

# St James' CoE Primary School

Cromwell Range, Birch-in-Rusholme, Manchester, M14 6HW

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils enjoy coming to this happy and caring school, their above average attendance demonstrates this.
- From below average starting points, pupils achieve well, leaving the school at the end of Year 6 with average standards.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and teachers display good subject knowledge.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and work well together. The school is a harmonious community where all feel equally valued.
- The commitment, vision and determination of the headteacher have ensured that despite significant changes in staffing there has been a strong focus on maintaining standards.
- Since the last inspection, attendance has greatly improved and pupils' writing is stronger.
- Governors know the school well. They are very supportive and increasingly hold the school to account. This has helped to drive the improvements since the last inspection. The school is continuing to improve at a good pace.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and the best practice seen is not consistent across the school.
- Not enough pupils reach standards higher than those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some opportunities to challenge pupils to progress at a faster rate are missed.
- Teachers' marking in all subjects does not always inform pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- The outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not provide enough opportunities for children to develop their skills across all areas of learning.
- Not all subject leaders have a good understanding of achievement in their subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed sessions where small groups or individuals were working.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined.
- The inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors took into account evidence from the school's accident and behaviour logs including exclusion records, evidence about how well pupils attend, the school's view of its performance and the school's development plan. Inspectors also considered other school documents and policies, some of which are available on the school's website.
- When making judgements, inspectors took into account the 21 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own survey of the views of parents. They also considered the responses of 13 staff who returned the Ofsted inspection survey.

## Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St James' CofE is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- An average number of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils whose parents are in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost three-quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with more than one half of those pupils speaking English as an additional language. This is much higher proportion than average.
- More pupils join or leave the school at different times throughout the year than average.
- Fifteen separate ethnic groups are represented in the school, the largest single group being of Pakistani heritage. One quarter of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Over the last year, there have been significant changes in staffing. The headteacher, and deputy headteacher have been recently appointed and half of the teaching staff are new to their classes or to the school.

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

- Improve teaching so it is consistently good and more is outstanding, by:
  - sharing the outstanding practice in the school
  - making sure that lessons always move quickly enough to keep pupils interested
  - ensuring that teaching assistants are always used as effectively as they are in the best lessons, to support pupils' learning.
- Ensure that all pupils make good or better than expected progress by:
  - providing marking in all subjects that gives pupils clear guidance, linked to their learning targets, about how well they are doing and how to improve their work
  - ensuring pupils are challenged to move on to the next stage in their learning more quickly.
  - developing the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that children have more opportunities to practise and develop the skills they are learning indoors.
- Improve leadership by developing the role of subject leaders, including observing teaching and evaluating pupils' progress so that they are better equipped to play a fuller role in helping the school to improve.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The majority of children enter the Nursery class with skills that are generally below those typically expected for their age and well below in aspects of literacy and mathematics. Well-planned indoor activities are instrumental in ensuring all pupils, including the many children at a very early stage of learning English, make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Year 1 with generally expected levels except in English and mathematics. Outdoor activities, however, do not offer the same purposeful opportunities for children to develop their different skills.
- Pupils build on this progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. Most pupils reach the expected levels at the end of Year 6 and the higher levels in writing and mathematics. However, in 2012 significantly fewer pupils reached the higher level in reading. School documentation indicates that this is not an on-going issue.
- Early reading skills are taught systematically. An average proportion of pupils in Year 1 reach the expected standard in reading words. Pupils through the school have access to a range of books, younger and less confident readers read regularly to adults in school and at home. Older pupils read fluently and with expression. Many access the internet to research topics in school and at home. The school uses 'Pocket books' and has developed homework which is popular with pupils.
- Pupils apply their skills in writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology effectively in different topics. Opportunities to write, involving a range of subjects, extend the skills taught in literacy lessons. This contributes well to pupils' good progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. Their progress is tracked regularly and thoroughly in order to make sure they are doing as well as they can.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same good progress as their White British classmates, the majority reaching standards which are slightly above those of other pupils, and higher than those for similar groups nationally. They receive good individual and group support from talented classroom assistants and many Pakistani pupils reach standards above those expected of all pupils nationally in English.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well to provide additional individual and group teaching and support for eligible pupils. They make similar progress to that of other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals reach the same levels as their classmates in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Relationships between pupils and adults are good. They are eager to learn and respond well to their teachers' requests. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils at different stages of learning a clear idea of what they are expected to learn.
- Most lessons move at a good pace. Well-planned and practical activities ensure pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to learn. Activities are chosen to make pupils think hard in order to succeed. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and pupils respond well to these. For example, pupils in Year 6 were using their number skills to find ways to re-arrange the numbers on a broken calculator, which could only provide certain functions, to provide a given answer. This generated lots of discussion about how to solve the puzzle and pupils were keen to do well.
- Teachers ask searching questions and involve other pupils in reflecting on the answer given or the work they have done. In a Year 4 class, one pupil happily read out his writing towards the end of the lesson and pupils were eager to offer opinions as to what made it good to listen to and what might make it even better.
- Teachers' planning generally produces activities that are effective in ensuring all pupils do as

well as they can. However, on occasions, teachers do not allow pupils to move on quickly enough, in order to attempt the more challenging activities that will help them reach the next level in learning.

