

# St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111692
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Inspection number</b>	325432
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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)	305
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 Vincent Magee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Mary Frain
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 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>	Stratford Road Hartlepool TS25 5AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 275040
<b>Fax number</b>	01429 275450

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average-sized primary school serves the parish of St Cuthbert, which includes an area of social disadvantage. The Early Years Foundation Stage offers part-time nursery places for children over three years of age and a Reception class. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age groups with some setting in place for English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is average. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. Around 5% have European heritage and most of these are learning English as an additional language. The school also caters for Traveller children. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and around 4% of these have additional funding to meet their needs. Extended facilities run by the school include a breakfast club and after-school care.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary is a good school which provides good value for money. Outstanding features include pupils' personal development and the care, support and guidance provided for them. Parents have confidence in the school and praise the 'friendly and approachable staff' and the good progress that their children make. Families appreciate the good childcare provided through the breakfast and after-school clubs and pupils say they enjoy the interesting range of activities on offer there. Excellent links with the church, other schools and agencies provide many benefits for pupils' personal and learning needs. For example, pupils take responsibility for leading the readings and prayers at Mass, both in school and church, and specialists from the local secondary school provide French lessons and sports coaching.

By the end of Year 6 standards are above average. From a below average starting point, achievement is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and both key stages. There are some variations, however, between subjects. The school is very effective in supporting pupils who have learning or emotional difficulties and/or disabilities and in boosting achievement for pupils who are not meeting their targets in English. The more able pupils do well because they have good challenges to stretch them. There have been good improvements in writing but some pupils in the middle ability band for mathematics are not doing quite as well as could be expected.

Teaching is good overall and there is some outstanding practice, especially in Years 5 and 6 and in English. Across the school, lessons challenge pupils' thinking and develop problem solving skills, providing good opportunities for them to be active, enthusiastic learners. However, expectations are not consistently high enough to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve their best in mathematics. The good curriculum is enhanced by a varied selection of visits and out-of-school clubs which inspires pupils and extends their experiences. Learning includes a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. Pupils are proud of their Healthy Schools Award that recognises the good work done to help them live safe and healthy lives. Many join the very successful 'walking bus' to and from school, enjoying both the exercise and company of their friends.

Personal development, including behaviour, is outstanding and supported by an excellent system of pastoral care. The school provides an extremely secure, nurturing environment and pupils say they enjoy learning. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. For example, the school council is involved in decision making and the Eco group is busy raising awareness of environmental issues, such as energy saving. Pupils leave the school as confident and mature individuals, with good academic skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides good, determined leadership and has implemented many improvements that have raised standards. This school is very successful in identifying and eliminating factors that might get in the way of learning. This is a major factor behind the good progress that pupils make and their excellent personal skills. The key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and there is good capacity for the school to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good quality care and support for children's well-being ensure that they have a smooth introduction to school life. Behaviour and personal skills are very good. Children's development on entry to the Nursery is below that which is typical for their age and a significant proportion have difficulty with speaking and listening skills. Overall, progress is good but it is better in the Reception class than in the Nursery. Children's knowledge and skills by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are average and meet expectations in all areas except early reading and working with numbers. Specialist speech and language sessions support pupils very well.

Children's progress is assessed constantly and tasks are planned effectively to build on developing knowledge and skills. Children have short, focused sessions with an adult where they learn new skills. In the Reception class, these are well balanced with free choice times where they consolidate their learning. However, the nursery children have fewer opportunities to choose their own activities and sometimes spend too long in adult-directed groups. This especially affects their opportunities to explore books and investigate numbers. Staff are well led by the coordinator and work effectively as a team. There have been good improvements to the learning areas with new resources and an extended outdoor classroom.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of free-choice activities in the Nursery linked to early reading and number activities to improve children's development further.
- Ensure consistent, good challenge for the middle ability groups in mathematics to raise standards further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are higher than average. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average for most areas but slightly lower in early reading and in working with numbers. The teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2008 were unusual for the school and below average; however, all pupils made good progress from their starting points and some exceeded their teachers' expectations. Assessments show that standards for the current Year 2 are average. Achievement is good overall but weaker for some pupils in the middle ability group in mathematics. An increased emphasis on learning sounds and letters has led to good improvements in pupils' reading.

