

St Cuthbert's Catholic School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112370
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337913
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Pat Kime HMI

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	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Daley
Headteacher	Mr John Turner
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers. They had discussions with staff, pupils, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and samples of curricular planning. Inspectors took account of the responses to the inspection questionnaires received from 14 parents, 54 pupils and three members of staff.

- what the school is doing, and how effectively, to improve the quality of teaching
- to what extent the school has the capacity to improve without external support
- how much success the school has had since the previous inspection in improving pupils' attendance
- the quality of curricular planning.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than three times the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more than twice the national average, being nearly half the pupils. These pupils are mainly concentrated in the older classes and around a third of them have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage but there are small numbers from other ethnic groups, nearly all of whom are proficient in English. Though few in number, the proportion of pupils from Traveller families is above average. Among the pupils is a small number of children in the care of the local authority. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the part-time Nursery and the Reception class. A deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The school holds the Sport England Activemark award.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, while there is some good teaching, there is too much that is inadequate or of a barely satisfactory quality. In too many lessons, expectations are not high enough and the poor behaviour slows learning for many. These are the key reasons why pupils are not making enough progress and attainment is well below the national average in English and mathematics. The combination of low attainment and attendance that, though improved, is still well below the national average means that pupils are not sufficiently well prepared for their futures.

The school's curriculum is inadequate because it is not sufficiently well structured to ensure that work becomes progressively more difficult as pupils move up the school. The school promotes healthy lifestyles successfully. In their choices about food and exercise, pupils apply their learning well.

The school provides satisfactory pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils, with a particular focus on those who face significant difficulties in their lives. It keeps pupils safe. However, for too many pupils, their awareness of some bullying in the school leads to a perception that they might not be safe.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. Children now make good progress from a low starting point. The teaching is good and there are lots of interesting learning activities that appeal to the children.

The school has received much support, some directly from the local authority and some that is arranged by it. This has led to the recent introduction of some new approaches, which have the potential to support improvement. These include the new policies for managing behaviour and marking pupils' work and the arrangements for the management of teachers' performance. However, in general, they are not implemented sufficiently rigorously or consistently to achieve what is needed. The school has not shown the capacity, at senior leadership level, to improve without support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 in order to accelerate pupils' progress, raise attainment and narrow the gap between standards achieved at this

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school and those seen nationally. In particular the school should:

- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that work is matched more closely to pupils' learning needs, so that all pupils make progress in every lesson
- -improve the management of pupils' behaviour in lessons
- improve the clarity of teachers' explanations of new work and of the tasks set for pupils
- ensure that marking leads to improvements in pupils' work.
- Improve the standard of pupils' behaviour so that it does not hinder learning.
- Strengthen leadership so the school develops the capacity for sustained improvement.
- Ensure that pupils are taught age-appropriate basic skills progressively, especially in English and mathematics.
- Further improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that all possible measures to do so are robustly deployed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

When children start in the Nursery, most can do much less than children their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this progress continues in Year 1. From Year 2 to the end of Year 6 there are pockets of at least satisfactory learning and progress but, overall, pupils' progress is inadequate and their attainment is low. Pupils have gaps in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. For example, spelling is generally weak and often careless, many pupils' handwriting is poor and too many write numbers incorrectly.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' results in the assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen in reading and mathematics and improved in writing. In all three of these in 2009, results were well below the national average and that for similar schools. Boys' attainment was particularly poor in English where they were more than a year behind the national average.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the previous inspection, but is still low and does not meet the school's targets. In English and mathematics, pupils' results in the 2009 national tests showed them to be nearly a year behind the national average. Less than half the pupils reached the standard expected for their age. They did much better in science, coming close to the national average. This shows what the pupils are capable of, with good teaching.

In the lessons observed, the quality of pupils' learning varied greatly, matching the quality of teaching. For some younger pupils, their behaviour had a negative effect on learning, even when teaching was good with practical activities that were well-suited to their age and interests. In Key Stage 2, pupils too often did not sustain concentration and the poor behaviour of a minority, for instance calling out over the teacher or niggling classmates, created an atmosphere that was not conducive to learning.

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Learning was also inadequate when pupils did not understand what they were supposed to do, or the work was too easy for the more-able pupils.

Attendance receives a lot of attention in school, with awards for good attendance and competition between classes. The attendance rate has improved since the previous inspection, but not enough. It is still low, being well below the national average.

Taken overall, pupils' behaviour is inadequate. Most work and play together harmoniously, but pupils are aware of some bullying. The older pupils are convinced it is this awareness, rather than being on the receiving end, that led nearly a quarter of the Key Stage 2 pupils who completed the questionnaire to say they do not feel safe in school. In too many lessons the poor behaviour and attitudes of a small minority of pupils caused an unsettled, distracting atmosphere which hindered learning. Nevertheless, the great majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They understand moral issues, develop cultural awareness and recognise the needs and feelings of others.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives and they apply this knowledge. The school provides well for this aspect of pupils' learning, in partnership with external agencies, including the local community centre. Take-up of school meals is high. They know about threats to health and well-being posed by smoking, alcohol, fatty foods and lack of exercise. They are enthused about the national Change4Life campaign and they enjoy the good range of sports clubs run by the staff. A good number of girls and boys attend a club where they receive sports coaching followed by a healthy meal.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4 4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Too many lessons are inadequate or barely satisfactory and examination of pupils' exercise books confirms this picture. There is some good teaching, but not nearly enough to accelerate pupils' progress and enable the majority to approach the standards expected for their age.

In the more successful lessons, the learning objectives are clear, understood by the pupils, and pursued in a work-focused, attentive atmosphere. Expectations are suitably high and activities are carefully planned and matched well to pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants are properly briefed and used effectively to help pupils complete and improve their work. Staff use question and answer sessions to hold pupils' attention and to find out how well they understand the work.

Where teaching is weaker it is undermined by one or more of the following factors: ineffective management of pupils' behaviour which results in too much misbehaviour and inattention

low expectations, for example a lack of challenge in the work for many pupils, especially for the more-able

confusing instructions and explanations that cause misconceptions on the pupils' part a slow pace with insufficient structure to the lesson

inefficient organisation of resources so pupils cannot easily do the set task.

The school has a sound marking policy but the marking of pupils' work, although thorough, does not always lead to improvement. Where teachers comment on errors, these are not always improved rapidly enough; some basic errors and poor presentation pass unremarked and corrections are not always completed.

The school's curriculum covers all that is required. It has strengths in the range and number of clubs provided and in the provision for pupils to continue to learn through play as they move from the Reception class into Key Stage 1. However, the curriculum is inadequate overall for two main reasons. First, it is not planned carefully enough to assure progression in work from year to year and to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. This is evident from the work in pupils' books. Second, too often teachers do not make the work interesting for pupils so even potentially exciting topics sometimes fall flat.

Pastoral care is satisfactory. The school works in partnership with other agencies to support pupils many of whom are vulnerable. It secures additional teaching for any pupils from Traveller families if they are falling behind the others. Pupils know that the staff care about them. Considerable support is provided for pupils who have social,

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emotional or behavioural difficulties and this results in some improvements in their behaviour and attitudes. However, teachers do not apply the school's new behaviour management policy consistently. Where teaching is weaker, disproportionate procedures are invoked, not always successfully, to deal with trivial misdemeanours.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

There has not been sufficient rigour or urgency, at senior level, in the school's efforts to improve and accelerate pupils' progress. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness, its improvement since the previous inspection and its capacity for further improvement are too optimistic and the school has been heavily dependent on external support. It does not show sufficient capacity for sustained improvement. There is evidence of some improvement since the last inspection but this has not been rapid enough. Last year attainment improved considerably in science and, though less strongly, in mathematics after a two-year decline in both subjects. This shows that, with good teaching and effective subject leadership, there is potential for pupils to achieve better. Some appropriate steps have been taken recently but, there is much to do to embed effective, school-wide implementation of new policies and procedures. The continuing prevalence of, at best, mediocre teaching shows that efforts to raise the quality of teaching have been too little or too late.

