

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Wigan

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131228
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	341114
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila O'Keeffe

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Fisher
Headteacher	Mr J Bruen
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
School address	Thorburn Road Norley Hall Wigan WN5 9LW
Telephone number	01942 222721
Fax number	01942 700694
Email address	enquiries@admin.saintcuthberts.wigan.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils as well as talking informally with staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation and pupils' work. They also took into account the responses to questionnaires completed by pupils and 100 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement and attainment of all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 in English
- the quality of teaching and assessment to inform learning that ensures consistent progress and improving standards to reach challenging targets
- the provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage including partnership with the Early Years Centre
- the outcomes that make each aspect of personal development and care guidance and support good or outstanding
- how effectively governors contribute to evaluating the school performance, monitoring provision and shaping improvement planning.

Information about the school

St Cuthbert's is a larger than average sized primary school which serves a well below average socio-economic area. The majority of pupils are White British with a small number who belong to minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. Well above the national average numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above. The school has recently taken over the pre-school provision which was funded separately. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Artsmark Silver award and the local authority quality standard for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Cuthbert's is a good school. It provides a welcoming, caring atmosphere where pupils are helped to develop their social skills and respect for each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or at an early stage of learning English as an additional language receive good support. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures positive relationships, collaboration and a friendly, happy environment. Good quality care and support is offered to pupils, and parents and carers, by the learning mentor and staff. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school because of the effective safeguarding procedures. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good, which is demonstrated by their academic achievement in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and the use teachers make of assessment to ensure all pupils achieve their potential are good. As a result, from levels that are well below expectations at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of year 6. However, at the start of some lessons teachers talk for too long and, consequently, the pace is slower and pupils are passive and not fully engaged and active.

Pupils explain that they enjoy school because there are many interesting activities to take part in. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a highly effective enrichment programme of year-group activities in the arts which benefits pupils' good personal development. The focus the school gives to developing the pupils' place in their local community and their understanding of the global community is good. However, their experiences are not as well developed as regards their awareness and understanding of other communities that make up the cultural diversity of Great Britain. Teachers and pupils make good use of information and communication technology including video-conferencing.

The recent change in the registration of the Nursery setting means the whole of the Early Years Foundations Stage is now under the direction of the school. Both Nursery and Reception classes are developing their planning well, building on the established, highly effective nursery practice to promote good provision and outcomes. The senior leadership team and governors have focused their attention on raising pupils' achievement. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave in Year 6. The leadership reflects on all aspects of its work and tracks pupils' progress well. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and has planned carefully to address these issues through effective intervention strategies and staff training. The school improvement plan clearly demonstrates the school's priorities to improve outcomes for all pupils, particularly in writing, and their overall academic achievement. This all demonstrates the good capacity that the school

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has to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good by structuring lessons so the pace is brisk and there is an appropriate mix of teacher-led and pupil-led activities, ensuring pupils are not passive and are more actively engaged in their learning.
- Improve community cohesion by developing pupils' awareness and understanding of the different communities that make up the cultural diversity of Great Britain by providing opportunities for pupils to engage with communities different from their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and achieve well. This is evident in lessons, particularly where teachers set work which engages and challenges pupils in exciting activities. In a few lessons, because teachers talk for too long, pupils are too passive and progress slows.

When pupils begin Year 1, most are working at levels below that expected for their age. During Key Stage 1 they make progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards by the end of Year 2 which are below average, but improving. The rate of learning often accelerates as pupils become more confident, independent learners in Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, pupils reach standards which are generally above average in English, mathematics and science. During the last school year the percentage of pupils working at the standard expected for their age in Key Stage 2 rose, especially in English.

Pupils are polite and are developing good self-confidence: for example, two pupils took the inspectors on an interesting and informative guided tour of the school.

