

St Cuthberts Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Lovanie Place, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 0BU

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other leaders, managers, staff and governors work tirelessly to improve the school. They ensure pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is good.
- The highly effective members of the senior leadership team have increased achievement in reading and writing so that it is outstanding in these subjects.
- All staff work harmoniously as part of a strong team. Senior leaders plan accurately the developments needed so that they are carried out to the benefit of pupils.
- Members of the governing body have wide-ranging skills which they use productively to support and challenge the school.
- Children in the early years make swift improvements to their reading and listening skills. Enthusiastic staff teach them how to work together indoors and outside.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The most able pupils achieve particularly well. Progress is most rapid in Years 5 and 6.
- The impact of teaching is good. Pupils enjoy their learning and are excited by new challenges. Support staff work well with groups and individuals and are particularly successful in the early years because they extend children's language most effectively.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school, showing equal respect for each other and for adults. They are eager to learn and enjoy discussing their thinking with others.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations. They can clearly explain their thinking about safety to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in mathematics is not as high as in reading and writing.
- Rates of progress in mathematics fluctuate between good and outstanding, so pupils do not make outstanding progress consistently over time.
- Pupils would like more support and equipment outdoors in order to use their leisure time more effectively, especially in wet weather.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher and three observed jointly with assistant headteachers. In addition, inspectors listened to some pupils read and reviewed a sample of their work in books and learning journals.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These included pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, members of the teaching and support staff and an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed 12 responses from Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), together with 72 written questionnaires handed in by parents. Inspectors also considered 16 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire. They reviewed the school’s website and information about the school on social media.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents including information on pupils’ progress and attainment, documents related to safeguarding and records about pupils’ behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Anne Humble, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gordon Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is below average but has increased since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is larger than the national average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy School status, the Eco Schools Award and an International School Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by:
 - making sure explanations are clear and pupils understand the skills, learning and strategies they can use within calculations
 - identifying quickly pupils' misconceptions and correcting them
 - ensuring that the new mathematics calculation policy is embedded across the school so that pupils are able to recall number facts confidently and use more readily their knowledge of multiplication tables
 - ensuring class teachers and subject leaders use data rigorously to identify any pupils who do not make outstanding progress and provide them with support specific to their needs.
- Improve outdoor play activities for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that they can use their leisure time more productively, especially when the weather is wet.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The highly effective headteacher is ably supported by a strong leadership team. Together, they inspire every member of staff to improve outcomes for all pupils. As one member of the support staff explained 'There is a strong family feel to the school with the children at the centre of everything.'
- The headteacher is well respected by parents, staff, pupils and governors who praise his leadership and appreciate the way he has managed the school through difficult periods. Staff morale is high. Togetherness and teamwork are central to the ethos of the school for pupils as well as adults.
- Senior leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Thorough evaluations are used systematically to inform changes. Over the past two years, for example, leaders have targeted reading and writing in the school development plans. Actions taken have secured outstanding achievement and rapid improvements in pupils' skills in these subjects.
- School leaders use regularly lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work to check the effectiveness of teaching and to offer advice on how to improve. The headteacher analyses rigorously all assessment data to measure the impact of any changes and to track the progress of all groups of pupils. Subject leaders and teachers do not use these data effectively enough in mathematics to identify quickly any groups of pupils who do not make the outstanding progress now expected.
- Effective support and guidance have helped to increase the attainment of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs since the school was last inspected. As a result, the rate of progress of these pupils has improved and mirrors that of most other groups in school.
- There are successful systems in place to manage the performance of staff. Senior leaders set challenging targets to help teachers to develop their skills. They offer staff excellent support and encouragement to succeed. Staff are firmly committed to their own professional development. They frequently reflect on their own teaching and discuss how they might improve learning for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted keenly. Pupils enjoy sharing their different views and opinions with others. Relationships are strong and pupils show respect for others. As one parent explained 'This school is dedicated to giving children as much opportunity as possible to develop academically and socially to move through life as respectful, hardworking individuals.'
