



# St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided First School, Berwick

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122309  
**LEA** Northumberland  
**Inspection number** 281228  
**Inspection dates** 15 June 2006 to 16 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Kathleen McArthur

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Prince Edward Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Tweedmouth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9		Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 307785
<b>Number on roll</b>	109	<b>Fax number</b>	01289 331717
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Mark Napier
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bernadette Fisher

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15 June 2006 - 16 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281228
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average first school situated near the coast in Tweedmouth. Children's attainment when they start school is a little below that typical for their age. The number eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The great majority of children are of White British heritage. A few children speak English in addition to their home language.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and the No Smoking Award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory; they reach broadly average standards and make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points, although standards in writing are lower. The Early Years unit gives children a sound, secure start to their time in school. They make good progress in their personal development and satisfactory progress in all other areas and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most are working within the expected learning goals.

Parents have very positive opinions of the school and one typical comment was, "My daughter loves school, loves her teacher and loves to learn". Children said "There's a lot of kind people in the school." Consequently, they are happy and behave well, have good attitudes and enjoy school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants support all pupils well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those who speak English as their second language make good progress in learning English because they are well supported. The good curriculum is enriched well. All pupils are well cared for and feel safe in school. The newly extended assessment systems have not been in place long enough to increase pupils' rate of progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Good leadership from the headteacher has ensured satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, despite a long period of major staffing difficulties and her almost full-time teaching load. The school acknowledges the need to develop subject leadership. Value for money is satisfactory. The school's evaluation of its own performance largely matches the inspection findings. Some evaluations were optimistic but demonstrate the will to improve. Given the current leadership, there is good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly spelling and the way work is presented.
- Ensure the assessment systems give pupils, particularly higher attainers, a clearer picture of what they need to do to improve their work so they make more rapid progress.
- Further develop the staff team to enable them to lead subjects effectively.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Most children start school with standards a little lower than those typical for their age, particularly in the vital areas of personal development and language. Few are fluent or confident speakers. Through the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in personal development and satisfactory progress in all other areas. Most are working within the expected learning goals by the end of Reception year. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continue to make satisfactory progress throughout the school and

almost all meet their targets. Those who speak English as a second language make good progress in learning English because they are well supported.

Standards vary from year to year because the year groups are small, and have been a little below national averages over time, particularly in writing. This reflects the lower level of language skills when children start school. Standards in reading are better. Actions for improvement by the school are proving successful; Key Stage 1 results were better in 2006 and standards are broadly what are expected for pupils this age. Pupils met their targets and some exceeded them. Some pupils attained the higher level, Level 3, in reading. Previous staffing difficulties hindered the progress of pupils now in Key Stage 2 and standards have been a little below average. Standards this year are broadly in line with national expectations. The work in pupils' books shows standards are improving, both in mathematics and writing. Pupils use a wide variety of interesting words in their writing, but do not spell accurately or present their work neatly enough.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development is good. Relationships are good, so the pupils are happy and enjoy learning. One child said 'There are a lot of friendly people in the school' which is very evident when the 'buddies' help younger children at playtimes. Pupils know their views are listened to and are confident that any problems are quickly sorted out. Attendance is just below average, due to some extended holidays which hinder pupils' progress. Pupils know how to be safe. The Healthy Schools and No Smoking awards show a firm commitment to health education. Pupils clearly know the importance of a healthy diet and expect the staff to eat healthily too. They have plenty of outdoor physical activities and really appreciate the new 'woodland trail' in the grounds. School councillors take their role of working for the school community very seriously and say, 'We try to improve things for everyone'. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education and life outside school through the satisfactory development of basic skills.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Current interest in the World Cup has been successfully used to help pupils learn about other countries and cultures.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Pupils report that their teachers work hard to make sure lessons are interesting. Good relationships ensure pupils are willing to learn and, consequently, the great majority meet their targets. A wide range of resources and stimulating questions makes lessons lively. Lessons are usually well planned, but occasionally lack detail for different groups of learners. Staff aim to challenge the more able pupils but, as yet, few reach higher

