

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Eastend, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 9HZ

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| Inspection dates | 10–11 March 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved because the headteacher, other school leaders and governors have successfully tackled the school's shortcomings.
- School leaders have worked closely, with support from the local authority, to develop teachers' skills. Teaching has improved and is good.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils who need extra help make good progress as a result of the targeted support they receive.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are well prepared for Year 1 because they make good progress across all areas of development.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their work and their school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through the curriculum and through the acts of worship that take place throughout the week.
- The school's strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy has helped pupils to progress well. A range of additional activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Leaders have grasped what needs to be done. Teachers make a good contribution to the school's development, including in their improved leadership of subjects.
- Governors have reviewed their working practice and now provide a good level of challenge to school leaders. The school is continuing to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers have not yet fully developed activities that help pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects and work that deepens the understanding of the most-able pupils.
- Pupils do not make the most of teachers' feedback; when this happens they continue to repeat earlier mistakes.
- Leaders do not make sharp enough use of information about how well the school is doing, including pupils' attendance. This makes it harder to set priorities for improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sharper use of all performance information to give leaders, including governors, a more accurate picture of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, in order to set school improvement priorities.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - pitching work for the most-able pupils at a level of difficulty that deepens and extends their understanding
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop and apply their mathematical skills well across the curriculum
 - helping pupils to use the teachers' feedback well and to learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and staff have worked in close cooperation with governors to improve teaching and raise achievement. Staff work closely together with the interests of pupils at heart. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious and set high expectations for staff and pupils. They have a fair understanding of what the school does well and some understanding of where improvements are needed. They have created an improvement plan with targets to continue the drive for improvement. This has involved all staff and governors, and they are working together with shared aims and a common purpose.
- Although leaders have established priorities for improvement based on the knowledge and information they have, there is sometimes insufficient emphasis on the analysis and evaluation of information collected when drawing up future action plans. This includes leaders at all levels. This means that they do not always have an accurate enough picture of what the school does well or where there may be some gaps: for example, the progress of the most-able pupils in some year groups or the attendance of specific groups of pupils.
- Leaders have systems in place to check the work of teachers. They visit classrooms regularly and they look at work in pupils' books. This has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching. Leaders for English and mathematics have provided training to staff and have shared ideas with them to help them teach these subjects more effectively. Teachers welcome feedback and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- There are clear systems in place to manage the performance of teachers. Information about their work is collected and collated so leaders know what further training or support is needed. Teachers have challenging targets and they know that only the best teaching is rewarded.
- Pupil premium funding helps to provide additional support for eligible pupils in classrooms as well as helping with costs of specific provision to support their emotional and social development. Consequently, these pupils learn and develop with confidence, having had the same opportunities as other pupils.
- Pupils benefit from learning a wide range of subjects, although the main focus is on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Within subjects such as religious education and science, pupils use their reading and writing to support their learning, and this helps them to progress well. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Pupils learn about other faiths, beliefs and cultures and this helps them develop an understanding of, and respect towards, those from other backgrounds. They learn about celebrations from other parts of the world and this effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A range of additional activities outside the school day complement the work taught in lessons.
- The additional sports funding has been used effectively to employ trained sports coaches to work with both staff and pupils, including the use of good links with the local secondary school which have also supported transition of the Year 6 pupils. The funding has increased teachers' confidence to teach sports and pupils now take part in a wider variety of physical activities.
- The school promotes diversity and prides itself on the inclusive ethos that leaders successfully foster. They instil values such as democracy, tolerance and respect for all members of the school community. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority provided good support for the school following the last inspection. As the local authority judges the school to be doing well, it has provided only 'light-touch' support more recently. School leaders work in close partnership with other local schools to share good practice and to build the capacity of leaders. The large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school is well led and managed, and that the school responds to their concerns.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have embraced the recommendations from the previous inspection, although the large majority of them are new to the governing body since then. They have supported senior leaders to develop their skills so that the drive for improvement has continued. Governors have carried out a review of their own skills and have critically reflected on the way in which they work. They reorganised their working practices so that they now have a much clearer structure and are improving their understanding of how well the school performs. They know what is done to improve teaching and ensure that teachers are financially rewarded when they achieve their challenging targets. They visit school more regularly to check for themselves that information provided by leaders is robust, but are yet to use all the performance information available to ensure that they have an accurate picture of

the aspects of the school that need improvement.