Progress across Key Stage 2 is good overall and it is sometimes outstanding in Years 5 and 6. Using frequent assessments of pupils' progress, teachers identify and support pupils who are falling short of their expected target. The system works very well in English. The 2008 targets for mathematics, however, were not met at the higher level because some pupils at the top end of the middle ability group did not make the expected progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language have good support and make good progress. A focus on boys' learning has helped to improve their progress and they achieve as well as the girls. The Traveller children are happily settled in school and make equal progress to their peers.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Very close links with the church and an excellent programme for personal and social education contribute strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being and their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' excellent awareness of global citizenship is recognised by a national award. Across the school, pupils enjoy learning, have a strong work ethic and are very confident in their own abilities. They say that any rare incident of bullying is dealt with swiftly and that they feel very safe. Pupils value the many rewards on offer for good conduct, attendance, effort or thoughtful actions. As a result, behaviour is exemplary for the majority and pupils are very considerate of each other. Most pupils have good attendance and the school does everything it can to discourage unnecessary absences.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living and staying safe. They enjoy cooking sessions and take part in an excellent range of sports clubs. Pupils are exceptionally well informed about potential dangers. For example, a recent project about alcohol misuse had a powerful impact on their understanding. Pupils play an important part in decision making through their elected school council. They engage eagerly in fundraising projects and are keen to take responsibility for jobs around school. The Eco group, for example, organise a 'healthy tuck shop', stocked with Fair Trade goods, which is a great success. These factors, together with good standards, prepare pupils well for their future education and citizenship.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching has a good impact on learning but there are variations. It is often excellent for pupils in Years 5 and 6 but sometimes satisfactory, especially in mathematics. In most lessons tasks are well planned to build on previous learning and promote good progress. Work in mathematics books, however, shows that there are occasions, when the work does not always stretch the middle ability groups to the full. On the other hand, pupils who have learning or emotional difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported and the most able generally have good challenge. Pupils are taught to critically evaluate their own work which promotes good skills of independent learning, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teaching assistants provide expert support for groups or individuals to meet specific needs or for those learning English as an additional language; this leads to their rapid progress.

The school works hard to provide an active approach to learning and to find topics and books to interest both boys and girls. Lessons therefore cater for pupils' different learning styles and motivate them successfully. The marking of writing is helpful in highlighting what is good and advising pupils how they can improve their work. A similar system is being developed in mathematics.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well planned to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes. It includes opportunities for pupils to extend their English, mathematical and computer skills and includes French lessons. A good emphasis on creative work, such as music, helps to develop pupils' talents. A strength of the curriculum lies in the intervention groups that are very successful in

catering for both emotional and learning needs. An excellent partnership with the local secondary school enhances learning very well and provides additional opportunities, for example, with drama workshops, sport and arts projects.

A wealth of additional experiences are provided through visits and visitors which broaden pupils' horizons. For example, the residential visit provides opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills and use their initiative. There is a good variety of after-school clubs which are very popular and include art and craft sessions and a steel band.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Parents praise the 'family atmosphere' in school and the excellent relationships. Close attention is given to care, health and safety issues, both in school time and the extended care facilities. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements fully. Staff go to exceptional lengths to find specialist help and resources where a need is identified. As a result, pupils are able to cope with the conventions of the classroom and take full advantage of all that the school offers. Staff are diligent, and supervision at break and lunchtime is very good. Pupils say there is always an adult on hand if they have any worries.

Regular assessments and the tracking of learning are well established and provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. As a result, additional help and guidance are targeted effectively. Individual guidance for pupils is good, especially in English. Target sheets provide a goal to aim for and clearly illustrate what needs improving.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and clearly focused on achieving high standards. The headteacher provides good leadership. She is held in very high regard by the governors, parents and pupils and is constantly driving the school forwards. Managers check that different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, have equal opportunities. Subject managers contribute effectively to the school's accurate evaluation of its performance. They keep a close eye on achievement and standards and use the information collected to plan school development. Some work has begun to ensure better consistency in teaching but it has not yet had a full impact. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors have an efficient committee structure and a secure overview of standards and achievement. Members of the governing body bring a good deal of expertise and experience to management. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is outstanding. Involvement in local projects and combined school-church events promote a strong sense of citizenship among pupils on a local, national and global level. The school plans and evaluates its provision effectively and is developing further global links. The school reaches out to its families and is very successful in providing workshops and information for parents so they are able to support their children at home.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</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>	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**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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	2

## 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?	2
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 5AJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time and appreciated all the help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

St Cuthbert's is a good school. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour. You get on extremely well together and take very good care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your school. Your council members ensure that your views are known and your Eco group is doing a good job. We especially liked the living water garden that some of you have designed. We think your fundraising work shows that you are growing into thoughtful citizens and that you care about those who are less fortunate in the world.

The school is a safe and happy place. You said things like, 'teachers always give you a helping hand' and 'they make learning fun'. Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school and especially like all the interesting things you do out of lesson time. They say you are growing into confident young people and we agree.

You are keen to learn, work hard and are making good progress. I think that some of you in the Nursery class would benefit from having more chances to choose your own activities. I have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to work on your early reading and number skills. In Years 1 to 6 you have worked hard to improve your writing. Well done! Most of you also make good progress in your mathematics work but some could do better still. I have asked your teachers to make sure that all of you always have work that challenges you.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector