



St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119615
LEA Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 280612
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Alban's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Darwen
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, BB3 0HY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 701336
Number on roll	204	Fax number	01254 761621
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Gibson
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2004	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Grime

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors over a period of two days.

Description of the school

This is an Anglican Voluntary Aided primary school serving an urban area of Darwen in Lancashire. The attainment of most children when they start school in reception is below average. In Key Stage 2, a high percentage of children have statements of special educational needs; most of them are educated in the special educational resourced facility. The proportion of children joining school at times other than normal is above average in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Cuthbert's has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was underachieving. It is now satisfactory. This matches its own evaluation. Good provision in the reception classes gives children a good start to school; they achieve well from a low starting point. In Key Stages 1 and 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are average and achievement is satisfactory. Children in the special educational resourced facility achieve very well; this provision is outstanding. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the Foundation Stage and upper Key Stage 2. Teaching assistants do a good job supporting all children, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is satisfactory, but not planned well enough to make lessons relevant to children's lives or to enable them to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects. Children behave well, have good attitudes and enjoy learning, but often lack confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. This reduces achievement in science and mathematics. Children are very well cared for and feel safe and secure. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by an effective deputy, provides good leadership but more needs to be done to involve all staff in monitoring standards of teaching and learning in many subjects. Given the current leadership, the school has a good capacity to continue improving in the future. It gives satisfactory value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching overall, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that children take more responsibility for their own learning, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of curriculum planning so that lessons are more relevant to children's lives.
- Increase opportunities for children to apply the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are both satisfactory. From a below average starting point, children in reception make good progress. The majority reach the standards expected for their age by the end of reception. In 2005, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average. Inspection evidence shows that standards are now higher and are broadly in line with expectations. In Key Stage 2, standards in 2005 were better than they have been for some years except in English. Assessment data shows that children achieved satisfactorily in comparison to their performance at Year 2. A sharp rise is currently occurring in the proportion of children exceeding expectations for their age in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 are now average and

assessment data shows that they are set to rise in future. Children could do better, however, in using literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum and in performing scientific and mathematical investigations. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Children in the special educational resources facility benefit from outstanding teaching and achieve very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The good personal skills developed in the reception class set the foundation for good behaviour throughout the school. School is popular, which is one reason for above average attendance rates. Children like learning, particularly when high expectations are set for them to work and think for themselves. There are, however, too few opportunities to be independent. This reduces achievement in aspects of mathematics and science. Pupils thrive on the rewards they are given for working hard and treating others well. This reflects the good relationships throughout the school. The vast majority of parents feel that behaviour is good. Their views are borne out by the inspection. Children are polite, considerate and take pride in their work. On the rare occasions when aggressive behaviour occurs, children say that it is quickly dealt with. The way that many children tuck into the healthy lunches and drinks offered by the school, and the enthusiastic play outdoors, show that they know about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. Children's views are valued. The school council is an effective forum for children to influence the running of the school. Good links with local commerce and the parish successfully raise children's awareness of their local community. They have a sound understanding of other faiths but their knowledge of other cultures is relatively limited. Children are satisfactorily prepared for their economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 4, 5 and 6. The quality of teaching and learning in the special educational resources facility is outstanding and contributes to the rapid progress made by the children there. A significant contribution is made by teaching assistants to the quality of learning of all pupils across the school, but particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the last inspection, teachers have recognised the need to improve the quality of provision for the more able. As a result of training and the recruitment of good quality staff, planning has improved and better use of assessment ensures that children of all abilities are being stretched. This is reflected in rising standards across the school, but particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Most lessons are managed well and good use of assessment

enables work to be matched to children's needs. There is some reluctance in some classes to give children enough scope to write on their own and solve problems in science and mathematics. This holds back achievement at times. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, but not enough attention is given to applying the basic skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Interactive whiteboards in every class adds to the quality of teaching of ICT but despite this, children are not given enough time to use computers to support learning in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. The needs of all children are met, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able. A good Foundation Stage curriculum gives children a good start to school life. In Key Stages 1 and 2, good planning for literacy and numeracy successfully raises standards but in other subjects, planning lacks imagination and lessons often lack relevance to children's lives. The school recognises this weakness. It has started to make links between subjects, for example between design and technology and English. However, at present, the quality of planning for developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in all subjects is unsatisfactory. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is effective in preparing children to live safely and healthily. Children's learning and personal development benefit from a good range of after school clubs and enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported in a happy and friendly environment. Child protection procedures and all other checks to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are firmly in place. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively by good quality teaching assistants, using high quality individual education plans to guide the children's development. The quality of care, guidance and support for the emotionally vulnerable is outstanding. This contributes greatly to the very good progress made by children in the special educational resourced facility. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessment systems are much improved since the last inspection. This is particularly the case in literacy and numeracy but the information gathered is not consistently used in all classes to involve children in identifying what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good leadership by the headteacher and her deputy have successfully harnessed the skills of the staff to remove underachievement. A culture is being created whereby the value of self-evaluation is accepted and there is a willingness amongst staff to work with support agencies, such

as the local authority, in order to raise standards. The senior leadership team has established good systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness. These include interpreting assessment data, and considering the views of staff, pupils and parents. Not all staff, however, are involved enough in monitoring the standards of teaching and learning in all subjects. As a result, some targets in the school improvement plan are not specific enough. Good management of provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those in the Foundation Stage, contributes to the good progress of children. The management of the provision for children in the special educational resourced facility is outstanding. The governing body fulfils all requirements. Under the good leadership of its chair, it plays a vital part in improving the school. The school is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve in future.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School

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09 February 2006

Dear Children

It was a pleasure to spend some time at your school. We enjoyed talking with you, sharing lunch and, at times, outdoor play. We are pleased with the way you work hard in lessons and try your best to present your work neatly in your books. You clearly enjoy learning and like coming to school. You behave well and it is good to see the way you work together and listen to the advice of adults.

We think the school is getting better. This is because of the dedication and efforts of your headteacher and her team of teachers and support assistants. We have asked them to make your lessons more exciting by making better links between subjects. This is so that lessons mean more to you. You are all very sensible and behave safely at all times, but we feel that at times, you could do more for yourself. We have asked the school to give you more chances to do this in lessons such as mathematics and science. You write very nicely, and seem to understand mathematics, science and computers quite well. It would be helpful though, if you could use your skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to help your learning in all subjects.

Our lasting memory is the way everyone at St Cuthbert's gets on. It is a very caring place and one where you should all do well if you try hard, work with your teachers and do your homework. We wish you luck for your future.

Yours faithfully

David Byrne and Doreen Davenport

Your inspectors