

St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School

Victoria Road, Botcherby, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 2UE

Inspection dates

23–24 September 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils make good progress as they move through the school. As a result, by the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average.
- Teachers do not routinely use the information they have from checking pupils' work and understanding. Activities set for pupils working independently are too difficult for them to complete without adult support or too easy to keep them purposefully absorbed in learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is not good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in this subject particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not all have good attitudes to learning. Pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is often untidy and shows that they do not always take pride in their work.
- Leaders and governors do not have a clear view of pupils' progress. This means that pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their work are not always swiftly identified and supported.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, leaders and governors have not secured consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- Governors do not have sufficient information on the progress of disadvantaged pupils as they move through the school to hold leaders to account for the outcomes for these pupils.
- Early years provision requires improvement. Children in Reception do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills as they play and learn outdoors.
- Attendance is low but there are signs of improvement due to the school's work with families to discourage avoidable absence.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading has improved and standards are rising in this subject.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' good understanding of fundamental British values such as the rule of law, democracy and tolerance.
- Marking has improved. Pupils frequently receive good guidance on the next steps in their learning or how to correct their mistakes.
- Teaching in the nursery is good. Children thrive in a warm, safe and stimulating environment and have a flying start to their education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress by making sure that:
 - teachers build on pupils' prior learning and plan tasks and activities that will absorb all groups of pupils purposefully
 - teachers ensure that pupils always present their work neatly and in their best handwriting so that they can take pride in their work and develop good attitudes to learning.
- Improve the teaching of mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that pupils make consistently good progress by making sure that teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to apply their skills in mathematical calculations to solve problems and develop their mastery of the subject.
- Build on recent signs of improved attendance so that pupils are only absent from school when there is a very good reason for this.
- Improve leadership by making sure that leaders, including governors, have a thorough awareness of the progress of different groups of pupils as they move through the school, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the outdoor provision in the Reception class so that children have good opportunities to develop their skills as they play and explore outside the classroom.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have yet to secure solidly good teaching and outcomes for pupils. Although teaching is now improving, since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that teaching has improved rapidly and this is why pupils' progress is not good.
- In the past, opportunities for teachers' training have not been well focused. Teachers are keen to improve their teaching practices however. They particularly appreciate recent opportunities to learn from good practice, particularly in other schools. Pupils' better achievement in reading shows that the teaching of reading has improved. However, improvement is less evident in mathematics for pupils currently in the school.
- Leaders are in the early stages of developing a system that will enable them to have an accurate overview of pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result, currently there is not a secure and shared understanding of how much progress pupils are making and whether or not their progress is rapid enough to make sure they will reach expected standards by the time they are ready to move on to the next phase of their education.
- Following a period that has seen many changes in staffing, staffing is now more settled. Subject leaders in literacy and numeracy are new to their roles this term and have not had time to make an effective contribution to checking the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their new areas of responsibility. They both know what needs to be done to raise standards in their subject areas and are already developing plans for improvement.
- Leaders make sure that this is an inclusive school. Their success reflects in the good relations that exist within the school, with the local community and with those families who are recently arrived in this country and speak English as an additional language. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and there are no recorded incidents of racism or discrimination.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs make expected progress along with other pupils in the school. However, the pupil premium funding has not been used to good effect to make sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally in mathematics.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding is used effectively to give pupils access to a wider range of sports and to increase their participation in sport, particularly competitive team sports. An external coach is successfully helping teachers to develop their skill and expertise in teaching physical education.
- The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship and religious education lessons ensure that pupils develop a good understanding, tolerance and respect for different cultures and religions. The curriculum ensures that pupils are prepared well with the personal skills they need to be successful in modern Britain. They learn about the importance of making decisions democratically. They know that the school rules are there to protect them and are proud of the fact that they are allowed to develop their own set of classroom rules.
- Changes to the curriculum in reading are helping pupils to make better progress. Pupils have opportunities to practise their skills in writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education and science. In mathematics, however, opportunities to apply their calculation skills to solve problems are sometimes overlooked. The school offers a range of after-school clubs and activities that extend and complement pupils' learning during the school day.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Leaders and governors have rigorous procedures in place for child protection, and staff, including those new to the school, are aware of these. Pupils know that teachers care for them well and are not afraid to ask for help when they need it.
- The local authority is providing ongoing support to the school. It has helped leaders to develop their links with other schools. The impact of this work is seen in the increased range of opportunities for teachers' professional development through visiting other schools and sharing good practice, for example in assessing pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance, although improving over time, has not been effective in holding leaders to account for good outcomes for pupils across the school and for ensuring that teaching is consistently good. Governors have not checked rigorously enough that leaders' decisions to award staff with pay increases reflect improvements in the quality of teaching or in pupils' achievement. This has hampered

governors' effectiveness in holding school leaders to account for tackling underperformance in teaching.

Recent appointments to the governing body supported by the Diocesan Board and the local authority aim to increase the range of skills and expertise governors can offer. However, new governors have not yet been able to attend a full governing body meeting and require more time to become familiar with the school and support leaders in driving further improvements.

