

# St Stephen and All Martyrs' CofE School, Lever Bridge

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105217
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	355727
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Elaine Murray HMI

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Ashworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Cummins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Radcliffe Road Bolton Lancashire BL2 1NZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed nine teachers and visited 11 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and questionnaires from 43 parents and carers and 18 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact of initiatives to raise attainment in mathematics and writing by the end of Key Stage 2?
- How effective is provision in providing sufficient challenge for more-able pupils?
- Do children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- Does the recently extended senior leadership team have sufficient capacity to move the school forward?

## Information about the school

St Stephen's is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils believed to be eligible for free school meals is above average at 27%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. In recent years, the number of pupils joining the school after the Early Years Foundation Stage has been higher than average. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection.

The school has the Investors in People award, Activemark and standard International School Award. The school operates a before- and after-school club which is managed by the governing body.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Stephen and All Martyrs' C of E School is providing a satisfactory quality of education. However, there are some good features. The headteacher and the recently strengthened senior leadership team have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching is now good overall. The children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress. The care, guidance and support received by pupils are good. One consequence of this is the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Until recently the majority of children entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill development that was below national expectations and then made satisfactory progress so that by the end of Year 6 attainment was below average. Since September 2010, significant improvements to teaching have accelerated progress rapidly in lessons, although overall progress is satisfactory due to some gaps remaining in learning. Nevertheless, standards are rising strongly and the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is now in line with national expectations.

Strong features of teaching are the good quality planning that is well linked to lesson objectives and pupils' personal targets. Consequently, in lessons pupils make good progress because work is accurately pitched to meet the needs of nearly all groups. There still remain a minority of satisfactory English and mathematics lessons. When these occur, the progress of a few groups of pupils is slower than it should be. The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets statutory requirements and provides a good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities. The school is successfully developing a creative curriculum which is matching the curriculum more closely to pupils' interests and needs. However, pupils' cultural development is limited as there are not yet sufficient opportunities for them to develop this aspect.

The school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in which pupils' confidence and self-esteem are developed successfully. There is a strong Christian ethos which effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs such as tennis, football and gardening. They show pride in their roles of responsibility within school, for example as lunchtime monitors. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and systems for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory. While statutory requirements are met, recently the evaluations of procedures and risk assessments have not been as regular as they should be. The school has accurately identified where it needs to promote community cohesion, but the plans for a few improvements are still in the early stage of development.

The school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement is demonstrated by the positive changes that have already taken place in the quality of teaching and pupil's attainment. Self-evaluation is accurate. Effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality

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of teaching and learning have improved teaching and learning so that attainment is rising. However, some procedures for school improvement are too new to have full effect. For example, tracking procedures identify underachievement successfully but are not yet sufficiently rigorous to provide senior leaders with an accurate picture of pupils' rate of progress and attainment. The Governing Body is supportive of the headteacher. It is involved in evaluating the school, aware of the challenges it faces and holds the school to account for tackling important weaknesses. The school engages well with parents and carers and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and progress.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
  - sharing good practice to reduce the small proportion of lessons where teaching is satisfactory.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - strengthening systems for tracking pupils' progress to provide a consistently accurate picture
  - ensuring improved rigour of safeguarding by more regular and systematic evaluations of procedures and risk assessments.
- Improve pupils' cultural development and the promotion of community cohesion by:
  - identifying more opportunities within the curriculum to develop cultural awareness
  - establishing stronger links with contrasting communities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

In the large majority of lessons pupils engage well and are motivated to learn. They show a good understanding of their targets for learning and this contributes positively to their good progress in many lessons. For example in a Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically in pairs to complete a play script. They knowledgeably described their learning objectives for writing a play script and referred to these and their targets during the lesson. In most lessons pupils behave well, particularly where lessons provide interest and challenge. Where lessons are less effective in sustaining pupils' interest, a small minority of pupils lack independence in managing their own behaviour. Consequently, behaviour can fall short of the school's expectations.

Attainment is improving and is now average in English and mathematics by Year 6. Although overall progress is satisfactory, it is rising rapidly because of stronger teaching and a better planned curriculum which avoids repetition of work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the carefully targeted support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils enjoy school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and have positive relationships with staff and each other. Pupils respond well to the plethora of reward systems in place to reinforce and encourage good behaviour. Pupils show a good

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understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. There is a high uptake of school meals and pupils comment on how school meals are healthy. Pupils have ready access to water and understand the importance of drinking it regularly. Pupils take pride in their responsibilities as monitors around school. Within lessons they happily take responsibility for tasks such as ensuring the class are directed to the correct groups and places for guided reading.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, there is a good pace, learning objectives are clearly explained and linked to pupils targets for learning. Marking is meticulous, clearly focused and consistently guides pupils on the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work, successfully ensuring that they take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson pupils assessed their work on writing opening sentences to see whether they had met their targets. Where teaching is satisfactory, lesson introductions are too long and leave little time for pupils to demonstrate their understanding and engage in meaningful tasks. A lack of challenge at times means that a few pupils are not fully motivated and engaged in their learning.

The steps taken to establish a creative curriculum are beginning to bear fruit. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and varied, and links are being made between subjects.

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For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils enjoyed using and applying problem-solving skills based on scenarios relating to books they had been looking at in literacy lessons as part of the school's Book Week. Recently introduced systems to track coverage are beginning to ensure that there is no danger of repetition. There are plans to improve the curriculum further by allowing more explicit opportunities to promote pupils' learning for English and mathematics in all subjects.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for groups such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are in danger of exclusion. The school works unstintingly to make sure that these pupils make good progress. Their academic progress is tracked and the school oversees their well-being through involvement with parents and other agencies. Arrangements ensure smooth transitions into school. Attendance is average and rising as the school works closely with families where attendance is an issue.

The breakfast and after-school club provides healthy snacks for pupils. The club promotes the school's ethos well and provides an appropriate range of enjoyable activities for pupils.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers in the school have a clear focus on raising achievement for all pupils. The developing systems for tracking and reviewing pupils' progress have had a positive impact on identifying areas of underachievement. As a result, the school has developed strategies to address these concerns. For example, strategies have been put in place to address underachievement in mathematics, with the result that attainment of nearly all pupils is rising. The headteacher has recently extended leadership to a broader range of staff who are clear about their roles and are beginning to work effectively with their colleagues. Measures to improve the quality of teaching have been effective, although the full impact of improvements has yet to be realised in ensuring pupils' good progress.

All safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current requirements ensuring staff are appropriately checked for their suitability to work with children. The Governing Body provides satisfactory management and offers valued support to the school. It is fully involved in evaluating the school and is involved in setting priorities for improvement. In a few cases governors have not paid sufficient attention to the regular review of risk assessment.

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The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils and tackles discrimination adequately. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school community is harmonious and the school has links within the immediate locality. The school's recent attempts to establish partnerships with schools in contrasting localities have been thwarted and the school is attempting to put this back on track.

The school has positive relationships with parents and carers. There are effective systems in place to ensure a regular exchange of information, and parents are well informed about the life of the school and their child's progress in learning.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start in the Reception class, children's level of skills are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and literacy. As a result of good support, teaching and care, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. By the time they join the Year 1 class the majority have attained the goals expected for their age. Links to the Year 1 class ensure smooth transition and a successful start for all children in Key Stage 1.

Children settle quickly to life and school enjoying the wealth of exciting, stimulating and fun activities. The quality of teaching and use of assessment are good. Staff make accurate assessments and plan opportunities for children which challenge them to learn well and enjoy school. For example, the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' led to a range of exciting opportunities in music, number and role play where the children delighted in donning costumes and masks to learn as the characters from the story. A correct balance of child and adult-led activities ensures children can make informed choices in their learning which staff effectively develop and assess. Children delight in exploring the range of learning opportunities created in the outdoors. Whether digging for mini-beasts or



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running the popular takeaway shop children never tire of continuing their learning in the outdoor setting.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Children feel safe and well supported through successful welfare arrangements. While the staff make good use of the area some of the resources are becoming tired and in need of refurbishment. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and senior leadership team have plans to improve provision.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Completed questionnaires were received from 22% of parents and carers. The vast majority say that their child enjoys school and feel well informed about their child's progress. A small minority of questionnaires had negative comments about the quality of communication with parents and carers. The findings of the inspection team did not support this view. Nevertheless, these were pointed out to the headteacher and governors who will investigate them further.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen and All Martyrs' CoFE School, Lever Bridge 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	63	11	26	2	5	2	5
The school keeps my child safe	17	40	22	51	2	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	44	20	47	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	56	15	35	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	51	18	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	47	21	49	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	35	25	58	3	7	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)	12	28	25	58	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	40	20	47	4	9	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	40	19	44	6	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	35	17	40	7	16	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	20	47	17	40	6	14	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	47	18	42	1	2	3	7

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Stephen and All Martyrs' CofE School, Lever Bridge, Bolton, BL2 1NZ**

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to see how your school is doing. Thank you for talking to us and sharing your views about your school. I will explain what we found.

We judged your school to be providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means that your school does some things well, but other things need to improve. We judged that the standards you reach are the same as those expected for your age. Over the seven years you spend in school your progress is satisfactory. We think you can do better. To help you, we have asked your school to do the following things;

- raise the standards you reach in English and mathematics
- make sure all your lessons are good so that you do even better
- make sure the school knows exactly how much progress you are making
- teach you more about different cultures in society and make stronger links with communities that are different from the one that you live in.

We enjoyed meeting you and were pleased that you were so welcoming and polite to us. We know that you have a good start to school in the Reception class and are aware of how to keep fit and healthy. You can help by continuing to work hard in lessons.

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