

St Thomas' Leesfield CofE Primary School

Thomas Street, Lees, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 5AT

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The school has made good progress since the last inspection, especially in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 the standards in English and mathematics are above those expected nationally.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) teaching is well delivered across Reception and Key Stage 1. As a result, children are confident and make good progress in reading.
- The teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Marking and 'next step' comments are emerging strengths and there is strong practice in Year 2 and Year 6. As a result, most pupils make good progress across the school and outstanding progress in Year 2 and Year 6 from their different starting points.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to schooling. They are polite, happy and honest and respect each other and adults around them. They enjoy coming to school. One pupil remarked, 'I am looking forward to the new term.'
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Bullying and exclusions are rare and dealt by the school effectively. Pupils know about safe use of the internet.
- Strong leadership led by the headteacher, effectively supported by the senior leaders team and the governing body, has resulted in achievement and teaching being good since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Outdoor learning activities in Reception do not match the high-quality indoor provision.
- Marking and written comments in the books are not consistently good across key stages.
- While the 'next step' in the written comments is often thorough, this is not linked to the targets, so that pupils are unclear about achieving them.
- Modern technology is not sufficiently deployed as a teaching tool to further improve learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Nine teaching staff were observed. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a consultant for the school diocese, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety and the monitoring of teaching and learning. They looked at the school's spending in relation to the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 26 parents in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of the views of parents and pupils. The views of parents were sought at the start of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised 28 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Thomas' Leesfield CoE Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Currently, there are no physically disabled pupils in the school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The school is a member of the Saddleworth and Lees Collaborative Partnership.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative off-site provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by increasing the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels by:
 - making sure all pupils know their targets as part of the 'next step' for improvement and are aware of how they link with National Curriculum levels.
- Increase the proportion of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that high-quality learning activities are planned for the outdoor area in the Reception class
 - increasing the use pupils and teachers make of modern technology in the classroom as tools for learning
 - improving the marking and written comments across key stages so that it is all of the same high quality as seen in Year 2 and Year 6.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well during their time at the school and leave Year 6 having made good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. However, achievement is not outstanding because not enough pupils attain the highest levels.
- Most children start Reception with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1 they have made good progress and their communication and social skills are as broadly expected for their age. This is a result of high-quality use of adult support and good use of indoor areas. However, the outdoor provision is not as well planned as the indoor. As a result, pupils' progress is not fast as it could be when they are learning outside.
- Pupils love reading and the teaching of reading skills and a love of books are well implemented across the key stages. Pupils receive a range of guided and independent tasks which enable them to hone their reading skills. The public library next door is an excellent resource which is well used by all the pupils in the school.
- Writing is well rooted in school through topics, such as in Year 6, covering science, history and geography. As a result, pupils have a broad knowledge and improve their writing presentation, grammar and spelling skills through subjects other than English. This helps them make quicker progress and prepares them well for their future education.
- At Key Stage 2 pupils' progress and attainment have improved in recent years. This trend is continuing in 2012 and attainment is now above what is seen nationally. Pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 shows that they are now making good progress in English and mathematics. In Year 6 progress in English and mathematics is outstanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils supported by additional funding through the pupil premium make consistently good progress; some make outstanding progress. They are given very good one-to-one support in lessons and in small groups, as well as through the learning mentor, to help them with their work.
- Gaps are narrowing between how well different groups of pupils are doing. In particular, the effective deployment of support staff is helping accelerate the learning of those pupils supported by additional funding through the pupil premium. The gap is now half a term and closing between these and other groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, to being good with some that is outstanding. This is due to teachers' high expectations, effective planning and close questioning of pupils to establish what they know and take them onto the next step. As a result, pupils make good progress in their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not always good or outstanding, though, because some teachers miss opportunities to use modern technology, such as information and communication technology, to improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- Children in Reception make good progress through effective use of adult support and well-planned indoor areas which help accelerate their learning.
- In Year 2 teachers set appropriate tasks for all groups, with fast-paced lessons linked to what pupils need to do to be successful, referred to as success criteria. As a result, they know when they have made progress because it has been clearly spelt out for them. For example, pupils wearing costumes playing out the role of the 'big bad wolf' helped them to improve their dramatic, speaking and listening skills. As a result, pupils were excited and made excellent progress.
- Phonics teaching is well delivered across Reception and Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils are confident and make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. This is confirmed by the results of the screening test in reading for pupils aged six in 2012, which were above what is

seen nationally.