- In most lessons, teaching assistants have a clear understanding of the role they will play in supporting the different needs of the pupils. However, in some lessons they are not fully involved with pupils while teachers are introducing and explaining activities. As a consequence, some valuable support for pupils is lost.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from well-targeted interventions. They receive extra help when needed from capable classroom assistants.
- Some marking gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. This is particularly true in writing. However, the same detailed guidance is not always available in other subjects and as a result, pupils are not always sure how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

- Pupils say they are very happy and feel safe at school. Most come to school regularly and attendance is above average. This is a great improvement from the last inspection.
- In lessons, pupils behave well, are eager to learn and listen well to their teachers and other adults. Only when lessons are less exciting do a few pupils lose interest.
- At break and lunch times they play together well, making good use of the play equipment provided. In addition, the school provides sports and other activities, undertaken by qualified coaching staff to ensure all pupils have the chance to enjoy their leisure times and return to the classroom ready to learn.
- There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility across the school. Friendship groups offer reading help to younger pupils, whilst Year 6 pupils often accompany younger children on their walk to the local church. Such opportunities ensure that pupils develop patient and caring attitudes towards each other and this contributes well to their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils report that bullying happens rarely. This view is shared by their parents who feel their children are happy, safe and cared for well. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, for example, on the internet and by mobile telephone and know how to keep themselves safe. The school's 'Pupil Parliament' is very active in informing the pupils and parents of the school's policy on bullying.
- The school is a happy place to be. Pupils feel equally valued and the different cultures and heritages within the school are celebrated, through theme days, parties to observe the different religious festivals, which are often undertaken by parents themselves and the, 'Friends of St James'.'
- Good behaviour is rewarded through assemblies to which parents are invited and in the classrooms day to day. Relationships between adults are strong and pupils feel secure in the knowledge that teachers and other adults will help them. In these ways, the school provides a safe haven for all of its pupils.

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

- Over the last year there have been significant changes of staffing at the school and a completely new leadership team is now in place. The headteacher's commitment and plan for the school, coupled with the support and challenge from the governing body have ensured that the school has kept a strong focus on maintaining standards.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning in a variety of different ways, such as lesson observations and checking on pupils' workbooks. These activities have enabled them to ensure

that priorities for improvement are correctly identified. However, many subject leaders are relatively new to their roles, and although they regularly check teachers' planning against pupils' workbooks, they do not observe lessons or routinely analyse information that shows how well pupils are achieving. As a result, they do not, yet, play a full part in helping the school in its drive for improvement.

- Leaders share with all staff their findings from observing lessons, particularly those in which pupils' learning was very good. However, teachers do not yet have the opportunity to observe the best practice in the school for themselves.
- The school has an accurate view of its own performance and as a result, priorities identified by the leaders are accurate. These are reflected in the school's development plan and are monitored on a regular basis for the progress the school is making towards its goals.
- Regular meetings are held between senior staff and teachers, ensuring teachers are held responsible for the progress their pupils make. The progress made by every pupil is reviewed regularly and thoroughly so that if any pupil starts to fall behind, it is tackled swiftly.
- Reviews of teachers' performance have been closely aligned to the teaching standards and are used well to support the school's priorities. These are linked appropriately to teachers' progression along the salary scale. Timings of the reviews have been fixed to follow the headteacher's appraisal, so that all priorities flow seamlessly on from each other, giving a cohesive approach to improvement.
- The school works hard to involve parents in their child's learning, providing information and meetings to enable parents to help their children at home. Parents who responded to Parent View, together with parents' responses to the school's own questionnaire, confirm that the vast majority of parents are happy with the school. The school works well with external agencies whenever necessary.
- The curriculum is good and enriched by visits, visitors and theme weeks held by the school. A range of lunchtime and after-school activities are provided by external coaches. Opportunities are available for pupils to practise their basic skills through other subjects, particularly in writing. Furthermore, in mathematics, where a colourful display of, 'Mathematics across the curriculum' provides examples of lessons in which pupils have linked skills in mathematics to science and Spanish, for example.
- The school uses pupil premium funding to provide group and individual support for pupils who are eligible for this funding. This is enhancing progress for these pupils. The school keeps detailed records of the impact of individual and group sessions.
- The local authority does not provide any on-going support for the school as this is a 'light-touch' school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Together with the headteacher, governors have worked to ensure they are asking the right questions in order to provide challenge and support in equal measure. They are clear about how well the school is doing and its priorities for improvement. They are well informed and have a good understanding with regard to the quality of teaching. The outcomes of teacher appraisal are presented to governors who make sure staff are rewarded for their good work. The recently altered timings of these reviews ensure that the school's priorities for improvement are shared by staff at all levels. Some governors are regular visitors to the school, taking assemblies and reading with pupils. They ensure that the pupil premium is used well to improve pupils' achievement by the school's provision of extra support through additional teachers and teaching assistants.

## 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>	105508
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	402980

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>	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hilary Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gavin Shortall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2246173
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