The governing body organises its work efficiently, despite carrying several vacancies, mainly for foundation governors. It is involved in planning for future developments. It has developed its role as supporter of the school, and is working in partnership with the local authority to hold senior leadership to account for the school's performance.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and all the relevant policies are kept under regular review. Staff are appropriately trained about child protection matters. The school works in partnership with other agencies, including parent support advisers, to promote the well-being and safety of pupils, especially those that may be vulnerable, and to provide equality of opportunity. For instance, some funded places are provided at out-of-school activities.

The school is a largely cohesive community and it has strong links with the local community. The change of school name to include 'community' is an overt expression of this. Pupils are actively involved in local community action and raise funds for charitable causes in Britain and the wider world. They learn about cultural and ethnic diversity and

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the school runs a week of activities focused on equality and diversity and has participated in the city's multi-cultural week.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The children get a really good start to school. They make good progress from a low starting point and catch up some ground, though few reach the expected standard for their age by the end of Reception. Staff know the children well. They keep a close eye on their learning day- by-day and plan appealing activities, in and out of doors and beyond the school, that meet their individual personal and learning needs very well. The transitions from home to Nursery and on into Reception and Year 1 are managed well. Staff build positive relationships with the children's parents and carers and help them to help their children learn. Overall, the teaching in this key stage is good. Some is of an outstanding quality. The last two years have seen good improvement as a result of good strategic planning and regular evaluation of progress. Children in Reception have adequate opportunities to learn out of doors but lack a freely accessible, dedicated outdoor area. This is an identified area for development and the teacher in charge of the Early Years Foundation Stage has well-considered plans to tackle it when funds are available.

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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

The chart below shows that most of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire have a positive view of the school and are happy with their child's experience there. Small numbers of parents and carers are not satisfied with the school's partnership with them and the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. The inspectors found that the school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. They found that some pupils' behaviour is poor and this hinders learning in too many lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert's Catholic School and Nursery 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 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	47	7	41	0	0	2	12
The school keeps my child safe	7	41	9	53	0	0	1	6
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	18	10	59	3	18	1	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	24	10	59	1	6	1	6
The teaching is good at this school	6	35	9	53	1	6	1	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	24	8	47	4	24	1	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	18	13	76	0	0	1	6
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)	5	29	10	59	1	6	1	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	12	12	71	1	6	1	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	12	12	71	2	12	1	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	12	11	65	3	18	1	6
The school is led and managed effectively	2	12	13	76	0	0	1	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	29	10	59	1	6	1	6

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.



4 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School, Carlisle, CA1 2UE

You may remember that Mr Bennetts and I visited your school recently to check how well you are all learning. Mrs Utting came with us to learn more about how schools are inspected. Thank you for making us welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and we learned a lot from seeing your lessons, talking to you and looking at your work. This letter is to tell you the main things we found out about your school.

We were particularly impressed by two things. First, you have good knowledge about healthy lifestyles. You are learning good habits. We hope you keep them after you leave school. Second, children get a good start to school. They make good progress in Nursery, Reception and Year 1. The children who left last summer did well in science. This shows how well you can learn when teaching is really good. We want you to do that well in all the subjects, especially English and mathematics. At present, standards are too low and many pupils are not making enough progress. Because of that, we decided that the school needs 'special measures'. That means it will get a lot of help and inspectors will come every term to check that things are improving.

We have asked the school to improve:

- the teaching where it is not yet good, so that you make faster progress
- how it makes sure that you all do hard enough work as you move up the school
- leadership, so that everyone at school is able to contribute to making things better
- behaviour, so that lessons can focus on work and learning
- attendance, because some pupils do not come to school regularly and on time.

For you, the most important things are to behave well, work hard and enjoy learning. I am sure that you will have some sensible ideas about how to improve your school. I hope you will contribute them through the school council. You all have our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector

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