- Good teaching was characterised in one lesson in Year 3, where learning objectives were shared and success criteria agreed with pupils on designing a healthy lifestyle poster. Here, tasks suitable for every pupil's need were set and there were mini-checks to revise success criteria in the middle of the lesson. As a result, pupils improved their writing and artistic skills quickly and successfully based on agreed criteria such as 'what makes a good poster?'
- Marking and 'next step' comments in pupils' books are strengths, especially in Year 2 and Year 6. However, there are some years where this is not consistent. As a result, these pupils are not clear about their targets and their link with the National Curriculum levels.
- Homework makes a positive contribution to pupils' widening experience. It helps to promote and encourage pupils' social and independent skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Staff use a range of effective methods to manage pupils' behaviour and ensure their safety. Almost all parents, pupils and staff feel that pupils are happy, safe and make good progress at the school. This is because 'teachers make things exciting for you', said one pupil. As a result, pupils are keen to learn in class and know how to keep safe, for example when they are in the playground.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because occasionally, when not directly supervised, pupils lack the self-control to manage their own learning or behaviour.
- The school is a harmonious community. Pupils are polite, confident and honest and respect each other and adults around them. Pupils have a clear understanding of consequences if rules are not followed, such as having the 'always' badge removed. This is a reference to the school motto. As a result, they work even harder to retain it by focusing on their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Bullying is rare and pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, such as name-calling or discrimination against pupils from a different culture.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safe use of the internet and the school has good safety procedure for its use. They know how to keep themselves safe from fire, roads and 'stranger danger'. They have regular visitors in to help them with this, such as the school nurse.
- Pupils enjoy a whole range of different games and sports during break times. These include planned lunchtime activities for pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning and for those with special educational needs. As a result, they fully enjoy the life of the school.
- The school has effective policies to improve attendance. There is targeted support for persistent absences through the learning mentor who has a strong link with parents. As a result, attendance is above average and punctuality is very good.

The leadership and management are good

- All the staff share the headteacher's strong ambitions to keep on improving the school. Good support from the senior leadership team, governing body and the local authority has ensured the school has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, it is a good school because achievement and teaching are good.
- The precise focus on teaching is driving forward improvement and has quickly addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. For example, standards in mathematics are now above the national average. Senior leaders have correctly identified priorities for development, based on accurate self-evaluation.
- There are high expectations from all the leaders. Achievable targets are set for each teacher to improve their teaching, linked to accelerating the progress and achievement of each pupil.
- There is a much improved monitoring and tracking system in place since the previous inspection.

This has helped to give clear direction in identifying teaching weaknesses. As a consequence, additional training has been given to teaching and support staff. This is linked to salary progression based on improving achievement for all groups of pupils.

- The various subjects are well included in topic work and very effectively implemented to meet pupils' needs. As a result of new and different topics, teachers enthuse, engage and motivate pupils, enabling them to learn new skills. Pupils' experience is further enriched through promoting environmental issues and after-school activities.
 - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is another strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their work and actions and the school's motto reinforces this. The school has productive links with other schools that have pupils with different backgrounds. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of multi-cultural Britain.
 - The local authority has provided effective support for the school in recent years. At present it receives 'light-touch' support based on its proven ability to improve itself.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection the governing body has had a better impact on school improvement. Effective training has enhanced their skills. The chair and other governors are challenging, supportive and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are knowledgeable about how their school compares with others and how well different groups of pupils achieve. Regular checks ensure that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. The governing body is aware of the good teaching in school, how this is rewarded and how any underperformance is dealt with when required. It promotes equal opportunities for the different groups of pupils and tackles discrimination well through its equality and inclusion committee. It knows how well the pupil premium funding is spent, which includes employment of the learning mentor, and checks its impact to ensure support is making a difference.
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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

Unique reference number	105714
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	405008

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Knott
Headteacher	Caroline Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2011
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