

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Aviemore Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 3BB

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide exceptional leadership and have created a very special place in which to learn and work.
- The executive headteacher and head of school are very well respected by pupils, parents and staff. This strong leadership and the commitment and hard work of the staff team unites everyone to provide the very best for pupils at the school.
- Leaders place the well-being of every pupil at the centre of the school's aims and ethos. They consistently ensure that vulnerable pupils and those at risk of harm are kept safe.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved sharply since 2016, especially at the end of key stage 2. Rates of progress in 2017 for these subjects were above those seen nationally.
- Governors know the school well. They provide a very effective balance of challenge and support for the leadership team. They are proud of the support the staff provide for other schools.
- Strengthening middle leadership is driving the school forward highly effectively, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils show a positive attitude to their learning. They are enthusiastic to take part in lessons, work hard and try their best. Their behaviour in class and around school is good. Pupils at St Cuthbert's are caring, well mannered and value their education.
- The early years prepares children well for the next stage of their education, including those with below typical starting points on entry.
- Rates of absence are now in line with national figures. Leaders have worked hard to improve pupil attendance at the school.
- The quality of teaching is typically good at every stage. Where it is strongest, teachers have the highest expectations for pupils' learning. All teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and build on this by planning interesting lessons.
- Improvements to outcomes in subjects such as history and geography are not as strong as in English and mathematics.
- Phonics teaching is inconsistent and does not develop pupils' knowledge and skills effectively.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to further improve outcomes by:
  - ensuring that teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics, and particularly in history and geography, is sufficiently thorough and challenging so that pupils more quickly develop subject-specific skills and knowledge
  - ensuring that the planning and teaching of phonics is more systematic and better develops children's and pupils' early reading skills and knowledge
  - ensuring that all teachers share the same consistently high expectations for pupil outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide inspirational leadership. Excellent leadership at all levels together with enthusiastic staff creates an exciting environment for learning and has made a significant, very positive difference to pupils' progress and attainment.
- The excellent leadership of the executive headteacher and high expectations of senior staff and governors have been a significant factor in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Links with the other school in the federation are very well used so that teachers can learn from each other. This has led to a school that is improving at pace. Key to this has been excellent leadership of teaching, management of performance and a rigorous programme of professional development.
- Leaders and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and are quick to identify potential weaknesses. This is because their ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes are thorough and precise. Consequently, improvements are being continually made to ensure that the school provides pupils with a high standard of education and care.
- The school has a range of highly effective policies, systems and procedures that underpin the practice of all staff. Senior leaders have high expectations and an excellent understanding of the needs of the pupils to ensure the best outcomes for them.
- Senior leaders and staff know the pupils at St Cuthbert's exceptionally well. The executive headteacher is rightly proud of the staff's awareness in spotting any factor that could interfere with pupils' emotional ability or their ability to learn. A whole range of successful strategies provide support for pupils, and often their families, during challenging times.
- A strength of the school is the high quality of the mathematics and English curriculum. The leaders for English and mathematics have very successfully taken responsibility for tackling the areas of uncharacteristic underperformance in the 2016 national tests. Significant changes to the way writing, reading and mathematics are taught have been highly effective in improving outcomes in 2017 for all pupils, especially at key stage 2. Consequently, outcomes at key stage 2 in 2017 were at least above national averages, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher has overseen the seamless transition of high-quality middle leaders following a significant change in staffing. This has ensured that there has been no decline in the effectiveness of leadership within the school. The development of high-quality middle leadership is recognised by the local authority and diocese as a particular strength of the school.
- The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the main religions of the world. Pupils benefit from opportunities to go on residential trips to Wales, Scotland, France, Italy and China, perform Shakespeare in a local theatre and the school choir sings within the local

community in residential homes and as part of 'Everton in the Community' charity.

- All the staff in the school who expressed an opinion feel proud to be part of the team and enjoy working at St Cuthbert's.
- The local authority provides excellent support for the school and has brokered support for other schools in the city from the executive headteacher. This has helped foster partnerships with other schools in the locality who are keen to develop their own policies in line with the high quality seen at St Cuthbert's.
- The local authority has identified St Cuthbert's as being highly successful. The excellent relationship that exists between the two schools in the federation provides both with further support and challenge, as well as aiding the development of leadership and teaching.
- Pupil premium funding is used highly effectively. The pupil premium grant subsidises extra-curricular activities, additional support with learning and tuition to extend pupils' talents and skills. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils of all abilities make rapid progress.
- The primary physical education and sports premium is used very effectively to promote teachers' skills and increase pupils' participation in physical activity. There are now plentiful opportunities for pupils to represent the school in sports and games in local city tournaments. Sports coaches are well deployed during lunchtimes to offer pupils additional opportunities to participate in a wide range of sporting activities.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the 'Parent View' survey would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of fundamental British values and how it affects their lives. They feel that their views are important and are given ample opportunity to articulate them by the school.
- The breakfast and after-school care provision gives pupils a calm and enjoyable start and end to the day. Pupils have fun with games, sports and other activities. They also benefit from a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities ranging from gymnastics to extra swimming and tennis.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body at St Cuthbert's is exceptionally strong and fully supports the executive headteacher's high standards and vision for the school. It provides strong and effective support and challenge to ensure that progress does not falter. It is highly evaluative and closely monitors the impact of the recent staff changes and developments.
- Governors are knowledgeable about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. They help to ensure that performance management arrangements lead to improved provision and outcomes.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise in areas such as finance, safeguarding, education, special educational needs and recruitment. They also have strong links with the local community and the church.

