

St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School

St Albans Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0HY

Inspection dates

4–5 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors know this school very well. They are passionate about the care, welfare and education of every pupil who attends the school. They have brought about many significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection.
- Subject leaders share senior leaders' driving ambition and vision for the school and carry out very regular checks on the progress that pupils make in subjects. This has accelerated the progress made by all pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, including those in Reception.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and strongly develops learning in a wide range of subjects. All pupils benefit from attending the wide range of out-of-school clubs run by the school. Some pupils compete in the wider community, where they have made their mark at county level in tennis, football, cricket and netball.
- Children who start in Reception make rapid progress from their differing starting points. No matter what their level of need, they very quickly settle into the highly nurturing environment created by staff.
- Staff across the school gauge the emotional well-being of pupils at the start of every day. This is followed up by highly trained support staff who are on hand to assist pupils if they have any concerns or worries.
- Parents say that there is a real community feel at St Cuthbert's Primary. Parents typically describe the school as their 'extended family'. Pupils say that they feel very safe, happy and well supported.
- Sign language is taught to all pupils. Such highly effective practice enables them to communicate throughout the day with pupils from the resource base provision.
- Strong teaching of phonics alongside a review of guided reading has resulted in a whole-school love of reading.
- Pupils told inspectors that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school and do not like to miss a single day. This is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance.
- The outdoor play area in early years does not reflect the high quality of provision for children indoors.
- Although very good, opportunities to help pupils appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live are not developed to their full potential.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Complete the planned improvements to the outdoor provision in early years so that it mirrors the rich, stimulating indoor offer.
- Further embed pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wide range of cultures and religions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The leaders of the school have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths. They work tirelessly in developing all areas of the school and constantly check for new ways to make it even better.
- Due to the very carefully targeted use of funding and very close checks carried out on pupils' progress, disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress from their starting points.
- The funding used to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used extremely effectively. Imaginative use of the money ensures that individual learning needs are met well.
- Sport premium is spent effectively. This has ensured that St Cuthbert's has put itself on the map in local competitive sports over the last three years, particularly in cricket, tennis, netball and football.
- Leaders have created a culture which enables both staff and pupils to excel. For example, one teacher was seconded to another school to support its teaching and learning in recognition of his own outstanding teaching skills. The performance of all staff is closely linked to further school improvement.
- The school has revised its curriculum so that it energises all groups of learners including those with more complex needs. Expectations in subjects like history, Spanish or science are as high as those in core subjects.
- All pupils have access to a wide range of clubs and inter-school competitions such as gymnastics; curling; multi-skills festival; dodgeball; Darwen primary school sports association (DPSSA) football; DPSSA netball; tag rugby and DPSSA cross-country running. Some activities such as horse riding are arranged specifically to meet the needs of pupils who have more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Over the past three years, leaders have completely overhauled the systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' learning. They work in collaboration with a group of 12 other schools to ensure that assessments are accurate. As a result, teachers know exactly what they need to do in order to meet the individual learning needs of their pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress overall. This is, in part, because resource base pupils are integrated into other classes whenever possible, where they are helped by other pupils who are very keen to share what they do. This type of collaboration starts from Reception upwards.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is also the deputy head of the school, has an exceptionally good knowledge of pupils' needs, including those who attend the resource base. The school has seen a rise in the numbers of pupils with complex special needs attending the school. According to the parents spoken to during the inspection, this is because of the excellent support and personal care that their children receive when they come to the school.
- The previous inspection report asked leaders to improve progress in English so that it

matched that in mathematics, particularly for boys. This has been achieved, with progress in reading and writing now matching that of progress being made in mathematics for all groups of learners.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a very clear working knowledge of the school. They actively take part in the performance management process and understand its links to whole-school performance.
- They have a clear understanding of how additional funding is spent and its impact on pupils' progress.
- While governors receive honest and accurate reports from the headteacher, they are clear that this is not the only way that they receive information about the school. Subjects leaders are keen to demonstrate the progress being made in their subject areas, and pupils are equally keen to talk about their learning experiences and educational visits.
- Governing body minutes show clearly how effectively they hold leaders to account, particularly over the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Governors have very clear responsibilities and are linked to different subject areas. This gives them sharper focus on their regular visits to school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership team and governors have ensured that the school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding. This includes robust checks carried out on all adults to ensure their suitability for working with pupils.
- School leaders have developed a clear culture of safeguarding within the school, which ensures that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff and governors are up to date with their training. They are vigilant about recording their concerns and respond quickly and appropriately should a concern be raised.
- The well-written and detailed safeguarding policy ensures that all staff, including those who are new to the school, are clear about what constitutes a safeguarding concern and what actions are required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together and time is allocated to plan learning for all pupils. This ensures that all adults have a very clear shared understanding of pupils' learning. As a result, teaching assistants make a strong and valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Staff are very knowledgeable and highly creative in their approach. They craft learning so that it engages all pupils, whatever their starting point, and deepens knowledge through active participation.

