

# St Cuthbert Mayne Roman Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117468
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339012
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joe Peacock

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Gonzalez
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Quinn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Clover Way Gadebridge Road, Hemel Hempstead HP1 3EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 253347
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 230320
<b>Email address</b>	admin@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed 10 class teachers. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and pupils, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. They scrutinised 189 questionnaires returned by parents, 28 from staff and 101 from pupils.

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

- the achievement of different groups
- the effectiveness of the quality of teaching, the curriculum and use of assessment information in raising attainment
- how effectively leaders and managers monitor the work of the school.

## Information about the school

The school is on a spacious site which is shared with two other schools. It is average in size and takes pupils from a wide area. Eight out of ten are from a White British background and the rest from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and a very small minority are eligible for free school meals. There has been a number of staffing issues over the last three years, including long term absence and difficulties with recruitment to temporary posts. The school has a number of national awards including Healthy Schools status.

**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

The school provides good quality education for its pupils. At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to be outstanding in every respect. Since then staffing issues have had a negative impact and attainment and behaviour declined. The headteacher has worked with staff and governors to successfully steer the school through this difficult time. Issues have been resolved, attainment is back at its previous high level and behaviour is once again outstanding. This track record, coupled with the comprehensive procedures for monitoring the school's performance ensures that the school has a good capacity to go on improving.

Most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and by the end of Year 6, attainment is high. Pupils have outstandingly positive attitudes to learning and are highly motivated. They relish the opportunity to explore new ideas and thinking through their lessons. Typical comments from pupils are, 'I wish we could stay in and work at lunchtime' and 'I just want to work and work and work!' Given excellent basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as well as their outstanding social skills, pupils are well prepared for their future. All benefit from the outstanding curriculum, which successfully engages and holds their interests, and the good quality teaching. In some lessons, however, there is too little difference in the tasks planned for pupils of different abilities, and not enough time is provided for pupils to work independently or to collaborate with others. In these lessons, the progress of average ability pupils in particular is satisfactory rather than good. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to the comments for improvement that they put in pupils' books. This means that pupils do not always learn from their mistakes.

Pupils and governors independently say that behaviour is the best it has ever been. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and feel valued and important members of the school and local community. They take a decisive role in raising money for charity, showing empathy for the problems and difficulties people face in recent disasters. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual development is a particular strength.

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

- Improve the rate of progress for average attaining pupils by;
  - ensuring teaching is consistently good and learning is always closely matched to individual needs

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- providing more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning
- allowing pupils time to respond to teachers' comments when their work is marked in order to improve it.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Pupils enjoy an excellent working relationship with staff and there is a strong sense of community and belonging in school which is reassuring for all. Pupils are clearly proud of their school and its standing in the community. All demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning and give 100 per cent concentration.

Data for the current Year 6 emphatically show that the school has successfully reversed its earlier decline. Furthermore, inspection evidence shows that attainment is high in Year 6 across all subjects. Progress is good across the curriculum. It is particularly strong in English and science. The majority of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and they too make good progress. Pupils achieve especially high standards in music and in oracy because of the strong emphasis on drama throughout the school. All pupils use computers confidently with many showing skills beyond their age.

Highly effective strategies have successfully improved behaviour. Pupils are invariably polite and considerate of others. Pupils collaborate together to excellent effect.

During the inspection, for example, pupils were observed sharing the best lines from their own action poems and together with a partner, were able to create a new and even better poem. Assemblies are uplifting occasions as pupils, accompanied by the school orchestra, sing beautifully. All have a good knowledge and understanding of different cultures and of religions through activities such as visitors from a synagogue and their involvement in national and international charitable fund-raising events. Frequent visits and visitors such as the one who brought owls and let them fly around the hall, are not to be missed. Attendance is much the same as in other schools, but punctuality is exemplary as pupils cannot wait to get to school and start work.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good, although there are some variations. Where it is the most successful, teacher enthusiasm successfully motivates pupils by presenting them with challenging tasks to be tackled independently or by working collaboratively with others. Learning is less successful when teachers spend too long on introductions to lessons, or when they give the same work to all pupils or do not provide enough time for pupils to work independently. More able pupils use their well-established skills and they too do well. However, the progress of average attaining pupils is sometimes not quite as good as it could be as they find work too difficult or easy when it is not planned specifically for them. Accurate information from the rigorous assessment of attainment and progress is used effectively by teachers when planning lessons.

