

# St Stephen's CE Primary School

Audenshaw Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5HD

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved substantially since the previous inspection because of excellent leadership from the headteacher and good teamwork from staff. This has led to much better teaching and learning throughout the school. The governing body has supported the school well in this process.
- Pupils make good progress because of teaching that engages their interest and enthusiasm.
- Attainment has risen in all subjects, and pupils do particularly well in reading.
- The Reception class gives pupils an excellent start to their school life.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other regardless of their background, and work and play together happily.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are keen to succeed.
- Pupils feel safe and have great confidence in their teachers to help them with their work, or to sort out any problems they have.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still a few inconsistencies in teaching, so that progress slows in parts of some lessons. Aspects that are good in most lessons are occasionally weak in others.
- Achievement in writing, despite improvements, remains below that in other subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed substantial parts of 13 lessons. They made several shorter observations to see pupils being taught about how letters in words represent different sounds, to observe pupils being given extra help in small groups and to check on the range of activities in different subjects.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority. Informal conversations took place with pupils, staff and parents.
- Only eight replies were available to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors took note of these, along with 82 replies received to the school's own parental questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, particularly that related to keeping pupils safe, and their behaviour and attendance.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress was checked, along with the results of recent national assessments. Pupils' work in books was examined, including a sample from last year, as well as displays around the school.
- Several younger pupils were heard reading.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Demster

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a little below average in size for a primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, but about a third come from a variety of other ethnic groups. An increasing proportion of pupils, more than in most schools, speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, at around a third, is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported at school action, is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- There has been considerable disruption to school staffing since the previous inspection, with several current teachers new to the school since then.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for its own pupils.

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

- Improve pupils' progress through eliminating remaining inconsistencies in teaching, particularly by:
  - ensuring that pupils are always given tasks that are neither too easy nor too hard for them
  - making sure that a good pace of learning is kept up throughout lessons
  - always checking up that all pupils know what they are doing, and are making the progress they should be, during lessons
  - marking pupils' work so that they are always shown how they can improve, and then checking that teachers' advice is followed in subsequent tasks.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by:
  - consolidating and extending the work done already to use drama and discussion as a stimulus to pupils' writing
  - focusing more, in line with current plans, on systematically developing pupils' skills in punctuation, grammar and spelling
  - improving pupils' fluency in getting their ideas onto paper by ensuring they use a joined handwriting style from an earlier age, and insisting they use this more consistently in their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Achievement has improved considerably across the school over the last two years, with greatly accelerated learning in the Reception class in particular, and in Year 6. The pupils who left Year 6 in 2012 made good progress overall during Key Stage 2, particularly in reading, and did exceptionally well in their final year. Their achievement in writing was not as strong, partly because progress in the subject had not been as consistent, but also because of relatively low starting points.
- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that vary between individuals but are overall lower than those expected for their ages, particularly in elements that would support their writing. Because the provision in the class is of high quality, they make at least good progress in all areas of learning to reach standards that are broadly average by the time they go into Year 1. Their early writing skills, however, are still weak compared to their attainment in other areas.
- Attainment is broadly average, but is stronger in reading and weaker in writing. For too many pupils, the quality of their punctuation, spelling and grammar does not match the content of their writing. Most do not write in a fluent, joined hand, even in the oldest classes, and this slows them in getting their ideas onto paper.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and make good progress because of the successful emphasis placed on the subject by the school. A strong focus on how the sounds in words relate to how they are written supports pupils' progress in the younger classes. In older classes, frequent lessons to develop more complex reading skills sustain pupils' good progress, as well as extending their interest in different texts.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as their classmates because they have work that is tightly matched to their stage of learning, and skilled teaching assistants provide a good mix of challenge and support. Extra help for individuals or groups is successful in accelerating the progress of any who start to fall behind.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups make similarly good progress, and pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported to become fluent, so they also achieve well. A gap between the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium and that of their classmates is closing significantly.
- Progress is now good throughout the school. Variations in progress between different classes have been largely eliminated as teaching has improved.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Most teaching is now good and an increasing proportion is outstanding. A high proportion of inadequate teaching, identified by the school two years ago, has been eliminated. During the inspection, some good teaching was observed in every class.
- Teachers establish clear routines, and set high expectations for work and behaviour. Pupils respond well and try hard to succeed. They enjoy lessons because teachers frequently give them exciting things to do, and teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is often transmitted to pupils.
- A feature of many lessons is the provision of different tasks to pupils to match their varying abilities, so that all learn well. Occasionally, this is not done precisely enough. Sometimes, brighter pupils are not challenged by work that is too easy and do not learn as fast as they should. At other times, a few pupils have work that is too hard for them and become confused.
- A strength of many lessons is the way adults monitor pupils' ongoing progress, intervening to put them right if they are confused, and challenging them to improve their work and refine their thinking. This is a major factor in the excellent progress often made in Reception, as the skilled adults continually help develop children's learning through sensitive interventions in their

