

# St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Leigh

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106448
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	395455
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe Winstanley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barry Foster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Astley Street Leigh WN7 2AS
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Lynne Read  
Maureen Hints  
Chanan Tomlin

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, senior and middle managers and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents for self-evaluation and safeguarding. They also studied standards in reading, pupils' workbooks and the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the 134 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

The school is larger in size than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds; a small number have minority ethnic heritage and speak English as an additional language. A lower than average number of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has Healthy Schools status. It meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum standards expected by the government for attainment and progress. The governing body provides a daily breakfast club on the premises and this is referred to within the text.

**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>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is outstanding. In Key Stage 2 achievement is good; there are inconsistencies in teaching and progress in mathematics is relatively slower than in English. For these reasons the school is not outstanding overall.
- Good improvements are evident in achievement at Key Stage 2. Attainment in English is close to the high levels seen previously at the school. Progress and attainment in mathematics are catching up but still have some way to go. In particular, some more-able pupils do not consistently have the challenge they need in order to reach the higher-level targets set for them.
- Teaching is good overall and there are examples of outstanding practice, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Lessons are interesting and pupils are well motivated. Some improvements have been introduced in teaching but not all are established. Key Stage 2 pupils do not always have useful targets for improvement in mathematics and marking in this subject does not consistently provide useful advice.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Lessons are conducted in a calm, purposeful manner. Attendance is above average and pupils have good habits of timekeeping. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well overall. However, pupils have few experiences to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity.
- The headteacher and staff have high expectations and are ambitious for their pupils. Leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good, although middle leaders do not monitor teaching rigorously enough to ensure consistency. The governing body is supportive but its monitoring systems rely heavily on school reports for information about pupils' achievement and the views of parents and pupils.

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

- Improve achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that the more able pupils are challenged consistently so they reach the targets set for them
  - ensuring that pupils have useful advice on how to improve their work through clear targets and helpful marking
  - developing a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of lessons in order to ensure consistency in teaching across classes.
- Develop systems for the governing body to be more actively engaged in checking performance and gathering parents', carers' and pupils' views.
- Enhance pupils' cultural development and understanding of diversity by providing more opportunities for them to engage with people from different cultures and faith backgrounds.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are making good progress and that the school meets their children's needs. Inspection findings support these views overall, although there are some differences in progress for mathematics between age groups.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age. The excellent provision enables children to make rapid progress in personal skills and to develop a thirst for learning. For instance, as part of their 'Farmyard Animal' project, children wrote their own stories about 'Daisy the Duck' or 'Henry the Horse', using correct punctuation and logical spelling. They painted pictures of animals, taking careful note of colour and markings, and 'sold goods' from their farm shop. Progress is outstanding; by the time they enter Year 1 children are working just above the expected level of learning and writing is a strength.

Attainment has improved this year and is above average overall by Year 6. It is not yet fully restored to the high levels of previous years because attainment and progress in English are better than in mathematics. Following the 2011 tests the school identified a number of issues with the tracking of pupils' progress and in teaching. Measures were introduced to address the problems and have been successful in boosting achievement across Key Stage 2. A very good proportion of Year 6 pupils attain the higher level in reading, enjoy a wide range of books and have well-developed study skills. They write expressively and in a wide range of genres, using accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Progress in mathematics is improving across the key stage and many shortfalls in previous learning have been addressed. Some Year 5 pupils were working their way confidently through challenging mathematical problems and those in Year 3 were working with digital

time and the 24-hour clock. Some of the more able pupils, however, are not consistently challenged to the full. In Key Stage 1 an increased emphasis on learning phonics (the sounds that letters make) ensures that most pupils read confidently by the age of six and attainment is above average. By Year 2 pupils have consolidated their skills further so that achievement in writing and mathematics is above average.

Pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and make the same progress as their classmates. The progress of boys and girls is tracked very closely, with intervention work successfully ensuring that all groups make equal progress.

### **Quality of teaching**

The very large majority of parents and carers feel that their children are well taught. Pupils have similar views: they say they enjoy learning and that that adults provide good help. Inspection findings support these views.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is outstanding. Planning is based on children's interests and is carefully structured to take learning forward at an accelerated rate. Tasks include stimulating opportunities for children to choose activities, explore their world and develop independence. One excellent session included opportunities for children to manoeuvre their wheeled toys around a track, following the directions and signs they had made themselves. They played collaborative games and worked out the scores, as well as using computer programs to find patterns.