levels. They deploy the skilled teaching assistants well to support different groups of learners, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English. The recently extended assessment systems aim to help pupils take some responsibility for their own learning so they know what to do to improve their work. However, they have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on increasing pupils' progress. Teachers do not always emphasise the importance of correct spelling or give pupils enough guidance about how to present their written work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The broad and balanced curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily, although handwriting and spelling could be improved. Pupils use these skills in other subjects, for example, making measurements in science and writing about friendship in religious education. Appropriate individual learning plans and skilled support ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language progress as well as their peers. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) competently, and extend these skills in other subjects, such as drawing colourful pictures in art. There are computers specially designed for younger children in the Early Years Unit, where the children experience a good range of practical and enjoyable learning activities. The extensive outdoor area is used well. The school enriches learning activities well with French lessons, many visits, visitors, specialist sports teachers and participation in local and parish events. Pupils enjoy attending the clubs, which include sewing and ICT.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good level of care for the pupils. Parents feel their children are well looked after and say that staff are happy to take all the time needed to help them. Good relationships between parents and school ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. They know they can approach any adult if they need help, and children look after each other well, for example, as playground 'buddies'. Child protection training for all staff is up to date, risk assessments are regularly reviewed and all health and safety procedures are fully implemented. The assessment systems provide accurate academic information to set realistic targets and track progress. The school recognises that more work needs to be done to give pupils a better understanding of what they are aiming for and how to improve their work in order to help them progress faster.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Parents and their children have very positive views of the school. The leadership of the headteacher is good. In spite

of an almost full-time teaching commitment, she successfully led the school through a long period of staffing difficulties and created a team of staff and governors who share her vision for improvement. Standards are now rising, the Early Years unit is fully established and building refurbishments completed. The senior teacher provides able support and manages the learning needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. Other members of staff are just beginning to develop their management roles as subject leaders to monitor standards of teaching and learning and contribute to overall school improvement.

Accurate analysis of what the school needs to do to improve and outcomes of the monitoring of teaching form the basis for improvement planning and targets for staff development and performance management. The budget is carefully managed to support this and to ensure that the school is well resourced for learning. The school makes good use of external support and links with local schools. Equality of opportunity is promoted well.

Governance is satisfactory and the governing body is led well. Governors visit school to monitor the improvement plan, but their input to development planning has been limited. Training has increased their skills to challenge and support the school more effectively.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been slowed by the school's staffing difficulties, but is satisfactory overall. All areas for development have been addressed. The leadership of the headteacher combined with the strong partnership between staff, governors and parents mean there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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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To the pupils of:

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided First School

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Northumberland

TD15 2EX

18 June 2006

Dear Pupils

You will remember that I visited your school last week. I really enjoyed my visit because everyone made me very welcome. You were all so friendly and polite, and helped me to find out lots of good things about your school.

Everyone was really proud of the new 'woodland trail' and you were all keen to use it. I was pleased to see that you help each other so much and take care of younger ones by being 'buddies'. The school council work hard to make things better for everyone, and I know you all try to raise funds for different charities.

I am glad that everyone tries their best to behave well and work hard, and that you enjoy learning so much. The staff look after you well, and work hard to give you lots of interesting things to do.

I know you enjoy going out on visits and meeting different visitors. You like the different clubs, and I was really impressed by the children in the sewing club, who were taking great care so all their tiny stitches were very neat.

The teachers are going to help you improve your spelling and handwriting to make your writing better. They are also going to make sure you know what you have to do to make all your work better so you make faster progress. They will make sure you all do really well in every subject.

You can help the staff and your parents by making sure you always work hard, keep behaving well and being kind to each other.

Thank you again for making my visit so enjoyable and good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Kathleen McArthur (Mrs)

Lead inspector