

# St Cuthbert's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111683
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	337724
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Keeler HMI

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	172
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Mary Dowson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julia Douglass
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Parkfield Road Stockton-on-Tees County Durham TS18 3SY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors visited 12 lessons, observed eight teachers and spent the majority of their time observing learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school development plan, analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' work and teachers' planning. The inspection also took into account the questionnaires completed by 46 parents and carers.

- the rate at which pupils progress as they move through each key stage
- the relationship between the quality of teaching and the impact on progress
- the impact of measures taken by the leadership team to improve teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

St Cuthbert's is an average-sized primary school situated in an urban setting on the edge of Stockton town centre. The school's population comes from a cross section of socio-economic, social and cultural groups. Most pupils are of White British heritage, however, the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school has an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary provides pupils with a satisfactory education. It is also a rapidly improving school. The senior leadership team has successfully focused on raising the quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils are making better progress as they move through the school than they have for a number of years. The headteacher, in particular, has raised expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in their learning. Staff have collectively embraced the strategies designed to secure improvements to teaching and this is beginning to make a difference to the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Data show clearly that historically pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment is broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Although achievement is currently satisfactory, an analysis of the school's data, together with lesson observations undertaken during the course of the inspection, show that the rate of progress is improving. This suggests that pupils are on track to achieve better results in the future, however, this has yet to be reflected in improved attainment by the end of Year 6.

Teaching is good overall and some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are well planned, building on pupils' prior knowledge as a result of accurate assessment. Pupils are involved in their learning and activities are stimulating and challenging. At times, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and not enough time practising and applying their emerging skills. Furthermore, poor organisation which requires pupils to move from one area to another for no reason during lessons causes pupils to lose concentration and this inhibits progress. Pupils behave well during lessons; they listen attentively and work effectively together and in groups. The quality of the curriculum is good because it meets pupils' learning needs well. Opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their English skills in other subjects. However, this is not so evident in mathematics which tends to be taught as a discrete subject and this does not help pupils to appreciate the purpose of what they are doing. A good range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and is a strong feature of this school. The relationship between adults and pupils is good and, as a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning. Bullying is rare but should it occur, pupils report that they know it will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

The governing body is an integral part of the school's improvement process. Members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and aspects that require further development. The school's leadership team is challenged and held to account and also

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receives good support from governors. As achievement is currently satisfactory, the school provides satisfactory value for money. However, because of accurate self-evaluation and subsequent improvements to teaching and learning brought about by effective and determined leadership, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve rates of progress by:
  - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching
  - organising learning in the classroom more effectively.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
  - providing further opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their skills in other subjects.
- About 40% of the school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enter the school with skills that are generally below what is typically expected for their age. Pupils enjoy their learning and they concentrate and respond well during lessons. Due to the good attention given to their individual and personal needs, the majority make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result of good teaching, an analysis of school data and a scrutiny of pupils' work, the rate at which pupils make progress is improving significantly and pupils are on track to achieve higher standards in the future. However, this has yet to influence attainment by the end of the current Year 6, where attainment is in line with the national average. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. The progress of this group of pupils is also improving, because they receive appropriate support in small groups or individually from a teacher or teaching assistant.

Pupils feel safe and secure and are conscious of the safety of others. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the benefits of a balanced diet and exercise. Pupils' behaviour is good, particularly during lessons where they listen carefully and display good working habits. They accept responsibility and through the school council contribute well to the school and play an active part in the wider community through their involvement in environmental activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of fairness and appreciate the many cultural experiences the school provides for them. Attendance has improved recently; however, it is currently average in comparison with the national average.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. The majority of teaching is good thereby promoting good learning and enhancing the rate at which pupils make progress. Where teaching was good or outstanding, key elements included lively teaching, good subject knowledge, a brisk pace, high expectations and the strong engagement of pupils in their learning, often through practical or collaborative tasks. The assessment of pupils' progress is an integral part of teaching and learning, and information is used well to inform future planning and set challenging targets.

