

# St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Hill, Crook, County Durham DL15 9DN

## Inspection dates

10–11 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, are highly ambitious and have a clear vision for the school. They set high standards and expectations for everyone.
- Governors consistently challenge the school and hold senior leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. They know the school extremely well.
- Leaders and managers have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result of good teaching in all key stages, all groups of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average and continue to rise across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good and they show a high level of respect for everyone in school.
- The school is outstanding in its work around pupils' welfare and personal development. Parents spoken to highly praise the support given to their children.
- Pupils are challenged to explain their learning through teachers' good use of 'how' and 'why' questioning. Additional adults are used to good effect and support all pupils' learning.
- Children in early years make a good start to their education. They are immediately given the support and guidance needed to ensure that the best possible progress is made, especially in phonics.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. Although overall pupils are making above national progress in writing in key stage 2, some of the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to enable them to make even greater progress.
- Leadership roles have been developed across the school in different subject areas and the impact can be seen in the standard of pupils' outcomes. However, further support is needed to extend middle leaders' work and their impact at a more whole-school level.
- The majority of pupils have good attendance. A small proportion of pupils, however, require additional support to ensure that their attendance continues to improve.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by making sure that teachers provide further opportunities to challenge the most able pupils consistently, particularly in writing in key stage 2.
- Improve attendance for the small group pupils who do not attend regularly enough.
- Further develop middle leaders' skills to have a greater impact on whole-school developments.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school and work very effectively as a team to ensure that the school continues to improve. They have been successful in creating a culture of high expectations where good teaching, learning and assessment can flourish. All staff within the school share the same aspirational vision for the school and this is equally supported by pupils and parents.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's performance because of their rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation procedures. They are quick to identify those areas of the school's work that need further work, and improvement planning is focused on the correct priorities.
- The headteacher is very clear about taking robust action when it is needed, to make sure that all pupils receive the education that they deserve. Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes demonstrates this effectively.
- Parents spoken to and those who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the free-text service recognise the work of all leaders in school but particularly that of the headteacher. One parent stated, 'The school is well led by the headteacher, who is enthusiastic and dedicated to giving the children the best possible start.'
- Staff are provided with high-quality training and support to further develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They value this and in the Ofsted online questionnaire, all teachers agreed that they are well supported and that leaders do everything to ensure that everyone is motivated and engaged.
- Leaders and managers make sure that pupils' progress is monitored carefully. Staff meet regularly with leaders to check that all pupils are making the best progress that they can. Where pupils are not doing as well as they should, appropriate additional support and teaching are quickly put in place to help.
- The rationale for the school's curriculum is about building pupils' aspirations and providing new and exciting learning opportunities. For example, pupils in Year 6, through the work of the Crook Shakespeare Cluster and Shakespeare in School, experience working on their own interpretation of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' through music, dance and acting, leading to a performance at a local theatre. In addition, two pupils have the opportunity to visit Stratford-upon-Avon and work with Royal Shakespeare Company actors and directors. On a regular basis, the curriculum is reviewed to make sure that it is addressing the needs and also interests of the pupils in each year group. Extra-curricular activities support pupils' learning by, again, providing a range of experiences, including sewing, dance, science, art and Latin. These opportunities contribute to the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a great strength of the school. All adults promote it very effectively and it is shown very clearly in the quality of relationships within the school and the sense of community and family that is highly valued by parents. The school's key values are shown in its mission statement, 'Live

the light, Share the light, Be the light', and pupils talk confidently about what this means to them and how the symbol of the lighthouse embodies it. The school is involved in a number of charitable activities, with individual classes choosing organisations to support that are important to them. Pupils have a very good understanding that support is about 'empathy and not sympathy'.

