

# St Thomas Moorside CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105695
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	377280
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eric Crompton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Adam Laskey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Coleridge Road Sholver Oldham OL1 4RL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6249290
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6204706
<b>Email address</b>	info@st-thomas-moorside.oldham.sch.uk

---



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright 2012

## Introduction

Inspection team

Clare Henderson

Additional inspector

John Evans

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by seven teachers and three teaching assistants, listened to individual pupils reading in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6 and scrutinised pupils' work. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, a representative of the local authority and two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The inspectors scrutinised the questionnaires completed by staff and pupils and analysed the 52 received from parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average; the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school during the school year. The governing body manages a breakfast club which was observed during this inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has Healthy School and Investors in People status. A children's centre is located on the same site. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and a separate report can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Keys to its success are the headteacher's outstanding leadership, excellent relationships with parents and carers and pupils' outstanding behaviour. Furthermore, the school promotes outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and enrichment to pupils' learning within the curriculum. The school is not yet outstanding overall because pupils' achievement is not consistently outstanding.
- Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staffing disruptions in the past in Years 3 and 4 slowed progress for these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The school addressed this by improving the quality of teaching pupils received. As a result, at least good progress is made through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. When they leave school in Year 6, their attainment is broadly average overall and rising rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. Parents and carers unanimously report that their children are safe and happy in school and this is endorsed by inspection findings. Pupils show high levels of respect and care towards each other and to all adults. Their behaviour around the school and in lessons is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is good with outstanding practice evident. Teachers and support staff are extremely attentive to pupils' personal and academic needs. This enables all groups of pupils to make at least good progress. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and members of the governing body have given high priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning and being involved in reviewing the school's performance. However, some senior leaders, new to their present role, have not had enough involvement in monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement.

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

- Raise the achievement of all pupils to outstanding in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities, in all classes, for them to extend their writing skills across all the subjects of the curriculum.
  
- Raise the quality of leadership and management to outstanding by:
  - further involving all senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of pupils' achievement.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress from low starting points. They rapidly learn to work with and care for each other. During the inspection, for instance, older children were observed taking care of the younger Nursery-aged ones, helping them to settle in and enjoy the wide range of exciting activities on offer.

At the last inspection, attainment in Years 1 and 2 was identified as an area to improve. The school has very effectively addressed this issue so that pupils now make good and often outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. A key priority in all classes to develop pupils' understanding and application of letters and sounds has successfully ensured that, by Year 6, attainment is above average overall in reading. High focus on improving reading skills and close collaboration with parents and carers result in pupils' above average attainment in reading at the end of Year 2.

Progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics during this school year is at least good overall. Attainment in the current Year 6 in reading and mathematics is above average, particularly for the more-able pupils. This is because teachers and support staff set very high expectations and a firm belief that pupils can achieve the highest levels. Attainment is broadly average in writing. Although it is rapidly improving in the current school year, pupils whose progress slowed in the past because of staffing disruptions are still making up lost ground. This is why achievement is judged good rather than outstanding. Furthermore, pupils do not consistently have enough opportunities, in all classes, to extend their writing skills across all subjects of the curriculum.

Learning is good and often outstanding in lessons. It is particularly strong when pupils' learning is challenging and thought-provoking. For instance, Reception-aged children were observed investigating and discussing whether objects would float or sink. The children were encouraged, through probing questions, to making predictions and find answers to the questions set skilfully by the adults. 'It's floating because it is made of plastic', was one of a range of well-thought-out answers given. Such enquiry-based learning is part of daily practice and rapidly enables children to

think and to express their ideas. In Year 6, pupils achieved highly as they enthusiastically solved algebra problems and explained the methods they used with strong evidence of applying previously learnt calculation skills to the task in hand. Through excellent support and quality provision, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those at the early stage of learning English as an additional language and those who are new to the school make at least good progress, when compared to similar groups nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents and carers agree with the inspection findings that their children make at least good progress.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers unanimously believe that their children are taught well and inspection evidence supports this view. In all lessons, there is a real purposeful atmosphere as pupils are fully absorbed in their learning. Marking of pupils' work is highly reflective of the strengths evident while providing pupils with clear direction on how to improve further. In all lessons, there are excellent opportunities, which pupils fully embrace, to reflect on, discuss and empathise with moral, social and cultural issues. Relationships with pupils are a key strength of teaching. Teachers and support staff are extremely dedicated and committed to the pupils' well-being and to promoting success in learning for all pupils including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Imaginative teaching and pupils' full participation in learning are integral to all lessons. For instance, Years 5 and 6 recorded and created a film using flip cameras. They confidently planned, performed and recorded a crime investigation adding sound and recording interviews to solve a mystery. Such learning extends pupils' confidence and communication skills very effectively.

