

St Cuthberts Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 108616 |
| Local Authority | North Tyneside |
| Inspection number | 337112 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Irene Cochrane |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 220 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs K O'Neil |
| Headteacher | Mr Alan Egdell |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Lovaine Place North Shields Tyne and Wear NE29 0BU |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observed eight teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed pupils at work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' progress, the safeguarding procedures, the school improvement plan, pupils' books, and records of the school's review. They also considered 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school for all pupil groups
- provision and progress in mathematics
- provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of leadership in monitoring and evaluating the progress of all pupil groups.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school with a stable population. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average and most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds a number of awards, including Artsmark Silver and the International Schools Award. It is a Creative Partnership Change School and has a Connecting Classrooms Partnership. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery and one Reception class. Since the last inspection, the appointment of the executive headteacher working in partnership with St Bernadette's RC Primary School in Wallsend has become permanent. The St Cuthbert's Out of School Club, which offers morning and after-school childcare and is managed privately, is the subject of a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and has improved its provision since the last inspection. Particular strengths lie in the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the high quality care and support provided for pupils. Parents are strongly supportive of the school. One parent commented, 'My child is happy, thriving and confident and I know that as well as being educated well, my child is well cared for.' The strong Christian ethos permeates throughout the school providing a warm and welcoming environment. The headteacher has worked consistently with staff and governors to improve opportunities for all pupils to good effect. His hard work to strengthen links with other schools and agencies has paid dividends in providing sustained enriched and interesting opportunities for pupils.

Children start school in the Nursery at a level that is below and often well below that which is typical for their age, particularly in communication and literacy skills. Over the last three years an increasing number enter with poorly developed language skills. As a result there is a strong focus on letters and sounds in the Nursery and Reception classes, which is having a positive impact on children's progress. By the time they leave Reception, although attainment is below average overall, children make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average and trends over the last three years show that pupils make good progress. The very small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made satisfactory progress. Good teaching together with an enriched curriculum engages and motivates pupils effectively. In a minority of lessons, pupils are not always sure of what to do to improve their work and teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils of the next steps in their learning.

The role of senior leaders has improved since the last inspection and is now good. They make a positive contribution to the improvements in the school and share the headteacher's vision for school improvement. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and this has meant that standards of attainment have been sustained by the end of Year 6. The school is making good use of assessment information to provide additional support where it is needed and this is helping to improve the progress of all groups. It does not however, fully evaluate the impact of initiatives to make sure they have full effect on pupils' progress, including those with special educational and/or disabilities.

Achievement is good, staff and governors are committed to school improvement and safeguarding is a high priority, which demonstrates that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work is rigorous and consistent in all classes
 - ensuring pupils know how they can improve their work.
- Make better use of the school's monitoring information to evaluate the impact of all improvements, including the interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy their learning and have very good attitudes to work. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their excellent attendance and exemplary behaviour. The school community is cohesive and harmonious. As one pupil said, 'St Cuthbert's is like a flower that blooms great joy.' Pupils work sensibly on their own and cooperate well with others in group work. They are respectful of others' opinions.

In 2009, standards of attainment were slightly above average at the end of Key Stage 1 with strengths in reading. Most improvement was in mathematics when compared to the previous year. Pupils attained average standards by the end of Year 6, with above average attainment in science. Progress for this cohort was satisfactory. The small minority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made less progress by Year 6 and attainment was variable. The school's interventions enabled the vast majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve threshold targets. During the inspection, observations confirmed differentiated activities were planned in all lessons to meet the needs of all pupil groups. Additional support sessions were also provided in English and mathematics for pupils identified on the school's pupil progress tracking system at risk of underachievement.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise through activities such as games and gymnastics. This is also reflected in their keen involvement in their participation in extra-curricular activities such as cricket, playground games and multi-skills, and working with the resident dancer from the Creative Partnership. Good relationships are a strength of the school and, as a result, pupils feel safe and cared for very well. They know that teachers are willing to help with any concerns and are confident that they know what to do if a problem should arise. Pupils' and parents/carers' views are sought regularly on safeguarding issues.

Pupils' awareness of community is good, evident through the pride they take in their school and links within the local community to support local charities and care homes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the excellent relationships pupils have between each other and the continuous opportunities they have in their classrooms and in assemblies to reflect upon issues that affect themselves and others. The prayer wall in the hall unites the school in shared reflection and awareness of others.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Common strengths include the very good relationships between adults and pupils which are reflected in excellent pupil behaviour in lessons. Lessons are planned well with clear learning objectives and teachers make lessons interesting and fun. As a result pupils are keen to take part and enjoy the activities provided. In the most effective lessons, pupils are more active and the pace of learning increases rapidly because teachers have high expectations and ensure pupils know exactly what they have to do. In a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long and some pupils are not always aware of what the next steps are in their learning. Teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve their work consistently.