On occasions, the pace of learning was not as quick because of weaknesses in classroom organisation. This resulted in pupils spending too much time listening to instructions and taking too long to settle to activities. However, this was not the norm. A common format for lesson planning provides for focused learning supported by an extensive range of activities, adapted to meet the different abilities of pupils.

The school has introduced a curriculum which is based upon the acquisition and development of key skills. Carefully planned topics engage pupils in their learning. This

<sup>1</sup> 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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is enriched through the introduction of themed weeks, for example, pupils are involved during 'French week' in learning about different cities in France, as well as about famous artists and historical events. This is indicative of the cross-curricular approach which is helping pupils to see the links between subjects. Opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in mathematics, however, are limited. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors in order to motivate pupils in their learning, for example when Year 3 and 4 visited the Beamish Museum as part of their learning in history. Pupils enjoy accessing a wide range of after-school clubs which include opportunities to join in participative and competitive sports.

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and foster very good relationships. Good links exist with external agencies which provide support to pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Carefully planned arrangements are in place to support pupils as they enter and leave the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior leadership team is focused on driving and sustaining improvement. Over the past two years, the headteacher, in particular, has raised expectations with regard to the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are united in their desire to raise achievement. This is now paying dividends as pupils are beginning to make better progress than in the past. However, this has yet to be reflected in improved attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require development. The school development plan is focused on securing improvements in pupils' achievement through high-quality provision. The governing body, ably led by the Chair, provides good support and holds the school to account well.

The school has a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic features of its community. The school reaches out to local faith communities as a means of fostering good relationships and broadening the outlook of its pupils. Good links have been established with the business community who support school initiatives, particularly through environmental initiatives. This has resulted in pupils' increased understanding of 'green' issues. Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Parents and carers are kept informed about what their children are studying and receive regular updates on how well they are progressing. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum

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and the school is successfully tackling the gap in performance between boys and girls. The school has well-developed safeguarding arrangements and has successfully integrated issues about safety into the curriculum.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children prosper in a highly stimulating and welcoming environment in which they feel secure. Children commence Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below age-related expectations. Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn and offer a well-organised and rich curriculum that meets the needs of children well. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those which children can choose for themselves. The outdoor area has recently been enlarged and the addition of direct access from the Reception classroom gives children freedom to take their learning outdoors. Good teaching and carefully planned activities stimulate and engage children's thinking. Children are developing their self-confidence very effectively and are making independent choices in their learning. As a result, children make good progress. By the end of Reception children's skills are generally average. Children's behaviour is good as they show care and concern for each other. Good leadership together with strong teamwork is responsible for the good progress that children are making. Staff regularly share information about individual children to ensure that all children feel safe and well cared for and activities meet their needs. Assessment is generally effective and planning clearly identifies the needs of different groups of children. Good links exist with parents and carers who value the provision on offer.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with their children's experience at school. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, their children's progress and the way in which the school is led and managed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 172 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	70	13	28	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	72	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	72	12	26	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	65	14	30	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	65	15	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	63	16	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	63	15	33	2	4	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)	19	41	24	52	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	61	15	33	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	39	24	52	3	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	33	25	54	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	48	21	46	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	63	14	30	2	4	1	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



Dear Pupils

You may remember that I recently visited your school to carry out an inspection. Over the course of the two days I and my colleagues spoke to many of you and also watched you during lessons. We were very impressed by the way you conducted yourselves, never failing to be polite and considerate.

St Cuthbert's gives you a satisfactory education. However, the good news is that St Cuthbert's is getting better because you are being taught well and are learning at a faster rate than before. You can take some of the credit because you listen carefully to your teachers and concentrate on what you are asked to do.

Here are some other things I think you should know.

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- While you are making satisfactory progress, you are beginning to learn at a faster rate.
- You behave well during lessons.
- The adults take good care of you.

In order to help improve the school I have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure that you do not spend too much time sitting listening to the teacher and moving from one place to another during lessons but spend more time working on activities
- provide more opportunities for you to practise your mathematical skills in other subjects.

I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

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