- Teachers recognise that pupils learn best when they are offered challenges which make them think and deepen their understanding. There is a clear focus on mastering concepts in mathematics and guided reading sessions clearly challenge the pupils' understanding of the text. This has been key to the continuing improvement and excellent progress made by pupils.
- Teachers' questioning skills encourage even the quietest child to make an active contribution to the lesson. For example, one teacher used gentle persuasion to encourage a pupil to develop a line in her acrostic poem from 'flowers opening in the morning' to 'flowers shining like jewels in the gloom of dawn'.
- Staff address pupils' needs exceptionally well. They check and measure progress very carefully and ensure that any gaps in learning are addressed through catch-up sessions.
- There are consistently high standards of presentation and writing in books, no matter what the subject. Pupils enjoy doing their homework. They feel it is pitched correctly, with some project research and reading encouraging pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Teachers' planning addresses the misconceptions of pupils from the day before. As a result, pupils know that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure.
- Attitudes to learning and relationships in the resource base ensure that pupils are positive about learning, as they are throughout the school. Lessons are pitched well at pupils' next steps and there are plenty of opportunities to consolidate their learning.
- All pupils are able to chat in Spanish to some degree, while older pupils are able to read Spanish texts and have an excellent grasp of Spanish culture. Some parents say that they are delighted and amazed to hear their children burst into Spanish at home.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of the bespoke support they receive. For example, the school SENCo recognises that some pupils often make very good progress when some of their learning takes place in the resource base, while others flourish in the mainstream classroom setting. This is a fluid arrangement that has significantly accelerated the progress of this group across the school.
- Activities across the school make learning both relevant and engaging for all pupils. Pupils typically commented, 'There is never a dull moment in this school.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents and pupils quote the school motto, 'Learning to love, loving to learn', as they believe it is the reason why the school is so successful. As one pupil said, 'this school is fun. We look after each other – we are as one!'
- School leaders and pupils have developed a highly effective way of giving pupils the opportunity to make a difference in the school and beyond. There are opportunities such as the RotaKids work with the Rotary Club to take part in fundraising activities or

the buddy bank in school, which is used to support pupils who feel lonely in the playground. These activities contribute greatly to pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and increase their spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and skills.

- Some pupils are taught basic first-aid skills and are encouraged to work alongside fully qualified adults at lunchtime. They feel their work is valued. Other jobs include eco warriors and school council. Pupils feel they are listened to. Leaders encourage them to choose class rewards, for example for handing in their homework on time.
- Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe both in and out of school because of the very clear guidance they receive. For example, children in Reception and Year 1 explained to the inspection team how important it was to stay safe when using the internet.
- Strong Christian values are at the heart of St Cuthbert's School. However, it is their links with schools in other countries and in the wider community that help pupils to develop a wider understanding of other religions and cultures. Pupils say that being different is a positive thing. 'People should be judged on what they do, not what they look like', said one pupil. The school is keen to do even more to help pupils appreciate and understand other faiths and cultures.
- 'Friday family breakfast' is a real feature of this school, which has encouraged parents to have family time alongside their children before helping them with their reading or writing. Parents say they have found these sessions really helpful when supporting their children at home and they enjoy the community feel. Parents typically commented, 'This school offers a special foundation for our children. We feel as if we are part of their extended family.' Others said, 'Children are excited about coming to school. They would live here if they had the chance.'
- All pupils at the school are taught sign language so they are able to communicate effectively with pupils from the resource base. This form of inclusion is just an example of what makes this school so special.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils of all ages who spoke to the inspection team were very clear that behaviour in the school leaves little to be desired. They feel that no one is left out in the playground and, should there be a dispute, they know that both adults and older pupils will help to resolve it.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in school. They understand the difference between occasional fallouts between friends and sustained bullying behaviour, 'which is not tolerated in school'.
- School leaders have a very clear focus on pupils' well-being, particularly their mental health. Even small changes in pupils' behaviour are regularly discussed in meetings and very careful consideration is given to the root cause. Case studies demonstrate that this approach has enabled several pupils and their families to receive highly effective