- All leaders and managers, including governors, see developing and promoting British values as an essential part of the school's work. Pupils are involved in looking at different countries and civilisations to explore their law systems for example, in work in Year 4 on the Greek city states. In addition, the school council produces its own manifesto and pupils in Year 4 to Year 6 have the opportunity to apply to visit the Houses of Parliament. The school sees that pupils' understanding and acceptance of difference are an integral part of the curriculum, just as these are an integral part of life in Britain today.
- The school benefits from a good level of support from the local authority. They have supported the school in moderating outcomes and further developing the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders, including governors, make sure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. It is used to provide interventions and targeted support in key stage 1 and key stage 2, and funds a parent support adviser to work with families in school. Leaders and managers within school are very focused on supporting their pupils in all aspects of life, both within and outside the school day.
- Physical education and sport funding is used effectively to raise staff expertise in teaching this subject area. Specialist coaches work with staff and the school has provided a number of additional sporting activities for pupils.
- Performance management is managed and led effectively and staff are set challenging and measurable targets that are directly linked to the school's priorities. The headteacher has developed a clear culture where every member of staff is responsible for the learning and outcomes of all pupils and that everyone is 'a leader of learning'.
- The headteacher is developing the role of middle leaders; however, the impact is currently focused on subject or phase areas rather than more strategic whole-school concerns.
- Parents are very positive about the work of the school. Of those who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text service, the overwhelming majority would recommend the school to another parent. One parent stated, 'The school has a very caring attitude towards all the children and constantly shows them right from wrong in all aspects of their lives. Every child is told that they can achieve anything they want to in life and are given lots of opportunities to shine.'

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate view of the school because they are regular visitors and work closely with the headteacher and leaders to check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Governors are reflective about their practice and have initiated a review and follow-up

from the local authority to make sure that their work is having an impact on pupils' outcomes.

- The minutes of governing body meetings show a good level of challenge and that governors are not simply accepting of the information provided for them by the headteacher but can interrogate it appropriately to ensure that it is accurate.
- Governors have worked hard to make sure that they have a good range of skills and experiences within the overall governing body.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding that is rigorously upheld by staff within school. All staff regularly receive up-to-date training on all necessary elements of safeguarding.
- The school knows its pupils very well and detailed records are kept about all safeguarding concerns. Staff, including the parental support adviser, are tenacious in accessing guidance and advice from outside agencies for their pupils and families.
- The headteacher, staff and the parental support adviser have developed very good relationships with families, which has helped parents to be open in seeking advice and support.
- In discussion, pupils show that they have a good understanding overall of how to keep themselves safe in school and out in the wider community.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Leaders, including governors, have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and this enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to experience good-quality texts that extend their skills. Pupils are confident readers, particularly in Year 6, and clearly enjoy their reading experiences both in school and at home. Teachers carefully check the books pupils are reading to make sure that everyone is suitably challenged. This is reflected in the good progress they make throughout school, and especially in key stage 2.
- The teaching of phonics is carefully developed across school and particularly in early years. This was clearly shown in the school's Year 1 phonics screening check results, which were considerably above national figures in 2017.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear guidance as to how they can improve their work. Pupils are given planned time to respond and talk positively about being challenged to further develop the quality of their work. For example, in a Year 4 geography lesson, pupils were challenged to use the technical language of a 'geographer'.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work very closely together to make sure that extra guidance and support are provided for pupils as soon as it is necessary. Both teaching assistants and teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and this enables them to plan learning that is interesting and helps pupils to make good progress. For

example, boys in a Year 6 mathematics lesson were challenged through being given time limits and unpicking why a 'gorilla' was having difficulties in long division.

