

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Windermere

Prince's Road, Princes Road, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 2DD

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Lucy Bone. This school is part of Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jacky Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Murray.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy the array of outdoor experiences made possible by the school's location. Pupils told inspectors that they relish taking part in water sports on the nearby lake as well as learning in the woodland area.

Pupils behave well and they are respectful of one another. They think of others and generously support those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils develop strong personal qualities such as empathy and responsibility through a variety of experiences. For instance, pupils tend caringly to the school's pets. Older pupils enjoy serving lunch to children in the early years and helping them to enjoy sociable lunchtimes.

Pupils are keen to play their part in the school community. For example, they are proud to represent their classmates on the school council and to act as reading buddies and mini police. Pupils have a say in deciding what clubs will take place. All pupils can participate in these activities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils recognise the positive changes that the school has made to improve the curriculum. They appreciate the raised expectations that staff have of their achievement. Pupils, including those with SEND and children in the early years, achieve better than they did in most subjects in the past. However, pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be.

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

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School is on a rapid journey of improvement. The school, in close partnership with the trust and the local governing body, has acted with considerable gusto to address the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. Overall, the school's curriculum has been redesigned so that it is increasingly ambitious for all pupils. This means that children in the early years are developing their knowledge across all areas of learning and that older pupils are studying the full range of national curriculum subjects.

In most subjects, the school has identified the broad content that should be taught in each unit of work. However, it has not fully defined the essential knowledge that pupils should learn in different year groups within the mixed-age classes. This means that pupils do not build up their knowledge across all subjects systematically as they progress from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Consequently, they do not achieve consistently well across a range of subjects.

The school is in the early stages of implementing the revised curriculums. Even so, teachers have embraced the expectations of the new curriculum. They explain new concepts clearly and check closely on pupils' learning to make sure that they understand what is being taught. Teachers are increasingly alert to pupils' different needs. They identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND with increased

confidence and assurance. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to fully access the same curriculum as their classmates.

The school's approach to teaching reading has improved considerably. Reading is a priority within the curriculum. In the main, staff ensure that high-quality texts link well to the different topics that pupils study. Pupils said that they enjoy reading and listening to their teachers read to them regularly. Pupils spoke about a range of authors with enthusiasm, including famous writers from the locality.

Staff across the school have benefited from external support, which has enhanced the way that they teach children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to read. Staff deliver the phonics programme with fidelity. This has improved how quickly pupils learn to read, including pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Although the reading curriculum has been strengthened, some pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge owing to inconsistencies in how the phonics programme was previously delivered. However, the school has taken decisive action to identify and address these gaps. Pupils who have fallen behind in the phonics programme benefit from well-tailored support to catch up.

Alongside the implementation of the revised curriculum, the school has introduced a range of approaches to ensure that pupils try their best during lessons. Pupils, including children in the early years, adhere to these strategies closely so that they make the most of the activities that teachers provide. They listen attentively to staff and move seamlessly from one activity to another.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils understand what it means to have healthy relationships. They spoke with respect and maturity about the differences between people. Pupils are well prepared to grow up in a diverse and modern Britain.

The school has benefited from the unstinting and well-focused support of trustees and the local governing body. This has led to a marked increase in leadership capacity. Even so, some of the school's systems to check on the quality and impact of its work are in their infancy. For example, the school does not have sufficient oversight of the quality of education that pupils receive or emerging patterns in some pupils' behaviour. In addition, while the school has introduced strategies to improve pupils' rates of attendance, it has not analysed how effective these strategies are. Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

The pace of curriculum improvement has increased the demands placed on staff. Despite this, staff appreciate the support given to them to manage their workloads. Staff morale is high. They are universally proud to belong to 'team Cuthbert'. Parents and carers overwhelmingly echo this sense of pride. They trust all involved with the school to tackle the remaining weaknesses in pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, including in the early years, the school is still determining the order in which essential knowledge should be taught within the mixed-age classes. This hinders how well pupils build their knowledge as they move through year groups. The school should ensure that staff know what learning to focus on in different year groups so that children and pupils are well prepared for subsequent learning.
- Some of the school's systems for checking the quality and impact of its work are embryonic. This includes systems relating to monitoring pupils' attendance and behaviour, as well as evaluating the quality of the curriculum. As a result, the school, including those responsible for governance, does not have sufficient oversight of key aspects of its work. The school should strengthen its understanding of what is going well and what still needs to improve.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148698
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10300762
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Murray
CEO of trust	Jacky Kennedy
Headteacher	Lucy Bone
Website	www.st-cuthberts-windermere.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 16 February and 4 May 2023, under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A large proportion of pupils at this school have lived in other countries before they began at the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A new early years and key stage 1 leader joined the school in September 2023. At the same time, a special educational needs coordinator from within the trust began working at this school.
- The school is part of the Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is also part of the Diocese of Lancaster. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2022. Its next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place in 2026.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This is the second inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with trustees, including the chair of the trust and the CEO. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. The inspectors considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors looked closely at some curriculum subjects. These included early reading, mathematics, science and history. This involved discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visits to lessons and a review of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to different groups of pupils to gather their views of behaviour, safety and learning. They also visited the playground, lunch hall and breakfast club to observe pupils' behaviour outside of the classroom.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of governor meetings and school improvement plans.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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