- Educational visits are used well to stimulate pupils' learning in the school's imaginative curriculum. An innovative homework system is supported well by parents and helps pupils to share their many different cultural experiences. For example, when completing a homework task about 'houses and homes', pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in Year 2 made models and diagrams of houses from the parts of the world that they had experienced. They gave presentations about their models in school. There are wide opportunities for pupils to take up sporting, creative and musical activities.
- The primary sport funding is used to good effect and offers pupils an abundance of new experiences, such as archery, golf and taekwondo. Careful management of this funding has increased teachers' expertise and improved links with other schools. Every pupil has already benefited from this funding so that their fitness and love of sport are flourishing.
- The school is supported well by the local authority. Staff in the early years work closely with the local authority to moderate their assessments of children. There are good links with other local schools. For example, the school hosted a festival of sport last year for local schools. This event helped younger pupils to experience competitive sports and to develop their social skills.
- Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive. They visit the school regularly to enjoy learning events alongside their children. Parental engagement is especially high with homework activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors use their wide-ranging skills and expertise to support and challenge senior leaders about the school's performance. They help with the school's self-evaluation and are keen to use detailed research to decide upon future improvements. They provide regular reports and make individual monitoring visits. They review data with the headteacher and subject leaders.
 - Governors have past experience of managing underperformance and are not afraid to make difficult decisions. They have a good understanding of what has led to improvements in the teaching of reading and writing. Governance has helped to implement a professional development programme to improve the teaching of mathematics.
 - Governors have managed finances carefully to refurbish the school. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium and sport funding lead to positive outcomes for pupils.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and, as a result, their attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils explain that they like coming to school and enjoy the challenges they experience. They demonstrate good behaviour to support their learning, such as when pupils in Year 2 discuss maturely the features of poetry, using new vocabulary and listening carefully to classmates.
- In some classes, behaviour is outstanding. Here, pupils' enthusiasm and their commitment to learning help them to make outstanding progress. This is particularly evident in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6. For example, Year 6 pupils show great ability to cooperate and discuss texts in depth together to secure outstanding progress when writing reports.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and show courtesy and respect to all. They are friendly, polite and well-mannered and are very keen to share their thinking and learning with others, demonstrating pride in their achievements.
- All groups of pupils play cooperatively and older pupils support younger children well at playtimes.
- Pupils have a strong voice in developing the school and shared some of their good ideas for improving playtime activities with inspectors. Pupils explained ideas that they think would make leisure time even safer, more fun and productive, particularly when it is wet.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Parents are very positive about pupils' behaviour and say that they have never encountered bullying at the school. Pupils agree and explain that, although bullying is rare, they have been taught how to deal effectively with it.
- Pupils in all classes receive exceptional care, guidance and support. This is particularly evident in the way that pupils with medical needs are closely monitored and assisted by teachers and support staff. Teachers and senior leaders liaise with many support agencies to ensure that the highest quality support leads to the best possible outcomes for pupils and their families. As a result, pupils thrive in the school's safe and nurturing environment.
- The school's procedures to protect children and keep them safe are exemplary. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and have been taught a wide range of skills to help keep themselves safe in different situations. This was evident in a whole-school assembly linked to a national charitable cycling initiative where pupils could clearly explain methods to stay safe when cycling.
- Pupils have a thorough knowledge of different forms of bullying. They understand that bullying can sometimes lead to discrimination but say that this does not happen at their school. They know how to stay safe when using the internet to avoid cyber-bullying. This is modelled by the headteacher who uses social media particularly well to communicate with parents, pupils and their wider community. At the same time, he ensures the strictest safeguarding measures are in place to prevent misuse.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good over time. At times, teaching is outstanding, particularly in the Reception class and in upper Key Stage 2.
- All teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure that work is well matched to their needs and abilities. This ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.
- Lessons are exciting and inspire all pupils to try their best and learn quickly. For example, in Year 5 mathematics, the most able pupils tackle puzzles involving multiplication and division. They talked about their love of mathematics to inspectors and one boy stated, 'I love algebra, it's like working out a mystery. It's a real challenge and I feel really smart when I do it right.'
- The teaching of reading and writing has improved over the past two years so that achievement is outstanding in these subjects. Teachers build pupils' skills gradually in writing so that they have a thorough understanding of the purpose behind different styles of writing. Pupils can then use their knowledge to inform their own writing. In reading, pupils read aloud regularly to adults at home and school. This practice has helped to raise pupils' attainment in reading. The excellent development of pupils' knowledge of

phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) supports their improving skills.

- When pupils make outstanding progress such as in reading and writing, it is because they benefit from clear explanations and expectations. Any misconceptions are corrected quickly. Pupils do not always experience such effective support in mathematics and so their rate of progress is not as rapid. School leaders have recognised this as an area to improve. They have developed a new calculations policy to support teachers' subject knowledge and help them to increase pupils' rates of progress in mathematics.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning and their ability to discuss their own thinking promote a very positive atmosphere for learning. How to present work neatly is on display. Pupils use these good examples and produce work that shows they have taken care with presentation.
- Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' success in learning. For example, they intervene sensitively to help younger pupils to gain the confidence to give answers in front of the class.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils begin Year 1 with attainment and skills that are slightly below average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 read well and make excellent progress in their knowledge of phonics. In the 2014 tests, pupils reached above the national average scores in the Year 1 phonics screening check because teaching, over time, has been at least good and sometimes outstanding.
- As pupils move through the school, their good progress continues in all subjects. In mathematics, in 2014, pupils' attainment was broadly average and because of improvements in teaching, pupils attained outstanding results in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Their skills in reading and writing were well above those found nationally.
- Most pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in mathematics so that their attainment is broadly in line with other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6. In reading and writing, pupils' attainment is above average by the time they leave the school and the progress they make is outstanding.
- From their slightly higher starting points, the most able make good progress, similar to other pupils. They are provided with challenging work that inspires them and is well matched to their needs. A large proportion of pupils reach above average levels of attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. This is because of the school's focus on improving these subjects in the past two years.
- Senior leaders have identified that attainment is lower and progress is less rapid in mathematics than in reading and writing. They have introduced a new policy and procedures to improve the teaching and learning of calculations.
- In mathematics, attainment and progress are not consistent over time and, in some year groups, achievement is better than in others. In Years 5 and 6, for example, achievement is outstanding in all subjects because of teaching that engages and excites pupils to learn quickly and so they work to the very best of their ability. The school's own assessment records and work in pupils' books show that all groups of pupils are making progress that is at least good overall.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. Their skills in reading have improved at Key Stage 1 and more are reaching the higher levels in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has varied in recent years. Through effective use of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, the school has worked to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others. Published data for Year 6 tests in 2014 show that disadvantaged pupils are about three terms behind other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to other pupils nationally, the gap is narrower in reading and writing with disadvantaged pupils being about a term and half behind, but is a bit wider in mathematics at around four terms behind.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress; a minority makes outstanding progress. This is due to early identification of their needs, regular support in the classroom and skilful guidance from support staff who run programmes such as a reading progress group. In this group, staff use their expertise to teach pupils how to decode words in the text and rapidly improve their comprehension skills. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported in mathematics in Year 3. Computer technology enables pupils to visualise their thinking so they understand where they make errors and can correct them quickly.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led by a dedicated and highly experienced senior leader. She has precise

knowledge of children's needs and how these should be met. Children's interest and curiosity are ignited by the high quality outdoor learning environment. The local authority often sends staff from other schools to develop their skills in this early years setting.

- A large proportion of children join the nursery with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age in communication and language. Staff have to spend lots of time teaching children very basic skills such as how to listen carefully and how to follow simple instructions before they can begin teaching more specific skills linked to reading, writing and number. They have excellent links with speech and language therapists to support children in this aspect of their learning.
- A minority of children have significant learning needs when they join the nursery. Some need support with speaking and listening and others with developing friendships or toilet training. The caring and watchful staff are ready to provide exactly what is required to help every child make good progress. Staff work very closely with parents to ensure that they know children well before they start school and this helps children to settle quickly.
- All staff in the early years help to assess children's skills when they first enter nursery. This ensures that teachers have a good understanding of each child's different starting points. They check their assessments with staff from the local authority and with teachers from other schools to make sure they are accurate.
- Children thrive in the vibrant environment that helps them to learn both indoors and outside. Children develop physical skills rapidly with a large outdoor space to explore. They are very proud when they are able to ride their balance-bikes for the first time.
- Good teaching helps children in the nursery to develop many new skills so that they start to catch up quickly in any areas where their learning is not secure. Highly skilled teaching assistants contribute well to children's good progress.
- In the Reception class, teaching often leads to outstanding progress for children, such as in phonics. For example, children enjoy learning to sound out the letter 'h' for the first time by using mirrors to help them make the sound correctly. Children then move outdoors to form the letter in chalks on the playground. Children are soon using their new skills to write three-letter words.
- Positive relationships with parents are at the heart of the success of the early years provision. Staff work closely to support parents of disabled children or of those who have special educational needs. All parents are welcomed regularly for workshop sessions where they make soup with their children, create 'fireworks in a bottle' and find out how best to support their child's learning at home.
- During their time in early years, all children make good progress overall from their different starting points. They make outstanding progress in their social and emotional development so that they learn to help each other, become independent and enjoy learning. Excellent skills in personal development and reading prepare them well for learning in Year 1.
- Staff have identified that the progress made by children in mathematics and writing is not as rapid as in other areas of their learning. They have started to address gaps in these subjects. For example, during the inspection, they ran an open morning to help teach parents how to support their children's learning at home, including a strong focus on mathematics.
- Children's behaviour is good inside and outdoors. Children learn rapidly to follow rules and routines and concentrate sensibly on their tasks.
- Safety is of paramount importance. Staff ensure that children are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, children learn about keeping themselves safe when they meet strangers.

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	108616
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	448729

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	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K O'Neil
Headteacher	Shaun Dillon
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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