- Teachers use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding in lessons. This also provides pupils with the opportunity to express their opinions and respond to the views of others. Across subject areas, pupils are continually asked 'why' and 'how' questions to help unpick how they have reached an answer and the evidence to back it up. Pupils are confident to respond to teachers' questions and are eager to share their learning with each other.
- Teachers continually model to pupils that it is natural to make mistakes and that everyone learns through making errors. As a result, pupils are confident in discussing any concerns in their learning and share with each other ways to help. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on phonics, a pupil was confidently explaining to their partner, who was having difficulties understanding a particular spelling rule, how to use either the '-cious' or '-tious' ending when spelling words such as 'scrumptious' and 'delicious'. Each pupil was very happy to give and receive this support. When spoken to, all pupils recognised the need to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Teachers and other adults have very high aspirations for all pupils and are very clear as to what is expected of everyone. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 group, pupils were given clear success criteria as to how to write an eye-witness account based on the poem 'The Highwayman' and by the end of the session were able to produce effective accounts using high-quality language, sentences and punctuation.
- Teachers share good practice and take opportunities to learn from one another and staff in other schools. They continually check pupils' learning carefully and identify what pupils need to know next. However, teachers do not always challenge the most able consistently enough to make sure that they are making the best progress possible, particularly in writing at key stage 2.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are self-motivated and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils spoken to value their education, want to come to school and appreciate what St Cuthbert's offers them. This has a strong positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils have a very distinct pride in their school. They show this, for example, through presenting work using their best handwriting, making sure that their environment always looks good and using every opportunity to tell visitors how good they feel about St Cuthbert's.
- Pupils spoken to see their school as being a family and that all adults will care and support them. Pupils know that if they have any concerns, there are strategies to help them. For example, when friendships have broken down, pupils can use the 'Friendship Stop Bench' on the yard, or access a worry box or the school's prayer room to support

them.

- The school is tenacious in working with outside agencies to make sure that families and their children receive the best possible advice and guidance to support their emotional and physical well-being. Leaders and governors have developed strong relationships with families so that parents are confident to share concerns, knowing that care and support will be given. A common phrase heard when speaking to parents during the inspection was, 'The school goes that extra step'.
- Pupils feel safe in school and extremely well looked after by all adults. They are confident that they can talk to any member of staff for help and support. Pupils know how to keep safe in a wide variety of situations, including when online. Pupils know that if there is any small instance of poor behaviour, then it will be dealt with quickly by staff.
- Pupils have a very good understanding that everyone should be treated fairly and this is shown in their view of St Cuthbert's being a family. As one pupil stated, 'Don't be afraid to be what you want to be', and, 'It is fine to be different'.
- Leaders, governors and all adults within the school work extremely hard to ensure that pupils and their families are nurtured as well as being challenged to achieve the best they can. This is recognised by pupils and parents. One parent stated, 'This school embodies the holistic approach to a child and their learning without labouring the grade. Every single child in this school progresses in ways that are sometimes out of the realms of a grade or a score, but all are pushed and coached to do their best.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and interruptions are very rare, so pupils' progress is good.
- The school is an orderly and calm environment which is very well cared for by both pupils and adults. Pupils move around the building in a purposeful way and clearly understand that there are rules and procedures which they follow consistently.
- In lessons, pupils listen to each other and value the opinions and views expressed by their classmates. All adults in school also follow this behaviour with each other so that pupils are constantly given the appropriate model to use.
- Pupils understand that poor behaviour can affect their learning and that it is important to manage themselves appropriately both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils speak very positively about the systems in school to address positive and negative behaviour and recognise that teachers will act very quickly if there are any issues.
- Leaders and teachers feel that issues around behaviour are as a result of a greater underlying problem and take time to not only address the behavioural issue but also its cause.
- Pupils are very happy to come to school and they appreciate the opportunities that school provides for them. Pupils understand the need to be in school so that they can learn. However, a small number of families are having a negative impact on attendance

