

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108506
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	324785
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Bennett

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	254
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Hastie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nick Conway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Balmain Road North Kenton Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 3QR

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324785

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Cuthbert's Primary School is slightly larger than average. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and speaking English as an additional language are below average and the proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average overall, but varies considerably between classes. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and a Reception class. A privately run playgroup and after-school club also operate on the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that has many outstanding features. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is central to its success. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the strong Christian ethos which underpins the aims and values of the school and the exceptional care and support which every pupil receives. One parent, who represents the views of many wrote, 'This is a happy school, full of laughter. Pupils are caring and thoughtful.'

From starting points in the Nursery that are below those typical for their age, all pupils make good progress and achieve well. The standards attained by Year 2 are broadly average and by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because staff are quick to identify their individual needs and work very effectively with parents and other agencies to ensure that they receive appropriate support.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Every pupil is valued and consequently they grow into confident individuals, who show respect to others and compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a detailed understanding of how to keep safe and know they have trusted adults to whom they can turn for help. They have many opportunities to take a full and active part in the life of the school and parish community. Pupils engage enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities and understand the contribution this makes to healthy living. They enjoy their learning and have high aspirations for their futures. The personal and academic skills they acquire prepare them exceptionally well for future citizenship.

Teaching is good with a number of outstanding features. Pupils understand what is expected of them because instructions are clear and questioning is used very effectively to challenge their thinking. Assessment is used well to plan lessons which build consistently on prior learning and marking gives a very clear indication of what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, a lack of opportunity for pupils to be actively involved in lessons slows the pace of learning.

The curriculum is outstanding and contributes to pupils' good learning and first-rate personal development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors which contribute well to their academic and personal development and they are keen to take part in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Dramatic performances such as 'Oliver' and 'Joseph' are warmly and enthusiastically received by members of the school and wider community.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides an outstanding role model ensuring that the Christian values remain central to every aspect of school life. He is well supported by a staff team who are committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves as well as they can. All staff are involved in aspects of school self-evaluation which leads to swift and effective action to improve provision. However, the role of middle leaders in evaluating the impact on outcomes for pupils is not fully developed. Governors share a clear vision for the school and contribute well to its work. The effective recent action in improving standards and achievement show that the school has good capacity to build further on its successes.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. From starting points that are below those typical for their age on entry to Nursery, children make good progress and achieve well, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they enter Year 1, children have attained standards that are broadly average, although their skills in writing remain below those expected.

Through positive relationships and sensitive support, children grow in confidence and independence. They learn to respect each other and work together as they explore the world around them. Children enjoy playing indoors and out, and have positive attitudes to their learning. They generally use their time purposefully; however, their involvement in some activities is less productive particularly when resources or tasks provide insufficient challenge. Children make good progress in their speaking and listening skills because adults provide good role models and provide well planned activities for those who require additional help. Opportunities for children to write are improving but activities do not always build well on children's skills therefore the pace of learning slows in this aspect of development.

Systems for safeguarding children are rigorously implemented and children have trusted adults who care for them well. Leadership and management are good. Opportunities for exploration outdoors have recently improved but systems for evaluating the impact on children's learning are not yet fully embedded.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating learning.
- Ensure that activities consistently challenge and extend children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage especially in writing.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From starting points that are below those typical for their age when they enter Nursery, pupils from all backgrounds make good progress. The published data from Key Stage 1 assessments over recent years has shown a decline in standards. Action taken by school leaders has had a positive impact on provision and as a result, evidence seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are now making good progress. Standards are broadly average and rising with an increase in the number of pupils reaching above average levels. Progress is especially good in writing which was lower than other aspects as pupils started in Year 1 and standards are now similar to other subjects.

Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 because senior leaders rigorously track pupils' progress and teaching consistently builds well on prior learning. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their overall standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The results of national tests reflect these standards although vary from year-to-year depending on the abilities of the pupils involved. Often there are significant proportions of pupils reaching above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and they are supported well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school has a very strong spiritual influence on its pupils and the Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life. Pupils show respect towards others and willingly raise money for local and global charities. Pupils feel safe in school because behaviour is exemplary and trusted adults are close at hand. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and it is not surprising attendance is above average. They comment, 'Teachers are great. They are here to help. It's not just the lessons we like, but all of the new things we learn.' Pupils are keen to take an active role in the daily life of the school, for example, by answering the telephone or taking care of younger pupils. They also relish the opportunities they have for physical education and sport and understand how important healthy food and exercise are to healthy living. Links with the parish community are very strong. This enhances pupils' feeling of belonging. In lessons, they are eager to collaborate with others. They listen carefully to instructions and show high levels of concentration and determination. The personal and academic skills that pupils acquire together with their personal aspirations for the future prepare them extremely well for their next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and teaching has a number of outstanding features. Explanations, demonstrations and instructions are very clear so pupils understand what is expected of them and teachers question pupils very effectively to consolidate and extend learning. Peer discussions encourage pupils to articulate their ideas and to use a range of new vocabulary. Teachers are both knowledgeable and extremely skilled at holding pupils' attention and teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to learning. Assessment is used well to plan lessons which build on prior skills, and activities often relate to real life experiences so that learning is meaningful. In a small minority of lessons which are otherwise satisfactory, pupils have too few opportunities to be actively involved and this slows the pace of learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum has a number of outstanding features. There is a strong emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school, which is beginning to raise standards especially in Key Stage 1. Grouping Key Stage 2 pupils of similar abilities in mathematics and English has helped teachers to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and ensure all achieve well. The school is making greater links between pupils' learning in different subjects. This is popular with pupils who say, 'learning means more to us this way'. Pupils enjoy taking part in performances such as 'Oliver' and 'Joseph', which contribute well to their personal development and actively participate in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Visits to places of local interest, including Holy Island, museums and local Roman remains are planned regularly and used to stimulate new learning programmes. Pupil participation in regular visits to outdoor residential centres, adds an extra dimension to the physical education curriculum and to pupils' personal development. One pupil commented, 'The best thing about Kielder was facing my fears at the waterfall.'

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The level of pastoral, welfare and emotional support is exceptional because staff know pupils well and use their very strong partnerships with outside agencies to ensure that extra help is available to all those who need it. This enables all pupils to make good progress particularly in their basic skills and their personal development. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds are able to take a full part in every aspect of school life including access to the rich and varied curriculum. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and very good attention is paid to securing their health and safety. Pupils say locked gates and doors keep them safe and good supervision arrangements make them feel well looked after. The marking of work is extremely supportive and includes clear comments which ensure pupils understand what they have done well and how they can further improve. This ensures that pupils make good progress towards challenging targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership for this highly inclusive school. They are supported well by a team of staff who are committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all pupils. The Christian ethos is central to the work of the school and the headteacher works relentlessly to ensure that the unique gifts and talents of every child are recognised and celebrated. The progress of all pupils is rigorously monitored and appropriate support is put swiftly into place to ensure that challenging targets are met. These aspects of the school's work are valued highly by parents and contribute well to the promotion of a cohesive community.

School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurately identifies strengths and priorities for further improvement. Action taken by senior leaders is timely and highly effective, which can be seen in the recent improvements in standards and achievement. Good evaluation of provision has provided an accurate picture of how the school is making a good contribution to community cohesion. As a result, the school is taking effective action within the local communities and expanding its international links. Leaders at all levels contribute to school improvement although the role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating learning has yet to be fully developed. As a result, some inconsistencies exist, particularly in teaching and learning.

Governance is good. Resources, including staff are deployed extremely effectively to enhance pupils' learning and development. Governors have a shared vision for the school and contribute well to its work.



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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3QR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. You told us that you enjoyed school and we can understand why. We thought your school was good and had many strengths. We were particularly impressed by the following things.

- The good progress that you are making in lessons. We think this is partly due to your good attendance and also because you listen carefully to your teachers and try hard. Well done and keep up the good work!
- Your exemplary behaviour in lessons and around school and the way in which you take responsibility for helping others
- The interesting lessons that teachers plan and the exciting range of visits and visitors that are organised. Also the opportunities that the youngest children have for play and learning indoors and out.
- The ways in which adults care for you and help you to stay safe
- The ways in which your headteacher and deputy headteacher work together to make your learning better and better.

We have identified two things to make your school even more successful. Firstly, it would be good if all of the adults in school were even more involved with your headteacher to find ways to help your learning. Secondly, we have asked the teachers who work with the youngest children to plan activities which will extend their skills especially in writing.

Many people talked to us about the wonderful performances you produce such as 'Oliver' and 'Joseph' and how much everyone enjoyed them. Also, how involved many of you are in your church and how important this is to the parish.

We sincerely hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and that your aspirations for the future are realised.

Yours faithfully

Janet Bennett

Lead inspector