play. Very occasionally, older pupils are left for too long to get on independently without anyone checking that they are on track, and then the pace of learning can slow down.

- Most lessons have a good pace and a lot is done in the time available. Occasionally, the pace can slow, for a variety of reasons. For example, sometimes pupils who have succeeded quickly with a task have to wait for others to catch up with them, or pupils spend too long waiting to see the teacher to ask for help or reassurance.
- Teachers increasingly engage pupils through discussion and drama, and this is successful in stimulating pupils to write and helping them sort out their ideas. This was observed when Year 4 pupils role-played people caught up in an air-raid. Despite some initial shyness, they soon became fully involved and made sensitive observations about the feelings and actions of people in this situation. The school is rightly increasing such practice to generate more interest and enthusiasm for writing.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and, in the best practice seen, give them very clear pointers to help them improve, which are followed up rigorously in future tasks. However, this practice is inconsistent between different classes and subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, and pupils are polite, sensible and cheerful. They get along well together, regardless of background, and work very effectively in collaboration in pairs or small groups. They enjoy learning, as well as the social aspects of the school and the friends they make.
- Breakfast club provides an enjoyable start to the day, and supports the social development of those who attend, as well as making healthy food available. Good behaviour and positive relationships are evident.
- Collective worship makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development, and exemplary behaviour was seen during one assembly, where pupils commented positively and sensitively about their friends' personal qualities. Teachers consistently reinforce moral values and pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and feel secure in school. They have learned about different kinds of bullying, and how to deal with them, and are clear about the differences between this and other misbehaviour. They say that any incidents are quickly dealt with by staff and would be very confident in approaching staff if they had concerns.
- Pupils work hard in class and settle diligently to tasks, getting on conscientiously when learning independently. They know their targets and are keen to meet them. Their enjoyment of learning is reflected in their improved attendance, which is above average.
- The school is successful in helping those pupils who find it difficult to conform to the usual expectations of behaviour to improve. As a result, such pupils are fully included in the life of the school, settle down socially, and make good progress academically.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has been relentless in driving up the quality of teaching and hence pupils' learning. She has been supported by an increasingly cohesive staff team, who now share a clear vision for improvement, take responsibility for improving their own practice and work collaboratively to help each other succeed.
- Major improvements in the leadership and management of the Reception class have moved it from being a weakness at the previous inspection to a major strength of the school.
- Better tracking of pupils' progress has helped staff work together to identify issues and address them, whether for individuals or groups. This has been particularly successful in promoting equal opportunities for all groups and closing any gaps in progress that were identified.
- A wide ranging and interesting curriculum, with meaningful links made between subjects,

promotes pupils' interest and learning, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Links with parents have been improved and are exemplary in the Reception class. They are given good information about their children's progress and events in school, and they are positive about the school and what it provides for their children.
- Performance management is used well to improve practice and support developments. Teachers have clear targets that address the school's priorities, as well as their own professional needs. Good opportunities are provided for extra training to help staff to meet these targets.
- The local authority has provided good support in making the many improvements over the last two years. In particular, it has brokered specific help from other local schools and consultants and has coordinated work between them, and helped organise funding.
- Resources are managed well. In particular, the school makes optimum use of the limited space available both indoors and out to minimise the impact of this shortcoming on pupils' progress. The pupil premium has been used well to benefit the relevant pupils and narrow the gap between their achievement and that of their classmates.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides a good mixture of support and challenge to the staff, and has fully backed the headteacher in driving improvements.
  - They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
  - Governors have a good knowledge of most aspects of the school, but have not yet taken a full part in monitoring the use of the pupil premium; work on this is planned shortly.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106246
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	405030

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathie Masztalerz
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 330 3818
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