- Positive relationships are a strength of the school and there is a strong sense of community where governors, staff and pupils enjoy learning together.
- The executive headteacher, alongside the heads of school and the governors, have worked hard to ensure that the school works well in federation with St Sebastian's Catholic Primary School.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The executive headteacher, the head of school and the governors ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school and that all adults take responsibility for this. Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training. Governors also have a good understanding of safeguarding and their responsibility to keep pupils safe from harm. They are well informed and receive regular training in all aspects of child protection.
- Records of checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils meet all requirements.
- All staff place the highest priority in securing the safety and well-being of all their pupils. Staff know exactly what to do if they are worried about a pupil's well-being, and the designated leader for safeguarding ensures that any concerns are rigorously followed up.
- Vulnerable children are well supported and record-keeping is good. Leaders ensure that there is strong support to help families, including close work with other agencies when appropriate.
- Pupils feel safe at St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School and their parents agree. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in the wider community. At playtimes and lunchtimes, there is a good level of supervision. The site appears safe and well maintained.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching across the school is good overall and is particularly effective in Years 4, 5 and 6. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This includes disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and other groups of pupils at risk of underachieving.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use resources effectively and provide imaginative activities to challenge pupils across the curriculum. As a result, pupils acquire knowledge and build on existing skills. Careful and precise questioning enables staff to assess pupils' understanding and challenges pupils to think more deeply, especially in English and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils. They are constantly looking for signs that pupils have not understood something and act quickly to provide extra support to secure good progress.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning. They receive

training to enable them to teach writing and mathematics accurately and skilfully.

- The teaching of mathematics is strong across the school. Teachers use a range of resources to develop pupils' mathematical skills and concepts. In Year 6, there is a greater emphasis on learning through reasoning and problem-solving activities to enable more pupils to achieve a higher level in national tests.
- Although the teaching of reading is a strength of the school, the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics is less strong. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in phonics by the end of Year 1 was below average. This is because phonics is not consistently taught with the precision needed to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding is secure.
- The school places high priority on developing pupils' love of reading. They develop a real enjoyment of books and stories through reading widely and often, and are able to discuss their favourite books and authors.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Teachers display strong subject knowledge. Pupils apply their writing skills through carefully considered activities in English lessons, for example in response to a well-chosen video clip. However, cross-curricular writing in history, geography and science is planned less consistently well and work is often not challenging for some pupils. In these subjects, the pace of learning is slower.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is now thorough and regular. This helps pupils, including the most and least able, to read and write with greater accuracy and fluency.
- Although there is some highly effective teaching in the school, senior leaders acknowledge that not all teaching has the same impact as the very best. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently as high as they could be in every class or subject. In classes where progress is not as strong, teachers give insufficient opportunities to pupils to enable them to think and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and take pride in their achievements. As they get older, they are enthusiastic about the many opportunities on offer to take responsibility. They are keen to represent their school in the many sporting and cultural activities that they participate in.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, the school has ensured that pupils are provided with a good awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. Pupils know not to give out personal information online, and to tell an adult of any concerns they may have.
- Pastoral support is strong. The school keeps a sharp check on pupils' well-being. Records show that the school is vigilant in following up any alleged incidents or

concerns. Pupils are given additional support when having to cope with difficult life issues.

- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including racism and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is rare but staff quickly deal with it when it does happen. An anti-bullying week is held each year to ensure that the key messages are reinforced regularly.
- The vast majority of parents who made their views known to the inspectors are very supportive of the school. One parent described the school as a 'friendly and happy place to be in'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance rates are now broadly in line with the national average, and while rates of persistent absence are still above the national average, there are signs that they are improving. The school's attendance officer has been successful in addressing higher than expected rates of persistent absence affecting some pupils, ensuring that no group is adversely affected by poor attendance.
- Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and are consistent in how they manage pupils' behaviour. School records confirm that there are few instances of poor behaviour. The number of pupils who find managing their behaviour more difficult is reducing over time.
- Pupils are polite and conduct themselves well in and around school. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they think most pupils behave well in school most of the time.
- Pupils respond well to the school's behaviour management procedures. They like to please adults in school and are typically caring and considerate of the needs of others.
- Pupils work well in class and most work is well presented. Pupils are curious, work hard and show resilience when set challenging work. However, a few pupils will resort to low-level, off-task behaviour at times when they do not find their work challenging or interesting enough.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupil outcomes are good. The executive headteacher and senior leaders have focused precisely on ensuring that all pupils make equally good progress from their different starting points.
- In 2017, the rates of progress and levels of attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 increased from the 2016 tests to at least above national figures. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was above national figures. Proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and mathematics were well above those seen nationally. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress in key stage 2. In writing and mathematics, there are frequent opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and focus their skills with challenging activities so that the number of pupils achieving at a high level in these subjects is well above the national figures.
- Inspectors found that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are confident and knowledgeable readers. They receive much enjoyment and knowledge from their reading. This accounts for the above average reading standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2017.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive high-quality, personalised support before, during and after lessons so that the outcomes for this group of pupils have substantially improved and their progress is rapid.
- Over time, pupils' progress across key stage 1 has not been as strong as in key stage 2. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 were below national figures for reading, writing and mathematics except for the most able pupils. However, this represented typically good progress from pupils' below average starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Evidence in pupils' work and the school's own data show that progress in key stage 1 is now more consistently secure.
- Standards across the school continue to improve, especially for those pupils in Years 5 and 6. Evidence seen in pupils' books during the inspection showed that pupils from all starting points in these age groups were making good progress as a result of organised, strong teaching and very high expectations from staff.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. These pupils benefit from well-targeted individual and group support that helps them to learn well and regularly reach their individual targets.
- Although there has been a focus upon ensuring that pupils' develop good phonic skills to help them become good readers, results in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 declined to below national figures.
- The quality of pupils' writing in subjects such as history, geography and science is not as high as that seen in English. There is evidence that attainment in science is improving. This is not the case in history and geography, where pupils' books indicate that coverage lacks depth and rigour so that pupils make limited progress in gaining a good grasp of key skills.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has successfully led improvements to provision, particularly in the outdoor area to provide children with the opportunities they require to learn well across the curriculum.
- A large proportion of children join the Nursery with skills below, and some significantly below, those that are typical for their age, especially in aspects of their personal and social development. They make good progress during their time in the early years, as staff carefully track children's learning and use this information to identify individual



children's learning needs.

- Although children make good progress with their learning from their individual starting points, the numbers leaving the Reception class with a good level of development remain below the national average. In 2017, around four in 10 children were not quite ready for Year 1.
- Staff have high expectations of the children. They are very good role models and encourage children to share, take turns and be kind to each other. Children also enjoy lots of praise and encouragement from staff for their efforts. This helps to boost their confidence and self-esteem.
- Adults model correct speech and language carefully and accurately. This helps children to overcome weaknesses in their speech and language, and supports their good progress. Children had great fun using their senses to explore the different materials during their 'Bear Hunt'.
- While most children make good progress, some of the learning activities are not challenging enough for the most able children in the class. The staff team are currently focused on providing more challenging and stimulating activities. These engage the most able children's interests and spark their curiosity so that they do even better in the early years.
- The unit for two-year-old children has made a significant impact in the induction of children into school. Highly skilled staff ensure that children settle quickly into routines. Children joyfully played outside with each other using number squares to develop basic number understanding. Transition arrangements from Nursery into Reception are almost seamless because children from both classes play and learn together, especially indoors.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the early years and behaviour is good. Relationships between adults and children are warm and positive and children usually play well with each other.
- There are plenty of opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's education. The school runs regular parental meetings and keeps parents well informed of their child's progress. Parents who spoke to inspectors were extremely positive about their children's experiences in the early years.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective and all statutory requirements are met. They also make sure that good use is made of additional funding so that disadvantaged children typically progress just as well as, or better than, other children.

## School details

Unique reference number	104649
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10037758

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Moloney
Executive headteacher	Dennis Hardiman, MBE
Head of School	Claire Bellis-Knox
Telephone number	0151 228 4137
Website	<a href="http://www.stcuthbertsliverpool.co.uk">www.stcuthbertsliverpool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:cuthberts-ht@st-cuthberts.liverpool.sch.uk">cuthberts-ht@st-cuthberts.liverpool.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of a federation (established under School Governance (Collaboration) (England) Regulation 2003) with St Sebastian’s Catholic Primary School, situated about a mile away. The schools share the same executive headteacher, governing body and some staff work in both schools.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In the early years, children attend the two-year-old unit and Nursery class part time. Those who are in the Reception class attend on a full-time basis.

- There are daily on-site breakfast and after-school clubs which are run by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes; some were joint observations with the head of school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils to discuss their learning and views about the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2, 3 and 5 and discussed their reading with them.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, middle leaders and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. A conversation was held with a local authority representative and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan; minutes of governors' meetings; checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; information about pupils' progress; attendance and behaviour records; and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across the curriculum to assess the quality of their learning and the progress they have made.
- The inspectors took account of 13 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to some parents in the playground at the start of the school day. The inspectors also considered 10 questionnaires completed by staff and 63 questionnaires completed by pupils.

## Inspection team

David Fann, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kathy Nichol

Ofsted Inspector

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