rates, mainly due to term-time holidays. Leaders and governors are very aware of this. They work continually to make sure that everyone understands the importance of attending school through using a range of strategies, including meeting with parents, termly newsletters, rewards for good attendance and the use of the parent support adviser. Despite the work of leaders, attendance is still low for this small group of pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils are making good progress throughout the school in a range of different subjects across the curriculum. This is due to good teaching. Observations of learning across different year groups and looking at pupils' books confirm that all groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are rising as a result.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are increasing continuously and are significantly above national averages. Pupils make good progress in reading, particularly in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in the school, particularly in mathematics. They benefit from targeted and well-planned support that addresses their particular needs effectively. Leaders monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress rigorously and are quick to take action when any pupil is not progressing as they should.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Owing to early identification of needs and barriers to learning, teachers are able to plan support that is effective and activities that are at the right level.
- Pupils across all key stages make good progress in mathematics. This is a result of teachers' good level of subject knowledge, the ability to identify quickly any misconceptions and address them effectively, and opportunities for pupils to explore and unpick how they have reached an answer.
- Overall, pupils achieve well in writing. Pupils practise and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding regularly within English and across other subjects.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall. However, sometimes opportunities are missed to make sure that they are making the best progress possible, especially in writing in key stage 2. Work sometimes lacks appropriate challenge.
- When pupils leave Year 6, they are well prepared for their move into secondary education. As a parent stated, 'Our daughter has gone into secondary school feeling confident and secure.'

## Early years provision

**Good**



- Children are making good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the time they leave Reception is above national figures and has increased by 30% over the last three years.
- All adults know the children very well and at all times show a high level of care for them. Actions to make sure that all children are safe are of a good quality. Children are regularly supported in their own understanding of how to keep safe, both in and outside the classroom. For example, when making porridge, children were able to discuss and recognise steam coming from the porridge bowl and that it would be hot and dangerous.
- Teachers, children and parents have highly positive relationships and this helps children to become confident learners quickly and enjoy the varied opportunities provided for them. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education and contribute towards assessments.
- Those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly and adults make sure that the right support is put in place for them. Leaders monitor their learning to ensure that they are making the best possible progress.
- Children work and socialise very well together and throughout there is a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. Children are interested in the learning opportunities provided for them and can sustain their attention appropriately.
- Adults manage children's behaviour very well and set out high expectations as to how children should behave when learning independently and with others. Children are very supportive of each other and are happy, for example, to share equipment or help another child with their learning.
- Teaching is good. Adults provide children with exciting and creative curriculum opportunities to develop and extend children's skills and knowledge. For example, children were able to create their own bear den from large pieces of equipment, take part in a 'scary' story about being chased by bears and then produce their own maps to find the 'scary bears'. Adults skilfully intervene while children are learning and help develop their speech and language skills, for example by extending children's language as they described the bear's den.
- Outdoor activities encourage children to develop an understanding of risk and develop their physical skills. For example, the creation of the 'Secret Garden' has provided children with the opportunity to develop their ability to climb trees, move up and down slopes appropriately and also to explore the plants and animals in the garden.
- Leaders accurately measure what children know and can do and have well-thought-out plans to further increase children's learning. Teachers regularly take part in local authority moderation exercises which have supported their accurate assessments of children's learning. Staff are continually reflecting on and refining their practice to make sure that the children receive the best education possible.

## School details

Unique reference number	114256
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10036553

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tanya Devereux
Headteacher	Rosaleen Donnelly
Telephone number	01388 762889
Website	<a href="http://www.stcuthbertscrook.org.uk">www.stcuthbertscrook.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:crookstcuthberts@durhamlearning.net">crookstcuthberts@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School is a one-form voluntary-aided school, serving the parishes of St Cuthbert's, Crook and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wolsingham. It is part of the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle within Durham local authority. It is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club for pupils each day.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 16 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors also heard pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, class teachers, members of the governing body, parents and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors met with pupils, observed breaktime and talked with pupils and staff around the school.
- The inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, minutes of governing body meetings, school self-evaluation plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the school's records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance.
- The inspectors took account of 11 staff responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire and 47 parent responses using the free-text facility. In addition, inspectors took account of 41 responses on Parent View.

## Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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