Pupils enjoy school and undertake their responsibilities as members of the school council or, for instance, as playground monitors and prefects. Behaviour is good and attendance is broadly average. Pupils show respect for one another and play together well. They are developing a good understanding of how to stay safe and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. There are good links with the local community: for example, pupils have worked on an allotment gardening project. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They show respect for the needs and interests of others and recognise the difference between right and wrong. Pupils raise money and make contributions to charitable causes. Awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity of Great Britain is underdeveloped but plans are in place to address this.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The majority of lessons observed had a number of strong features. Relationships are good and there is an atmosphere of keenness as pupils clearly want to do well. Teaching assistants and other staff ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. Teachers use marking well to guide pupils in improving their work. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities in lessons, for instance, in art and literacy, and role play in an enquiry-based geography lesson during the themed Africa week, making learning relevant and interesting. Where, occasionally, teaching is less effective, teachers miss opportunities to engage the pupils early by talking for too long and, therefore, pupils are too passive. This affects the pace of a few lessons and diminishes the pupils' chances to be more actively engaged and involved in their activities. The school tracks the progress of pupils to ensure no pupil falls behind. It is in the process of trialling a more advanced system so staff can more closely monitor progress of their own class.

Pupils' enjoyment is enhanced by a good curriculum. The year-group enrichment programmes are highly effective. They provide a rich experience for pupils: for example, all pupils in Year 3 are involved in high-quality art work, which contributes to their self-esteem and enjoyment. This is evident in the responses in pupils' questionnaires where pupils say things like, 'I like the different things we can do each year, like playing a brass instrument in Year 4.' Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is good because of the support and programmes in place. The school actively promotes attendance through its many initiatives.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a strong and shared sense of responsibility and commitment amongst all staff, which emanates from good leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteachers and senior management team. Monitoring and the development of teaching and learning are good and the pattern of continual improvement is clear. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school through the effective monitoring and challenge they provide. Equal opportunities, tackling discrimination and good partnerships are at the core of all the school's activities and all pupils are helped to succeed. This is borne out in the generally positive responses in the pupils' and parents' questionnaires. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were good. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures are in good order. The school has made good inroads to promoting community cohesion. As a result pupils' involvement in the local community and their awareness and understanding of global communities is good. The school is aware that pupils need to widen their experiences and develop their understanding of the different communities that make up the cultural diversity in Great Britain and has plans in place to work with a school in a different area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The recently amalgamated Nursery and Reception staff work together well to ensure continuity and quality for all the children in their care, especially in their communication and social skills. Children settle well because of the good relationships that staff form with them and the good communication with parents and carers to gather and share important information.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is well led and managed. Observation and planning is being strengthened, based on the highly effective recording methods used in the Nursery. This ensures the children's individual needs are addressed and next steps in their learning are well planned, enabling good progress towards the early learning goals. When children move to Year 1, most children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to make progress in their learning and development, because of the good transition arrangements. A good level of attention is paid to ensuring children are safe and all welfare requirements are met. Children learn the importance of safety through the daily routines and in their involvement in activities both indoors and outside.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school's provision. They feel that their children are happy at school and, in particular, they are pleased with the progress their children make. Inspectors followed up the few negative comments made and, taking into account their own observations, pupils' responses to the questionnaire, the school's documentation and discussion with the headteacher, they found no evidence to cause any concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Wigan to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 319 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	62	34	34	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	61	39	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	46	48	48	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	53	42	42	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	56	42	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	44	46	46	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	49	49	49	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	38	53	53	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	49	43	43	1	1	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	41	45	45	8	8	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	40	46	46	4	4	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	49	49	45	45	1	1	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	55	41	41	2	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Wigan, Wigan WN5 9LW

All the inspectors thoroughly enjoyed our visit to St Cuthbert's. I would like to thank you all for making us feel welcome and, in particular, the two pupils who gave us an interesting guided tour of the school. Your good social skills make the school a happy place. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school, particularly the year-group activities, like learning to play an instrument. We agree with you that the adults look after you well and that you have a good range of activities to take part in. We were impressed by your art work and the way you learn about other countries. Here are the main things we found out about your school.

- St Cuthbert's is a good school. It is good at helping you to become thoughtful, confident and caring young people. It is giving you experiences to develop your skills, such as in information and communication technology and drama.
- You make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time you leave in Year 6.

What we have asked your headteacher and staff to do is to make sure that you all:

- spend more time in lessons finding out things for yourselves by getting more involved early on with your activities
- learn more about people in different communities in Great Britain.

I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sheila O'Keeffe

Lead inspector

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