The highly effective curriculum is one of the main reasons that pupils enjoy school so much. It is also instrumental in promoting high attainment in basic literacy and numeracy, skills, and in other curriculum areas such as music, drama and sport. Performing adds significantly to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Curriculum planning ensures pupils develop a broad range of skills in different subjects when completing tasks. For example, in a science lesson on micro-organisms pupils utilised literacy and computing skills when preparing PowerPoint presentations to show their results. A good range of well attended after-school clubs, visits, including a residential experience, and visitors further enrich the curriculum.

Arrangements for ensuring pupils safety and well-being are effective so pupils feel safe and valued. There are good links with feeder infant schools and exceptionally good links with secondary schools which inspire confidence in pupils and ensure a smooth transfer.

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The excellent support for the most vulnerable pupils and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils make good progress. The school is doing all it can to promote good attendance.

*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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Many parents in the inspection questionnaire recognised the inspirational qualities of the headteacher, and praised staff for their daily commitment and energy. The long standing and highly effective partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher is a driving force, where only the best will do. Staff work as a team to continuously develop and improve. All are closely involved in monitoring and evaluating their own and pupils' performance. Some staff are new to their subject leadership responsibilities and are still developing their management roles.

Governors are proud of their school, regularly attend training events, and are determined to be even more involved and challenging. Led by a conscientious chairperson, they often visit the school and are increasingly involved in monitoring the effectiveness of all aspects of school life. This has resulted in a fairly accurate self-evaluation with a clear view of where improvements are needed.

Some outstanding aspects have been maintained since the previous inspection. This includes the excellent partnership with parents, reflected in the very high response to the questionnaire, and parents' attendance at workshops designed to help them assist their children. Newsletters are bursting with information for parents. Partnerships with other providers, organisations and schools are highly effective, ensuring that pupils' social, emotional and learning needs are very well met. St Cuthbert Mayne is an inclusive school and actively promotes equality of opportunity. One example is an amplification system installed in classrooms, to ensure pupils hear well enough. Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective in keeping pupils safe. The school is a cohesive community and makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion in the wider United Kingdom and global communities. For example, a see-saw which generates electricity was designed by a past pupil and two of these, sponsored by pupils are installed in schools in Malawi.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

In total, 83% of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire which is very high. Inspectors fully endorse parents' extremely positive views of the school. 'Fantastic', 'delighted', and 'all staff are top class' are typical comments. A very small minority of respondents indicated that they felt unhappy about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour is outstanding and this is because of the school's excellent strategies to deal quickly and effectively with any incident, no matter how small, where pupils fail to meet the school's high expectations of them.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert Mayne Roman Catholic Junior 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 189 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	124	66	61	32	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	138	73	47	25	2	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	100	53	81	43	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	57	73	39	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	114	60	68	36	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	108	57	72	38	6	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	52	88	47	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)	97	51	81	43	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	102	54	79	42	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	93	49	81	43	11	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	86	46	89	47	7	4	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	137	72	50	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	135	71	50	26	4	2	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"><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.**



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Cuthbert Mayne Roman Catholic Junior School, Hemel Hempstead HP1 3EA

My inspector colleagues and I really enjoyed our two days with you. Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful.

You and your parents are right to be proud of your school because it is a good school and outstanding in some respects. We are really impressed with your excellent behaviour and how friendly you are towards one another. You are making school a very happy place to be for everyone. Well done!

Congratulations too on the high standards you achieve and good progress you make by Year 6. This shows how well you concentrate and how hard you work in class. It helps when you have so many exciting and interesting things to do each day. The skills you learn in literacy and numeracy and other subjects such as music and drama are making sure you are extremely well prepared for your next school. By the way, we thoroughly enjoyed your singing in assembly with the school orchestra. Your teachers usually plan some very interesting things for you to do and it is clear how much you enjoy doing your work and doing it well. Most of you are given work to do that is just right for you. You and your teachers often assess how well you are doing but on occasions, they do not use all this information well enough to plan the right work, just for you. In the best lesson we saw, you worked together to create some outstanding action poems. We think that you should be given this freedom more often. We also think that after marking your work, teachers should give you the time to make it better.

Your headteacher, governors and all the school staff work extremely hard to keep you safe and to continuously try and improve every aspect of school life. Your job is to carry on working as hard as you do to raise standards even more.

Thank you again for your help. We hope that you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock,

Lead inspector

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