

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Heyscroft Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4UZ

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

- The executive headteacher has worked successfully with the school's leadership team to transform the quality of education at St Cuthbert's. As a result, this is now a good school and pupils are making strong progress in their learning.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are confident, they feel safe in school and they are extremely well cared for.
- Leaders have improved the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are now making good progress from their various starting points.
- Pupils develop strong phonics skills. They apply them well to support their reading in all year groups. As a result, most pupils develop into successful, competent readers.
- Middle leaders make a good contribution to school improvement. They make regular checks on pupils' work and they have a good understanding of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is typically good. However, pupils' progress is sometimes hindered by a lack of challenge. This holds some pupils back from attaining the higher standards.
- Pupils' attendance rates are around the national averages. However, too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Leaders provide a broad, engaging and stimulating curriculum. This helps pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects in an exciting and meaningful way.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and at breaktimes. They have positive attitudes to their learning and take great care with their presentation and handwriting.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Children thrive in the early years. Good teaching helps them to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding critical for success in Year 1.
- Governors are knowledgeable, effective and committed to the school. They provide robust challenge to school leaders in relation to pupils' progress and attainment.
- The majority of parents and carers are supportive and positive about the school. They say that their children are safe and happy at school and making good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching regularly provides good levels of challenge so that more pupils make stronger progress and attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve attendance by working closely with parents of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- St Cuthbert's is a very different school to the one inspected in 2016. A new leadership team is now in place and several members of staff have been appointed, many as newly qualified teachers. The executive headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the wider leadership team, has ensured that new members of staff have received good support and guidance. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved, and pupils are making good progress in their learning.
- Following a dip in standards in 2017, leaders have worked successfully to improve teaching and raise pupils' attainment. They have provided staff with high-quality training and support. As a result, the quality of teaching is now typically good in almost all classes across the school and leaders are providing effective support where further improvements are required.
- Senior and middle leaders are a cohesive and ambitious team. The regular checks that they make on the quality of pupils' work ensures that agreed policies are followed. There is consistency in the way that teachers provide feedback to pupils. Leaders monitor and support their colleagues in developing their teaching and this helps to ensure that pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its Christian ethos. Pupils are also introduced to British values through assemblies and the school's broad curriculum. Pupils who met with one of the inspectors demonstrated a good understanding of democracy, and the importance of tolerance and respect.
- The school's well-designed curriculum promotes pupils' personal and academic development extremely well. Effective teaching ensures that most pupils successfully develop their learning in a wide range of subjects. Teachers also use a range of subjects, such as science and history, to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Staff are fully supportive of the school's leadership team. Teachers told inspectors that they feel well supported and enjoy working at the school. All members of staff who responded to the staff survey said that they were proud to be a member of staff at the school. They also strongly agreed that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are helpful for the pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport is used effectively to help pupils to become more active and develop their physical talents. A wide range of clubs and competitions are available to pupils and sports coaches work alongside teachers to encourage high-quality teaching of PE.
- Leaders make good use of the funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work hard to identify each pupil's individual pastoral and academic needs. They then work effectively with staff to ensure that the support provided helps these pupils to make strong progress in their learning and development.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. During a period of significant change, governors have ensured that the school has had sufficient leadership capacity to move forward and address a legacy of underachievement. As a result, the quality of education at the school has improved rapidly and pupils are making much better progress in their learning than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They visit the school frequently to gain an accurate understanding of pupils' experiences of school. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement.
- Governors are kept well informed about all aspects of the school's performance. They ask challenging questions of school leaders and hold them to account for the use of additional funding. Governors also ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and fully understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. They receive regular updates on safeguarding matters. They understand the school's systems for raising concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being.
- The school's safeguarding policies are comprehensive and clear. Appropriate checks are made on adults who work with pupils. Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained.
- The school's pastoral team provides excellent support for vulnerable families and does all that it can to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in the school. They told an inspector that adults are easy to talk to if they have a problem.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, when in school, out in the community or when using the internet. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that their children are safe and well looked after at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' effective planning helps to ensure that pupils learn well. Teachers regularly set exciting work that engages pupils' interests. Pupils work with positive attitudes and make strong progress in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Staff have been thoroughly trained and teach well-structured lessons that help pupils of all abilities to attempt to read unfamiliar words. As a result, children develop the skills and knowledge required to become successful readers. Teachers build effectively on these skills as pupils move through the school, helping pupils to apply their reading skills for research as well as enjoyment. Many older pupils develop a love of reading and read widely and often.

- Teaching of writing has improved. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they need to do improve their writing. They insist on pupils using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, not just in English lessons but also in subjects across the curriculum. This insistence on accuracy across subjects ensures that pupils gain in confidence and accuracy to apply their skills. As a result, most pupils develop into successful writers.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation. Inspectors saw many examples of neat and fluent handwriting in pupils' books and on display around school. This has a positive impact on the standard of the work that pupils produce across the curriculum.
- Teachers focus on ensuring a good grounding in basic skills in mathematics and help pupils to become confident in their use of number. Teachers also provide regular opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils are making strong progress in this subject across most classes in the school.
- Assessment is used effectively to check pupils' progress as they move through school. However, some teachers do not take enough account of what pupils already know or can do when planning lessons. As a result, there is sometimes a lack of challenge in the work that they set for pupils. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching. They are providing training opportunities for staff to enable a greater proportion of pupils to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Inspectors saw evidence of good teaching in subjects across the wider curriculum. Pupils enjoy the challenge of learning in subjects such as geography, history and science. The school's broad curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who find learning more difficult, including those pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils learn well and make strong progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils work extremely hard in lessons and develop excellent attitudes to learning. They take great care with their handwriting and presentation and have real pride in their work.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being. Staff provide excellent support for the small number of pupils who occasionally struggle with their emotions or behaviour. This helps these pupils to develop their self-confidence and more positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They were keen to share their positive experience of school with inspectors during this inspection. For example, older pupils talked with great enthusiasm about educational visits and the range of sports clubs that are available at the end of each school day.