Interesting, exciting learning is rooted in real-life experiences. All teachers provide excellent opportunities for pupils to empathise with situations and characters, for example, when reflecting on life for the Victorians or the feelings of children when evacuated during the Second World War. Pupils enthusiastically say, 'in our philosophy lessons we talk about and try to improve problems we see in the world'. Listening to different styles of music, reflecting on the work of different artists, sharing residential holidays with pupils from another school with a different religious background, all heighten their spiritual and cultural development very effectively. Teachers, through high quality teaching of reading, information and communication technology (ICT), music, sports and Spanish, are successful in promoting enjoyment of learning and give pupils the confidence to make mistakes and take risks.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The outstanding behaviour of all pupils has a significant impact on pupils' good achievement. Pupils are mature, confident and extremely proud of belonging to this school. Behaviour is never less than good in all the teaching observed and much is outstanding. The school's very well-embedded reward system, including the merit system and 'always' badges, through which consistently good behaviour is rewarded, makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' outstanding behaviour.

Staff at all levels are committed and highly skilled in promoting good behaviour and consequently defuse and address all issues efficiently and fairly, allowing lessons to

proceed without interruptions. Pupils' behaviour around the school, in the corridors, dining hall and in assemblies continues to be outstanding. The school teaches and responds to all types of bullying and, as a result, pupils say they feel very safe in school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about this aspect of the school's provision. They do not express any concerns about bullying or feel that their children's learning is being disrupted by poor behaviour. The pupils' views and the school's recording of incidents show that these are managed well and parents and carers are kept very well informed. The school attendance rates have improved rapidly since the last inspection and are above average overall. A daily breakfast club, attended by high numbers of pupils and their parents and carers, demonstrates the high regard and strength of relationships and support parents and carers have for the school staff. 'I honestly feel the teachers in this school treat their positions as far more important than just a job, they really care', is a view typical of those received during the inspection.

### **Leadership and management**

The school is led extremely effectively by the headteacher. Senior leaders in close partnership with staff identify priorities clearly that will improve the school further. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. However, a few senior leaders new to their present roles are not fully involved in monitoring the quality of pupils' achievement. Staff say how much they value the support they receive and how their planned professional development and opportunities to review this help them address the school's priorities. Staff work in close collaboration with each other to review and monitor pupils' progress across the subjects they study. Good progress has been made in response to the school's identification of its weaker areas, as shown by the rise in achievement throughout the school and particularly in Years 1 and 2. This demonstrates the school's clear vision and relentless drive to improve further.

The governing body has a good range of skills that enables it to give school leaders good challenge, as well as support. It is knowledgeable and well-informed and fully involved in monitoring the work of the school. Visits and visitors enrich the understanding of topics studied and pupils are enthusiastic about these opportunities and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities available. However, the curriculum is good rather than outstanding because pupils do not consistently have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills across all subjects of the curriculum. The governing body, senior leaders and staff work effectively to prevent discrimination and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to enjoy the full curriculum.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development exceptionally well. Numerous opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work, relationships and behaviour are woven successfully into learning. Excellent partnerships with the children's centre and local schools ensure smooth transition at all stages of the pupils' education. Parents and carers say that they are very well informed about the work of the school. They particularly welcome being enabled to establish a parent forum group which works alongside school staff to draw up policies and consequently be fully involved in improving the quality of education their children

receive. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and parents and carers expressed no concerns about their children's safety.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils/Students

**Inspection of St Thomas Moorside CofE (VA) Primary School, Oldham, OL1 4RL**

We really enjoyed our time in your school and two of the highlights for us were seeing so many of you, with your parents and carers, enjoying the breakfast club and talking to so many of you about your experiences at school.

You will be pleased to know that we agree with you that yours is a good school. These are some of the things we liked best. You make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You are very helpful and caring in the way you look after one another. Teaching is good and helps you to be interested in what you are doing. Behaviour is outstanding and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well within the curriculum you study. You have an exciting range of activities, which help you excel in ICT, music, Spanish and sports. We read the comments made by your parents and carers. They were very pleased with all that your teachers do to help you to learn and enjoy school. Please thank them for taking the time to write to us.

Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body are determined to make your school even better. To do this I have asked them to ensure:

- that you have more opportunities to extend your skills at writing in all the subjects you study
- that all the senior leaders are fully involved in checking you achieve as well as you can in all your learning.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson  
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).