The curriculum is well organised to ensure pupils access a wide range of learning experiences and there is a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and other life skills. The daily curriculum is well planned and takes into account the differing ability groups. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies and is satisfactory overall. For some pupils, their continuity of learning is disrupted by attending group sessions. Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced through an exceptional range of enrichment activities and after school clubs which are well attended. They greatly enjoy these activities which give them a sense of pride in their school and confidence in learning new skills. For example, one pupil said they felt better

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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about themselves and another said school makes us a better person. Partnerships are fully utilised to enhance the quality of learning. Although pupils have access to an enriched curriculum through a wide range of activities it is not always provided consistently in classrooms.

The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils, which is much appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. Staff are always approachable and are keen to ensure pupils' needs are met well. Transition arrangements are outstanding in starting school and on exit to the secondary school, which supports pupils' confidence in meeting new situations and preparing for the next stage in their learning. Well established monthly drop in sessions provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their children's work with the teacher. As a result communication between home and school is very good. Pupils who are vulnerable are identified as quickly as possible and staff work tirelessly with agencies to get the best results possible. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults in the knowledge that they will be well taken care of and can turn to them for advice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The headteacher has continued to be a key catalyst for change and has nurtured the new leadership team who are keen to ensure pupils achieve the best they can. As a result pupil outcomes have improved. Senior leaders make a positive contribution to the improvements in the school and are continuing to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating success. The school monitors the performance of different groups and provides additional support where there are differences in performance. However, the information gained from monitoring is not always used to evaluate the full impact of actions taken to improve pupils' learning. The school is taking action to address this.

Governors are involved in the school and are kept well informed of school developments. They share the same vision for school improvement and have a good understanding of school priorities and safeguarding requirements. The school has rigorous systems in place to safeguard pupils. It has well documented and comprehensive systems in place to meet statutory requirements. Parents and pupil views are regularly sought to monitor and improve procedures and parents and carers are kept informed of health and safety issues through newsletters.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of pupils, showing the school's good commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. As a result actions are in place to support all pupil groups and the school celebrates the uniqueness of each pupil through its strong Christian values. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, developing pupils' awareness of social and religious issues and their view of the wider world through involvement in the Comenius project and Connecting Classrooms.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to attain outcomes at the end of Reception Year that fall within the broadly average range. Outcomes in communication, language and literacy skills are the lowest and physical and creative development are the highest. As a result there is a daily emphasis on developing children's knowledge of letters and sounds. The school's current data suggests that children are making good progress in this area due to the daily phonic sessions. This was confirmed by inspectors. Good provision is made for all children and they cooperate and play well with each other. They enjoy taking responsibility such as potting plants and tidying up.

Relationships with adults are good and are a strength of the school. Children know who to ask for guidance and are familiar with school routines. Recent developments in the Nursery have enhanced the indoor environment to allow children to follow their interests more readily and work cooperatively with others. As a result children are active learners

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and enjoy learning through play. Well planned activities follow children's interests, for example, finding mini-beasts buried in compost captivated a group of boys in the outside area of the Nursery and promoted sustained learning and enjoyment.

Teaching is good and the enthusiasm of staff is evident, which in turn promotes a positive attitude to children's learning. The learning environment is welcoming and well presented, encouraging opportunities for child-initiated learning. Although the outdoor area has been well developed and children have increased access, the area is not used to its full potential, especially for the Reception children. Effective induction arrangements help children to settle in and promote strong relationships with parents.

The setting is well led and managed by the acting foundation stage coordinator. There is a shared vision to provide the best outcomes for children which is reflected in the good progress the children make. Welfare requirements are met well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

In response to the questionnaire, parents and carers think highly of the school. They feel their children are safe and cared for well throughout the school and regard the headteacher as a key driver in bringing about school improvements. They appreciate the way staff care and support their children to give them the best opportunities. A very small minority of parents and carers had some individual concerns but the inspectors found little evidence to support them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthberts Roman Catholic Primary School Aided to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 57 | 83 | 12 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 46 | 67 | 23 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 34 | 49 | 30 | 43 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 38 | 55 | 28 | 41 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 38 | 55 | 30 | 43 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 33 | 48 | 33 | 48 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 40 | 58 | 28 | 41 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 38 | 55 | 25 | 36 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 34 | 49 | 33 | 48 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 28 | 41 | 38 | 55 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 28 | 41 | 37 | 54 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 40 | 58 | 27 | 39 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 50 | 72 | 18 | 26 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided, North Shields, NE29 0BU

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and for the part you played in the recent inspection. We really enjoyed spending time with you and listening to your views about your school and why you enjoy learning.

Yours is a good school and some parts are excellent, such as the great care staff take of you. You feel safe and like coming to school, which helps to explain why your behaviour and attendance are outstanding.

Your school works very closely with outside groups like the Creative Partnerships to make sure there are lots of interesting things for you to do, which we know you enjoy. Your headteacher, staff and governors work hard to improve your school and have been successful. Most of you make good progress with your work and changes to the outside areas have given you better opportunities at playtimes.

We have asked your teachers to help improve your work by:

- ensuring they mark your work to a high standard
- making sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve your work
- ensuring teachers check out how well the improvements are going for all groups of pupils and particularly for those of you who need extra help with your learning.

Once again, thank you very much for your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Irene Cochrane

Lead inspector

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