Governors know that they need to check more carefully that the school's funds, particularly the pupil premium, are used to good effect. However, they are yet to ensure that these pupils achieve well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers do not always expect pupils to work really hard and to produce work of the highest possible quality. In too many books, pupils' work is incomplete, handwriting is poor and presentation is untidy.
- Tasks set for pupils when working in groups without direct adult supervision are not always at the right level for pupils to complete independently. The work is either too difficult for them to do without help or is too easy to stimulate pupils' engagement and motivate them to want to learn as much as they can.
- The teaching and assessment of mathematics is weaker than it is in reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 2. Too often pupils are asked to complete pages of written calculations but do not have enough chances to apply their skills to solving real-life problems in a range of different subject areas.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is good. As a result, the teaching of reading has improved and this is reflected in pupils' better standards and increasing enthusiasm for reading more widely across a range of subjects. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and younger pupils are very proud to receive stickers and rewards for reading at home.
- Teachers are developing their understanding of how to assess pupils' progress in the light of the new National Curriculum. They are working in partnership with other schools to make sure that their assessments accurately reflect the amount of progress pupils make so that they can identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning and help them to catch up quickly.
- Marking has improved. Teachers give pupils good guidance on the next small steps in their learning or how to correct their mistakes. Pupils frequently have opportunities in later lessons to act on teachers' advice and this helps them to develop as independent learners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils say that children are sometimes bullied in school and that a few pupils are unkind to others and call them bad names. For example, pupils say that boys who have longer hair or walk in a funny way are called 'gay'. Pupils are confident that adults will always deal with this and know that bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Teachers support pupils' personal development by helping them to develop skills that will make them into successful learners. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to become increasingly independent of adult support.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from harm when they use the internet. They say that they know that some sites are not appropriate and that they must never give out any details of themselves or their friends.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive. In some lessons, when pupils are working in small groups without direct adult supervision, pupils drift away from their tasks and occasionally disturb other pupils' learning.
- Pupils look smart in their school uniforms and say that they are proud of their school. However, pupils' work in books is frequently untidy and does not show an equal pride in the quality of their work.
- Pupils' behaviour in the school building is generally sensible. They are polite and courteous to staff and

visitors. Pupils' behaviour in the playground is sometimes overly boisterous. For example, boys playing football dash around and kick the ball without proper regard for other pupils who may be playing nearby.

- Attendance is low but is beginning to improve because leaders work hard with families to encourage regular attendance and punctuality.
- The number of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period of time has reduced significantly over the last two years. This is because leaders have been effective in improving the systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour. Staff constantly praise good behaviour and there is a fair, consistent approach to rewards and sanctions.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and have been so over time. However, the small number of pupils in each cohort means that comparing standards from one year to the next does not always give a fully accurate picture of the school's performance. The work of pupils currently in the school shows that standards are beginning to improve in reading and an increasing proportion of pupils make good progress in this subject. However, such improvement is yet to be seen in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress from their low starting points is good in the nursery but is no better than that typically expected in the rest of the school across a range of different subject areas. As a result, although progress is improving, too few pupils are ready for the next stage in their education by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. This is why the outcomes for pupils require improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress along with their peers. The gaps in their performance against other pupils in the school are not significant. However, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in mathematics.
- School leaders have a range of actions in place to make sure that pupils who are falling behind in their learning will receive help to catch up. Due to the fact that assessment procedures for the new National Curriculum are in the early stages of development, identification of these pupils is not quite as rapid as it should be.
- The outcomes for most able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are below average but are beginning to show improvement because the quality of teaching is improving.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Most children enter the nursery with levels of skill and development below those typically expected of children of similar age, particularly in relation to their language and communications and personal and social development.
- Children make good progress in the nursery because teaching is good and the indoor and outdoor learning environment is safe, stimulating and appealing to young children.
- Over time, teaching in Reception has not enabled children to make consistently good progress and too few children reach the standards that will make them ready to start in Year 1. Although the quality of teaching is starting to improve, activities, particularly those outdoors, do not always enable children to develop their skills at a good rate. Additionally, adults sometimes miss out on the chance to join in with children's play, for example in the 'home corner', and to use this to extend children's thinking and develop their communication and language skills.
- Resources indoors in Reception are generally of good quality and easily accessible. The outdoor area has a very limited range of equipment for digging and exploring, climbing or swinging and balancing. This limits children's physical development. Opportunities to develop children's reading, writing and numeracy skills and their creative development as they play outdoors are still overlooked. This hampers their progress.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Children generally listen to adults and respond well to instructions. Classroom routines, such as tidying up after activities, are well established and promote children's personal and social development well. Children enjoy school and their parents say that they are always eager to go to school each morning.
- Leadership in the early years requires improvement because leaders have yet to secure children's good progress in Reception.

- Leaders ensure that effective procedures are in place to keep children very safe and secure. They promote good partnership with parents. Parents appreciate the weekly communication they receive through the learning journeys and an increasing proportion of them respond with their own comments on children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	112370
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection Number	10002258

This inspection 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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon John Watson
Headteacher	Pauline Moss
Telephone number	01228 818201
Website	www.st-cuthberts-carlisle.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-cuthberts-carlisle.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. An increasing proportion of families are new arrivals into the country and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is average.
- Children in the early years receive part-time education in the nursery and full-time education in the Reception class.
- There have been some changes to staffing since the last inspection. Three out of five class teachers are new to the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons or parts of lessons.
- The inspector spoke to a range of pupils about their work and play in school.
- The inspector held meetings with four members of the governing body as well as school leaders and a local authority representative.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to take into account. The inspector spoke informally to parents on the school yard.
- The inspector observed the overall work of the school and checked various documents and procedures including the school's plans for improvement and arrangements for checking pupils' attainment and progress. She also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector considered a wide range of evidence, including the school's records of the quality of teaching over time and pupils' current work in books.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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