help and guidance at an early stage.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Off-task behaviour is rarely seen in lessons and behaviour outside the classroom is often exemplary.
- The school has a larger-than-average group of pupils who have complex special needs and/or disabilities and who may occasionally behave differently from other pupils. Parents of pupils in this group say that they have been exceptionally pleased with the support that they have received.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils have continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Last year, national data showed that pupils in key stage 2 achieved very well in writing and mathematics but not as well in reading. School leaders immediately set about reviewing the way in which guided reading was being taught across the school. Current pupils make similar, strong progress in reading as they do in other subjects across the curriculum.
- The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are also making very strong progress across the curriculum. For example, work in science books demonstrates that the most able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress over time.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress from their starting points. Their progress alongside other pupils is very closely tracked and monitored and gaps in their learning or misconceptions are very quickly addressed and followed up well, either in the resource base or in the classroom.
- Current performance information collected by the school is demonstrating a very pleasing picture. Many of the middle-ability pupils are now making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Where pupils have not yet reached their age-related expectations, often because they have additional needs, the expectation is that they will reach the required standard because the appropriate support, including before- and after-school clubs, is in place.
- No stone is left unturned to ensure that pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are well developed across a range of subjects such as science and topic work as well as in English.
- There were some staff changes in one year group in which pupils' progress faltered temporarily. Senior leaders addressed this and are carefully monitoring the progress being made by this year group to ensure that pupils catch up quickly.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading. The well-stocked library enables pupils to choose from a wide range of books and pupils talk confidently about their favourite authors. Those who read to the inspectors were exceptionally confident and used quotes from the text to illustrate their understanding. From their starting points, current pupils are making strong progress.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children join the early years with a range of different skills and knowledge. Most children enter the school with skills below those typically expected for their age. An increasing number of children have additional needs.
- The early years provision provides children with a real kick start to their education. Children settle quickly and feel very safe thanks to the excellent care and attention given by skilled staff. Parents say that staff are very approachable and make transition into school a very positive experience.
- Children make excellent progress due to the skills of staff and the well-organised curriculum. Most, including those with additional needs, leave having reached or exceeded the early learning goals. As a result, most are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader has a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development within the unit. She works closely with 12 nurseries and providers which transfer children to the school.
- Thorough research into children's individual strengths and weaknesses ensures that activities are planned to meet their needs well. Examples of this are the progress made with speech and language and social and emotional development.
- Staff plan work which engages both boys and girls. As a result, both groups currently make equally excellent progress.
- Staff recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that the outdoor area matches the excellent provision in the classroom. Although there are planned improvements in place, the work has not yet been completed.
- Links with parents are very strong. Children's work is regularly uploaded and sent to parents and there is also a 'busy book' and home/school book for keeping in touch. The website also provides a useful source of information for parents with activity sheets and guidance on how to help their child.
- There is a good balance of child-initiated activities and those that are adult-led. This is effective in helping to develop children's independent learning skills. The children are keen to share what they do. They learn to collaborate from the start. Standards of behaviour are excellent.
- Statutory welfare requirements are in place.

School details

Unique reference number	119615
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10024275

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Tomlin
Headteacher	Mrs M Smith
Telephone number	01254701336
Website	www.stcuthbertscofeprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@stcuthberts.blackburn.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 February 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a slightly smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is significantly higher than in other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than average.
- Most pupils are of white-British heritage.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in the Reception class.
- The school has met floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in mathematics and English, for the past three years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in a range of lessons and parts of lessons across the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A conversation with the school's improvement partner was held over the telephone.
- A meeting was held with a number of parents to seek their views of St Cuthbert's school, including the resource base.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and staff and took account of responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took account of the pupil responses to the online questionnaire and met with groups of pupils both formally and informally during the inspection.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read and carried out a thorough scrutiny of books across a wide range of subjects.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Bentham	Her Majesty's Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017