- Pupils who met with one of the inspectors had an excellent understanding of how to stay safe when working online. They knew the importance of not sharing personal information and understand the importance of telling their parents or a trusted adult if they have any concerns about what they experience when working online.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is extremely rare at St Cuthbert's. They said that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils say that they trust adults to support them with any concerns.
- School leaders promote healthy lifestyles through the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Pupils also learn about the importance of a healthy diet and are very well supported on issues relating to mental and emotional health.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school provides a calm and orderly place for pupils to learn. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils show respect for each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils behave extremely well during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They are friendly towards each other and the adults who work with them. Pupils told inspectors that it is very rare for anybody to misbehave.
- Leaders have worked effectively to improve pupils' attendance over the past two years. It is now broadly average and almost all pupils attend punctually. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is above the national average. Most of these pupils are disadvantaged, and their poor attendance has a negative impact on their learning.
- All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that behaviour at the school is good and that they are well supported by senior leaders in managing pupils' behaviour. Most parents who responded to Parent View said that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. However, since this point, pupils' attainment and progress have improved significantly. Leaders and teachers have worked hard to improve outcomes. Training and support for teaching have been pivotal in bringing about this success.
- Results in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national averages at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018. For many pupils, this represented good progress. The quality of work seen in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making strong progress in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects across the curriculum.
- Effective phonics teaching ensures that pupils get off to a good start in developing their reading skills. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was in line with the national average in 2018. Pupils learn to

use and apply their phonics knowledge with confidence when reading and writing unknown words. Effective support is provided for those pupils who struggle with their reading. As a result, pupils make good progress and develop confidence and fluency in their reading.

- Pupils make strong progress in writing. They develop a good understanding of sentence structure and punctuation, and often make use of a rich and varied vocabulary. The opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects such as science and history also make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' work and the good progress that they make across the school.
- The work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making good progress across the school in mathematics. Pupils develop good mathematical knowledge and skills as they move through school. An above average proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in the national assessments in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018.
- Pupils make strong progress in subjects across the curriculum. Inspectors saw evidence of effective learning in science, history and geography. There are also strengths in modern foreign languages and PE. Teachers ensure that pupils apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills well when working in the wider curriculum.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress of pupils with SEND and ensure that good support is provided. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their various starting points across a wide range of subjects and particularly in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across the school in English, mathematics and subjects across the curriculum. Leaders make regular checks on the progress these pupils are making and ensure that support is provided to meet any specific pastoral or academic needs. Over the past two years, the difference in attainment between these pupils and other pupils nationally has narrowed. However, progress for some of these pupils is still being restricted by poor attendance.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. During their time in the Nursery and Reception classes children make good progress in their learning and development. In 2018, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was around the national average. This meant that most children were well prepared for the next stage of their education when they started in Year 1.
- Children benefit from good teaching in the early years. A range of stimulating and challenging activities are provided for children each day. Pupils quickly develop confidence and independence, showing that they feel safe and secure while in school.
- The early years is effectively led and managed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of provision. They know what needs to be done to further improve the good quality of education that is provided. Leaders have ensured that all necessary safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- The learning environments, inside and outside, are stimulating and well organised.

Teachers make good use of the outdoor area to develop children's physical abilities. They also incorporate reading, writing and mathematical activities into this area. For example, children were seen purchasing fuel from a kiosk, and receiving a receipt before carefully driving off on their bikes.

- Leaders have ensured that there are good arrangements to ensure that children make a smooth transition into school. Parents are involved in the initial assessments that are made on children. They are also encouraged to share information about children's progress at home, so that staff have a full picture of each child's development.
- Children develop into happy and confident learners during their time in the early years. Classroom routines are well established, and children develop very good behaviour for learning. Children show good levels of concentration when working independently or with friends. They also listen carefully when working with adults and are keen to contribute to group discussions.
- Staff make regular checks on the children's progress in each area of learning. They maintain accurate records of children's achievements and ensure that they provide suitable activities that build upon children's prior learning.
- There are good relationships between staff and parents. The parents who spoke to inspectors said that their children are happy and safe in school. Staff also provide parents with regular opportunities to find out about how pupils are taught in school. Staff have recently led sessions for parents on the teaching of phonics and mathematics and this has given parents more confidence in supporting their children at home.

School details

Unique reference number	105553
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10052866

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Kennedy
Executive headteacher	Mylene Mcguire
Telephone number	01614 456079
Website	www.stcuthberts.manchester.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@st-cuthberts.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 July 2016

Information about this school

- St Cuthbert's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staffing changes. The executive headteacher started at the school in September 2017. The deputy headteacher took up his post in September 2018. Three newly qualified teachers started at the same time.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.

- There is a Nursery and one Reception class. Children attend full time.
- The school provides a Catholic education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. This Catholic education provision was judged 'outstanding' at the school's most recent section 48 inspection, which took place in February 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across the school in a wide range of subjects. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work in subjects across the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour information and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and several middle leaders. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils. They listened to pupils read and discussed behaviour and other aspects of school life. They also spoke with many other pupils informally.
- Inspectors spoke with parents on the playground before school. Inspectors also took account of the 41 responses to Parent View, the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 27 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Gaynor Rennie	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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