As pupils move through school they experience good teaching and some is outstanding in Key Stage 1 where expectations are consistently high. In a Year 1 lesson pupils used adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and time connectives in their writing to produce work of a very high quality for this age group. In Key Stage 2 teachers include good challenge in their English lessons but the more able pupils are not always fully stretched in their mathematics work. Targets provide advice for pupils about how to improve their English work over time but they have little advice to support their learning in mathematics. In some classes marking is detailed and helpful. For example, teachers give 'two stars' showing the good points and 'a wish' highlighting where, and how, improvement could be made. It is less effective in mathematics. Teaching assistants are successful in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons. The use of peer and self-assessment, especially for the older pupils, is very effective and helping them to become independent learners. Careful planning provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate the key skills they are learning.

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

Behaviour is good overall. Pupils say they enjoy school and have lots of friends. Most parents and carers agree that behaviour is good but a few expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils say that staff listen to both sides and act effectively to deal with any incidents as they occur. That view is confirmed by a scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions. These show that pupils, including those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, are well supported in coping with school life and lessons are

very rarely disrupted. However, the school acknowledges that outcomes have not always been reported quickly enough or in sufficient detail to parents and carers. The governing body is currently reviewing the recording and reporting systems in place and improving dialogue in such cases.

Safety is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Through projects and lessons on personal development they have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils are well equipped to deal with risk and know what to do if they have a problem. Class rules are developed by the pupils themselves; these are displayed, respected and followed. Good opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, school councillors contribute much to the day-to-day running of school and to the process of decision making. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through good links with the church and local community. Pupils learn about, and show respect for, different faiths and cultures but have little opportunity to enhance their understanding of diversity at first hand.

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. Comprehensive evaluation systems, including pupils' regular assessment results, ensure that senior leaders have a clear overview of provision and performance. The information gathered is fed into school development planning; this is focused on the main priorities, with clear actions and measurable targets. Together with pupil assessment data, school development planning is also used to good effect to manage the performance of the staff. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment in English at Key Stage 2 have improved significantly this year. This has been achieved through improvements to teaching, well-planned professional development and challenging termly targets. The school has good capacity to improve further. Subject and middle leadership is an area for development at the school. Monitoring systems are in place but are not yet applied rigorously enough in mathematics to ensure a consistency of approach across classes.

The good curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and ensures that individual needs are well met. There is a key focus on the teaching of basic skills but also a broad range of experiences that are stimulating and provide depth and creativity in learning. Visits to places of interest, residential experiences and competitive sport all help to extend pupils' horizons. The school does not tolerate discrimination in any form and this contributes significantly to the harmonious community. Staff and members of the governing body are focused on providing equality, ensuring that opportunities are open to all, regardless of disability or special needs. Staff work hard and make good use of outside agencies to source equipment and expertise to cater for specific needs. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day, offering healthy food and interesting activities.

Good partnerships with other schools ensure continuity of learning and care through transition programmes for those pupils moving on to secondary education. Links with the nearby Children's Centre provide support for families and the partnership with the pre-school helps to ensure uniformity of approach for those starting school.

Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and staff training is up to date. The governing body provides good support for school leaders. Members have recently undergone further training and are keen to develop their monitoring role. At present, they have few systems in place for gathering information at first hand, such as sending out their own parent/carer and pupil questionnaires, or for checking assessment data.



## 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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Leigh, WN7 2AS**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. St Thomas' CofE Primary provides you with a good standard of education and you have a flying start in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1. Good teaching enables you to achieve well and the school helps you to develop into well-mannered and confident people. Behaviour and safety are good. You get on well together and take good care of each other. A special thank you goes to the pupils who joined us for some interesting conversations. It is good to know that you like your teachers, learn a lot and are happy in school.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Your English work has improved really well recently. However, we think those of you in Key Stage 2 could do even better in mathematics and that all of you would enjoy meeting people from different backgrounds, so we have asked the adults in your school to:

- make sure that there is always good challenge for those of you who learn quickly
- make sure that you have targets to help you improve your work and that marking provides you with a good amount of advice
- provide opportunities for you to meet with pupils from different cultures and backgrounds.

In addition, we have asked your teachers to check lessons to make sure that all these improvements are working. Your governors are keen to be more involved, so we have asked them to check on your views and those of your parents and carers, and keep a closer eye on your achievements.

You can help by continuing to work hard, being keen to learn and keeping up the high level of attendance. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Read  
Lead inspector

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