved in the Greater Manchester School Games.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There is a newly constituted governing body which is very loyal to their community and totally committed to a school where the emotional, social and moral well-being of all pupils is important. Several governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body are increasingly active in the school and have recently started to work with teachers to gather direct evidence of how the school is performing.
 - Governors were fully aware of the link between performance management and salary progression. They are confident that the new performance management system, which has been developed with support from a Local Leader in Education, will enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Governors work with the school to analyse gaps in attainment between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others and are aware of how this funding has been targeted. For example, they know about the introduction of literacy booster groups and the use of an additional teacher in Year 6 mathematics and English.
 - Some governors are less confident to ask questions or to challenge the headteacher's decisions because they do not have a deep enough knowledge about pupils' achievement or emerging strengths and weaknesses in the school's work.

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

Unique reference number	105553
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	439831

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Brendan Curley
Headteacher	Paul O'Hara
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2010
Telephone number	0161 445 6079
Fax number	0161 445 1782
Email address	head@st-cutherts.mancehster.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

