

Inspection of a good school: St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Eastend, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 9HZ

Inspection dates:

5 March 2020

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils that we spoke with are proud of their school. They enjoy learning. Most work hard to live up to the high expectations that staff have of them.

Pupils are punctual and most attend school on a regular basis. Relationships between pupils and staff are caring and supportive. Pupils are happy and feel safe. They know that staff are there to help them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils told us that they have many friends and that everyone gets on well with each other. We observed pupils playing happily together in the playground.

Most pupils behave well and move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Bullying happens occasionally. When it does, staff quickly sort things out.

Pupils contribute to decision-making within the school. They enjoy their roles as school councillors and librarians. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and the opportunities afforded to their children. They are proud of their children's achievements. Parents typically commented: 'I am so happy that my child attends this school. The leadership within the school is strong and every member of staff is approachable.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children achieve well in the early years and pupils' achievement by end of key stage 2 has improved, most notably in reading and writing. In 2019, instabilities in staffing adversely affected the end of key stage 1 published data. This issue has been resolved. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in key stage 1 are achieving well.

Leaders and governors know their school well. They have a clear understanding of what they need to do to make it even better. Significant changes have been made to the curriculum. Most subjects are well planned. Subject leaders make sure that pupils learn new content in a logical order. This will help pupils to know more and remember more.

Leaders recognise that the curriculum is less well developed in some subjects, such as art and design, design and technology and modern foreign languages. Plans in these subjects are scant and do not make it clear what pupils will learn as they move through the school. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan activities that build on what pupils know and can do. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They lack the knowledge and skills to lead their subject effectively.

Teaching pupils to become confident speakers and fluent readers is a central part of the school's work. In the early years, every opportunity is taken to promote language development. As children play, new and exciting words such as 'frothy' and 'cappuccino' are introduced to develop and extend their vocabulary. Well-trained staff teach phonics right from the start. Pupils respond well to the fun and engaging activities that teachers plan. Staff make sure that pupils read books that are matched to the sounds they have learned. They act quickly if pupils need extra help to catch up.

We listened to pupils read. Younger pupils read with increasing fluency. They make good use of their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Older pupils show a real love of reading. They talked to us enthusiastically about the work of their favourite authors, such as J.K. Rowling, Roald Dahl and Vashti Hardy. However, more could be done to raise the profile of reading around the school. In addition, pupils do not have enough access to books which deepen their learning in subjects such as history and geography.

Leaders are designing a more systematic approach to the planning of mathematics and this is developing well. Children in the early years can count to 20 and beyond, and add numbers to 10. Teachers make good use of assessment to plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 could make links between calculating percentages and earlier work in fractions and decimals.

Pupils are proud of their achievements. They talked to us about their learning in a range of subjects. Most pupils are keen to learn and this is reflected in their behaviour in class.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. They learn alongside their peers. Teachers are well trained and adapt their lessons and resources to ensure that the specific needs of these pupils are met.

Pupils access a wide range of trips and after-school clubs to broaden their experiences and develop their life skills. The school also pays due regard to pupils' physical and mental health.

Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high. They appreciate the care leaders take to ensure that, as far as possible, they have a good work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is rooted in everything that the school does. Staff are well trained and have a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They have a clear understanding of procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Vulnerable families are well supported by the school and other agencies. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet well planned and sequenced in some subjects. Leaders have taken action to address this issue. It is for this reason that Ofsted's transition arrangements were applied to confirm that pupils benefit from a good education. In some subjects, such as art and design, design and technology and modern foreign languages, pupils' learning is not as well sequenced as it could be. Consequently, teachers are unable to plan activities that build securely on what pupils know and can do. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans provide enough detail. Leaders should also ensure that subjects leaders are well trained to lead their area of responsibility. This will enable pupils to know more and remember more in all subjects.
- Pupils have access to a good range of high-quality reading books. However, they do not have enough opportunities to access reading materials which strengthen their understanding within as wide a range of subjects as possible. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have more access to a broader range of texts to deepen their knowledge and understanding of subjects in the curriculum.
- Although improvements have been made, the learning environment across the school does not promote a real love of reading. Leaders should ensure that reading is given a higher profile around the school. This will encourage pupils to take an even greater interest in becoming avid readers.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 10–11 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	112310
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10135160
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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clare Donohue
Headteacher	Paula Holden
Website	http://www.stcuthbertswigton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was not present during this inspection. The deputy headteacher is currently in charge of the school.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Lancaster, in April 2015.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, staff and pupils.
- We also met with several governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with two representatives from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was reviewed. This included the school improvement plan and published information about pupils' performance.
- We met with the designated safeguarding leader to check the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and processes. We also checked the single central record and talked to staff to assess their understanding of safeguarding procedures in the school.

- We did deep dives into reading, mathematics, art and design. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at break, lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- We spoke to parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- We considered the nine responses from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We also read all the free-text responses from parents. We considered the 36 responses from pupils and the 11 responses from staff to Ofsted's online pupil and staff questionnaires. Due consideration was also given to the school's own most recent questionnaire to parents.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Her Majesty's Inspector

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