

Inspection of St Cuthbert Mayne School

Trumlands Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4RN

Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April, and 3 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high aspirations for its pupils. Many areas of the curriculum have been successfully redesigned in recent years to increase ambition. As a result, pupils now benefit from a better quality of education than before, allowing them to achieve more highly.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Across the school, pupils behave with respect, kindness and empathy towards each other. Staff nurture and support pupils so that they are able to learn effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive bespoke pastoral and academic support. This enables them to access the curriculum with confidence. However, actions to improve attendance are not reaching some pupils who are missing out on the improved educations that the school offers.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities offered by the school. For example, pupils recently performed a musical production with skill and enthusiasm. Well-planned visits to places of cultural and historical importance enrich the curriculum. For instance, pupils relish the opportunities to visit London and Paris.

Sixth-form students describe the sixth form provision as a 'family-style setting' where each student is valued. They are positive about the education, opportunities and guidance they receive, which enables them to move on to appropriate next steps.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have worked diligently to make significant improvements to the curriculum and its delivery in the classroom. The current curriculum is well-designed, enabling pupils to build on their prior knowledge securely over time. The school's published outcomes in 2024 were below national averages, however. This was in part due to poor pupil attendance and high levels of in-year transfers into the school in key stage 4. This meant that some pupils could not fully benefit from the quality of education on offer.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Most staff use information about what pupils know to adapt how they teach the curriculum. Most teaching addresses pupils' misconceptions well. However, on occasions, teaching does not routinely check pupils' understanding as robustly as it could do. This is particularly the case for pupils who have high rates of absence who may have additional gaps in their knowledge.

Reading is a high priority across the school, both in subject areas and for pupils' wider enjoyment. Teachers check pupils' reading knowledge. Where required, they provide appropriate and effective support.

Staff help pupils to build their vocabulary. On occasions, they help pupils to communicate their understanding through extended writing well. However, this practice is not consistent. Some pupils do not get the support they need to express their knowledge in

extended writing when this is required of them. This hinders them when applying their knowledge to new contexts and situations, including in public examinations.

Pupils with SEND receive strong support. The school identifies their needs with precision and provides individualised support where required. Staff adapt how they teach the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Students in the sixth form particularly value how the school supports them. The school provides a breadth of subjects to address both the needs of students as well as their interests. Students receive informed guidance about careers and further education to help them to consider their next steps.

The school has addressed the poor attendance of some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, but still has more work to do in this area. In some cases, high levels of mobility in recent years have compounded the low rates of attendance, as pupils transition into the school. Although there has been a marked improvement in the attendance of some pupils, strategies to improve attendance are not reaching some pupils. Overall attendance remains too low and continues to have a detrimental impact on some pupils' education.

Pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school at breaktimes is calm, orderly and respectful. Pupils follow the school routines well. In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. They aspire to do well. The school demonstrates a continued commitment to addressing the issues that lead to suspension from the school. Consequently, the school has successfully reduced permanent exclusions and suspensions.

The personal development programme is effective in teaching pupils about the world around them. They learn the importance of mutual respect, individual liberty and free speech. The school offers a range of enrichment opportunities, ranging from sports clubs to academic support. The careers programme is well-planned, enabling pupils to learn about opportunities for work, apprenticeships and further education, both locally and nationally.

Governance of the school is effective. Governors know the school well and challenge and support the school in its continuing school improvement journey. Staff are proud to work at the school. The school supports staff well regarding both their workload well-being. Parents and carers are positive about the work of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's attendance strategies are not reaching some pupils as well as others. Pupils with high levels of absence develop gaps in their learning which are not

sufficiently identified or addressed when they return. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should intensify its actions to improve attendance for some pupils and better address the knowledge gaps that pupils experience, particularly when this is as a result of absence.

- On occasions, teaching does not enable some pupils to develop their writing skills as well as others. Where this is the case, some pupils find it difficult to express their knowledge in more complex extended writing tasks. The school should ensure that staff better support pupils' writing skills so that pupils can communicate their knowledge in depth and with complexity.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	113551
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10378889
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1021
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachael Cox and Kathleen Lund
Headteacher	James Down
Website	www.st-cuthbertmayne.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school works in partnership with a multi-academy trust, Education South West.
- The school currently uses two registered and two unregistered alternative provisions for pupils.
- St Cuthbert Mayne School is a voluntary aided school in the Diocese of Plymouth and Exeter.
- The school has a Roman Catholic and Church of England religious character.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection started on 23 April 2025. Inspectors returned on 3 June 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and art. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school and a range of other aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector in June met with representatives of the multi-academy trust partner.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to governance, standards and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered parents' and carers' responses to Ofsted's surveys, and responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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