- Governors check the school's finances and ensure that money is spent wisely. They link funding to priorities in the school development plan so they can check that the school provides good value for money.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks are made on all adults who visit school and all staff have been trained on what to do if a concern regarding the safety and welfare of a pupil is raised. Leaders effectively support pupils and those families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Leaders work well with external agencies to help them keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school. Records, such as those covering the senior leaders' regular checks of teaching, show that it has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers respond very positively to advice and feedback; they are reflective, always looking to improve and are ambitious for pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, most of the teachers are new. Staff quickly built an ethos of teamwork and collaboration, sharing ideas and learning from each other.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge means they are able to recognise and address any misconceptions by pupils quickly, so time in lessons is used effectively. Pupils say that teachers make sure that they understand what is taught.
- Pupils are clear about the structure of lessons; they know lessons include challenges with different levels of difficulty. As a result, their understanding of themselves as learners and of their level of achievement is good and improving.
- Teachers' good understanding of information about pupils' prior learning ensures that lessons are generally pitched at the right level. This information is also used to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers adapt activities too, to meet the needs of those who struggle, or are new to school. However, work does not meet the needs of the most-able pupils so well, and as a result they are not fully deepening and extending their understanding.
- Reading in general and phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) in particular are taught well. Staff reinforce the use of phonics in other subjects. All staff teach and then practise the same method with pupils, which enhances their understanding. Other reading skills, such as inference, are also taught effectively.
- Mathematics is taught well. Staff are clear how calculation, for example, is taught at St Cuthbert's. Vocabulary specific to the subject is taught effectively. As a result, pupils' understanding is built well. There are too few opportunities, though, for pupils to use the skills they have been taught in mathematics and apply them in other subjects.
- Writing is well developed across the school and outcomes are of a high standard. For example, pupils in the Year 5 and Year 6 class responded very well during the inspection to the imaginative stimulus for writing when the teacher acted out the role of the main character from the novel they were studying. The quality of the discussion was high and pupils thought of some searching questions to ask the character.
- Pupils' workbooks are presented well because teachers have high and consistent expectations. Pupils' handwriting is generally neat and work is mostly set out clearly. Pupils told inspectors that their teachers' marking is very helpful to them. They like being given time to read it and respond to show they have understood. Nevertheless, too many pupils repeat earlier mistakes and do not make the most of the teachers' feedback.
- Pupils said they enjoy the 'pick and mix' homework tasks they are given, because they can choose which activities to tackle first. They like it that some tasks mean their family can work with them, too.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are aware of risks. The school's personal, social and health education programme and assemblies teach them about dangers such as bullying and road safety. However, they are less sure of how to keep

themselves safe when using technology. This is being addressed by the school and a programme is in place.

- Pupils are confident and self-assured, and are developing a good understanding of how to be successful learners. They are keen to please the staff and other pupils.
- Relationships are very strong and it is clear that pupils are happy in school. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. Pupils know that staff care, and say that if they have any concerns, staff will sort things out for them. Pupils report that bullying and the use of derogatory or aggressive language is extremely rare.
- Lunchtimes are sociable events, where pupils of all ages eat and chat happily together.
- The strong, caring Christian ethos is supported by pupils, and parents appreciate this aspect of the school.
- The school's ethos promotes many aspects of pupils' welfare and they enjoy learning about how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- As a result of the broad and well-planned approach, pupils are able to reflect on their actions and act responsibly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their conduct around the school is often excellent and there is a culture of respect which pupils understand and appreciate.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to participate and are very responsive to adult instruction. They apply themselves and cooperate well in paired talk or shared tasks.
- Attendance has fluctuated for some groups of pupils, mostly relating to poor punctuality at the beginning of the school day. The attendance of many pupils is consistently high. The school was slow to look in detail and with rigour at the data to identify any specific areas of weakness. However, it now has an action plan in place and is working more effectively with families to improve attendance of the few pupils who continue to have significant absences or lateness.
- Play and lunchtime activities are well supervised. Pupils are creative in making up games and all ages play happily together, some with the equipment that is provided by the school, often with older pupils looking after and guiding younger ones.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From starting points that are mainly below typical for their age, children in the early years make good progress. Although the outcome of the Year 1 phonics assessment fell in 2015, the improved teaching of phonics has led to an improvement in the proportion of Year 1 pupils on track to achieve the expected standard.
- Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection, together with additional individual support, have enabled pupils throughout the school to make strong progress from their various starting points.
- In 2015, the well-planned support and improvements in teaching led to a greater proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving better than expected progress, particularly in reading and writing. Any gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are being closed as a result of disadvantaged pupils making accelerated progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those who need to catch up are given carefully planned support. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Pupils who attend the school's nurture provision are well supported with their social and emotional development, often being able to access the curriculum much more readily as a result.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment in 2015 was higher than in previous years and was in line with the national average. Pupils' outcomes were particularly high in writing. Consequently, pupils were well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Current information shows that in almost all year groups, pupils are on track to achieve the standards expected of them. There are no patterns of weak attainment in subjects.

- Pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. They speak positively about reading and share information about their favourite authors. The reading resources are proving successful in supporting more reluctant readers. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm for reading is strong, although some pupils would benefit from reading more frequently out of school.
- Pupils' learning in subjects such as science, geography and history is good. They cover a good range of topics and write for different purposes. Pupils' work on half-termly topics, such as 'What is so great about Great Britain?' and 'What goes up?' demonstrates good levels of general knowledge and pupils' understanding of different points of view. Pupils would benefit from being provided with as many opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum as they are with their writing.

Early years provision

is good

- Children are warmly welcomed into a bright and attractive environment in which they feel safe because they are well cared for. The classroom is bright and attractive and resourced with toys and equipment that are of good quality and easily accessible. The outdoor area complements the indoor area, with activities planned to develop children's skills across all areas of learning.
- Children make good progress in the early years from starting points that are often below typical. The proportion who reach a good level of development is only a little below the national average. This good progress is because staff know children well and they provide activities that build on what children can do. Children make good progress in phonics and this helps them to develop early reading and writing skills. Consequently, children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is good. The staff use assessment information accurately to plan next steps in learning. They probe children with focused questions to develop their thinking, although activities to deepen the understanding of the older, most-able children are not as consistently well developed. Children choose some activities for themselves and some are led by adults. Occasionally, some children struggle to maintain concentration on the activities that are provided and need a little more direction from adults.
- 'Learning journals' are used to good effect to record children's learning and achievements over time. These show that children make good progress in all areas of their development. Parents say they like these books and they reinforce the strong links between home and school.
- The outdoor area is used well to help children develop physical skills, as well as literacy, numeracy and other skills across the curriculum. During the inspection, a teaching assistant was developing children's language while they were investigating ways of moving across a bridge made of various pieces of construction equipment. Children were absorbed in this and delighted in successfully completing their journey across the bridge.
- Children get on very well together. They have settled very well owing to the high-quality care provided by adults. They work and play well together and show perseverance and resilience in completing their work. Children are happy and they enjoy school. They behave well when working with adults and when playing independently.
- The early years leader understands the strengths of provision and where further improvements are needed. The staff plan together effectively and share ideas. This helps them provide imaginative and exciting learning activities for children.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 112310 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10002262 |

This inspection 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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 106 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Kevin Armstrong |
| Headteacher | Miss Paula Holden |
| Telephone number | 01697 343119 |
| Website | http://www.stcuthbertswigton.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@stcuth-wig.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22–23 October 2013 |

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British are much smaller than the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much smaller than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years provision consists of part-time and full-time Nursery children and full-time Reception children who are taught in the same class.
- The school has received support since the last inspection from the headteacher and staff of Our Lady and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in Maryport.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. He also looked at a wide range of pupils' work, discussed their work with them informally and heard some pupils read.
- The inspector observed an assembly and behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes and in the lunch hall.
- Discussions were held with the chair and other members of the governing body, the local authority adviser and members of staff.
- The inspector analysed the 29 responses to Parent View. Discussions were held with parents before school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including information on pupils' current and recent achievement, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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