



St Cuthbert's RC Junior and Infant (NC) School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103470
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276930
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gumbleberrys Close off Cotterills Lane Stechford Birmingham, West Midlands B8 2PS
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	0121 7832205
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	0121 7852141
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Father Paul Devany
Number on roll	267	Headteacher	Mr Pat Doohan
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Cuthbert's School is a Roman Catholic Primary School serving an area of Stechford in north-east Birmingham. About seventy per cent of the pupils are from Roman Catholic families and the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is 8.8%.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below average. They get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their standards are significantly above average. This is excellent achievement. The school provides outstanding value for money. The school has many strengths, of which the most prominent are the excellent teaching, which meets each pupil's needs, and the high quality of the pupils' personal development. Behaviour in the school is outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, for instance, through the school council, to develop healthy and safe lifestyles and to make a positive contribution to the community. Through its ethos of promoting high achievement within a Catholic community, the school fosters the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development outstandingly well. The curriculum is a further strength; pupils have many opportunities to take part in sporting and other extension activities. The school's success owes much to the excellent leadership and direction of the senior managers and the governors. Parents are universal in their praise of the school. The school has no significant weaknesses but staff continue to strive to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential and that the school performs at a consistently high level. The school recognises it needs to develop its procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. The school views its effectiveness as good but it is in fact better than this. The school has improved substantially since the last inspection and has very good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continuing to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Refining the procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils reach standards that are significantly above average when they leave at the end of Year 6 and they meet challenging personal and school targets. This represents outstanding achievement. They enter school with skills and knowledge that are below average, as assessed through the local education authority's baseline assessment scheme. In the Foundation Stage they make good progress, especially in their personal development, which is outstanding. The pupils make rapid progress during Key Stage 1 and consistently achieve high standards by the end of Year 2. They write extensively and with clarity and discuss sophisticated language, such as differences between the words 'astonish' and 'astound'. A recent project to accelerate boys' development of writing skills has led to very rapid progress among a group that previously experienced difficulty. At the end of Year 6, standards have been above the national average over a period of time. A slight fall in standards in 2005 has been carefully analysed by the school and steps have been taken to ensure this is not repeated. Pupils consistently

make good progress. In Year 4, pupils can apply their mathematical knowledge to accurately work out differences in their heights. In Year 6, they can use text to make inferences, for instance, by using a reference to Berlin to infer that the setting is in Germany. Across the school, a notable feature is that all pupils produce a large amount of high quality work. All groups of pupils in the school make equally good progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school and show very positive attitudes to learning. They participate with enthusiasm in lessons and show high levels of concentration. Pupils are extremely friendly and welcoming to visitors. Behaviour is outstanding in class and around school. As one pupil said, 'I think it's the best in Birmingham'. Through effective monitoring, attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils benefit greatly from the school's extremely positive Roman Catholic ethos. For example, an inspirational assembly featured high quality singing and very good opportunities for prayer and reflection. It successfully encouraged pupils to consider how they can make a difference to others after they heard the story of Irena Spenderowa, listened to a reading and saw photographs of children in Nepal. Displays of pupils' artwork around the school, such as Aboriginal paintings and North American and Italian-style masks, are impressive and uplifting for the pupils. Pupils make outstanding contributions to the local and wider community. They raise funds for three local charities and for Uganda and Nepal. The pupils on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have made valuable contributions to improving outdoor play equipment. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They have a clear knowledge of good diet and participate well in a wide range of sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding because teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well and provide suitably challenging work that enables the pupils to make rapid progress. The pupils learn very effectively as a result of teaching they receive and their excellent behaviour. The pupils know what is expected of them and they respond very well, cooperate with each other and produce sustained, high quality work. Increasingly, they learn to work independently, for instance, when using the library for research. Teachers and their assistants are deployed skilfully to ensure that each pupil receives the level of support he or she needs. The adults' individual skills are used to best effect, for instance, by using teaching assistants to teach music and information and communication technology (ICT). The teachers' marking is of high quality. Individual pieces of the pupils' work are carefully annotated, with comments from the teachers

giving appropriate praise and showing how the work could be improved further. Pupils have individual targets in their books, through which they monitor their own progress with the help of fellow pupils, and the teachers endorse that the targets have been achieved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and other activities are excellent because these provide a very broad range of experiences that are suited to the needs and interests of all pupils. Subjects are presented in an exciting way, for instance, by creating a 'rain forest' in part of the classroom to support science, geography and other subjects. Science and ICT have both improved considerably since the last inspection. All pupils have at least two hours of sport and PE each week. During the inspection, most of the older pupils went on a cross-country run during lunchtime. There is a very wide range of other extension activities encompassing art, drama and music. Older pupils said that 'extension' was the best thing about the school. The curriculum is very successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and the skills they will need in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Children starting nursery settle really well because of highly effective induction procedures, including home visits. Staff know the pupils well so pupils are confident that they can turn to them for help when needed. As one pupil remarked, 'Teachers help you if you have a problem'. There are very good procedures for risk assessment to ensure that pupils are safe. As pupils said, 'It's very safe here'. Child protection procedures are thorough, so vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored and very well cared for. Those with learning difficulties receive effective support from teaching assistants and this enables them to have full access to the activities provided. Assessment procedures are established and used very well to guide pupils' learning. Clear learning targets are set for individuals in a range of subjects. All staff, including administrative staff, have a small group of pupils in whom they take a special interest and who they regularly hear reading.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has developed and maintained the positive ethos of the school over a considerable period. The recent appointment of a deputy head has brought new skills and thinking to the school, particularly in the areas of tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. In particular, there is a clear framework of expectation of high achievement and good behaviour to which all in the school community subscribe. The strong commitment by leaders and managers to evaluating the school's performance and improving it further includes the development of a more secure understanding of the school's performance in relation

to other schools. Regular monitoring of the quality of teaching results in effective steps being taken to make any necessary improvements. The leadership ensures that the Foundation Stage gives the youngest pupils a good start to their education. The school works well in partnership with external agencies. Pupils and parents are consulted about the school's development and their suggestions are acted upon, for example, in the provision of playground equipment. Careful thought has been given to the deployment of resources, resulting in a decision to maintain relatively high levels of staffing. The impact of this on standards is continually monitored by senior staff and governors to ensure that best value is achieved. The matters raised in the last inspection have been dealt with successfully and the school has a very good capacity to make further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils The inspectors who visited your school very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work. We want to thank you for spending the time to do this. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school and how it can be even better. We think St Cuthbert's is an excellent primary school. The best things about the school are:

- you are taught very well
- you learn quickly and your work is of very good quality
- your behaviour is excellent and there is no bullying
- there are lots of interesting things to do at school, such as the extension activities
- your teachers listen to what you think, for instance, in the school council and in class
- you are taught to care for other people, both in school and in the wider world
- your parents agree that St Cuthbert's is a very good school.

We think the school could improve even more if:

- everyone came to school every day, except when they are ill, and arrived on time
- the teachers found out more about how good the school is when compared with other schools.

Yours sincerely Mr Sadler Lead Inspector