

St Edward's RC School

Rowland Way, Lees, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 3LQ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Not enough teaching is good or better and, as a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Although many pupils make expected progress, too few pupils, especially those of higher ability, make good progress.
- Teachers do not always make enough use of information on pupils' progress for planning lessons, and pupils sometimes have to wait too long before getting underway with their own work.
- The school's views of its performance are not fully accurate. Inspectors found that some areas judged by the school to be good are requiring improvement.
- Some of the subject leaders for English and mathematics are not part of the leadership team and are unsure about what they need to do to raise achievement. Consequently, the plans they make have limited impact.
- Although members of the governing body are very much involved in school life and support the school well, their capacity to challenge the performance of the school is limited by a lack of pertinent detail or over-optimistic information.

The school has the following strengths

- Plans made for pupils for their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are very strong.
- Pupils are proud of the school and say they feel safe while they are there.
- Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs often make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for extra funding (pupil premium) provided by the government often make better progress than their peers.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average.
- The school enjoys good support from parents.
- Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve procedures that track individual pupils' progress. This information now identifies pupils who may need additional help. The plans and arrangements for these pupils are now effective in raising achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 teachers teaching in 21 lessons. Three lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. This included a lesson with short observations of younger pupils learning letters and sounds in small groups and a similar arrangement for older pupils who were working on developing reading.
- The inspectors listened to several pupils read and examined in detail English and mathematics written work from pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6. Inspectors reviewed topic and science books from other year groups.
- They considered the written documents of the school's view of its own performance, held discussions with staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding. They looked at minutes of governing body meetings, the development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers and documents that track pupils' progress.
- The inspectors spoke individually with pupils and held a discussion with the school council.
- Inspectors took account of 41 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also the results of the school's most recent parental questionnaire, as well as two written responses.
- Inspectors considered the findings of the previous inspection report.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Batty	Additional Inspector
Peter Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are of a variety of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils with educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children from service families, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - making sure that work is always well matched to the ability of the pupils
 - using time available in lessons more effectively so pupils are able to move on to their independent work more quickly.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by identifying the progress of different groups of pupils and adjusting their targets and the plans made for them in order to ensure that they make the best possible progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rationalising the leadership structures in school to meet its needs more effectively and raise pupils' achievement
 - sharpening monitoring procedures, especially of teaching and learning, to identify quickly the progress of all pupils so that their individual needs are effectively met
 - making sure that the school's views of how well it is doing are accurate and based on secure evidence
 - developing the capacity of the governing body by ensuring that the information it receives enables governors to hold the school more to account for its effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In recent years the skills and knowledge of the children who start at the school have fallen slightly and are now just below those typically expected for their age. The range of activities available for children in the early years promotes good learning because the activities are attractive and well planned. Learning in the outdoor area for Reception-age children is not as effective as it is for those of Nursery age because the outdoor area is not freely available due to its position.
- Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 most children make broadly expected progress. The inconsistent teaching they receive, however, means that good progress is not made as often as it could be. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is inconsistent, though those of middle and lower ability make more headway from their starting points than others.
- Nationally published data indicate that fewer more-able pupils reach the higher levels than could do, particularly in writing, and school records and inspectors' findings support this view. The time made available for more-able pupils in lessons to get on with work which asks them to think hard is limited. This is because they have to wait for weaker pupils to learn what the more-able already know.
- The school's systems for checking on pupils' progress do not always give a clear enough picture of where groups of pupils are and how targets for their achievement should be adjusted. As a result, targets set for more-able pupils are not as ambitious as they need to be.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve at least as well, and often better, than other groups of pupils. There is no difference in the progress of girls and boys overall. Those entitled to the pupil premium funding make more progress from their starting points than others and data show that the gap in achievement is closing, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading; older pupils' reading is of a standard that is normal for their age. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out words they are unsure about. They are enthusiastic about their reading books and told inspectors that they read regularly in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. At its best the good teaching helps pupils to learn well and to make good progress. Too much teaching observed was not good enough, so that pupils did not make as much progress as they should.
- In the best lessons teachers plan well for pupils' learning needs. They make sure that each pupil is set work at the right level for them to make the best progress and they ensure that pupils spend most of the lesson completing these tasks. In these lessons pupils are keen to learn because teachers make learning fun. In a Year 4/5 lesson pupils had great fun playing a game to identify the difference between verbs and adverbs and then went on to finish a story, using information at just the right level for them to make the best possible job of it.
- Where teaching is not good, teachers' planning is aimed at what is to be taught rather than what pupils need to learn. In these lessons pupils' needs are not always met, they lose concentration and learning slows. This is particularly the case with more-able pupils.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is strongest when children are involved in selecting what they want to do from the good range of interesting opportunities. Adults then extend children's thinking carefully. This means that more-able children are better catered for because they are leading what they learn.
- The quality of teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because special arrangements made for them are effective. This means that they often make better progress than other groups of pupils.

- One of the strengths in good lessons is the way in which teaching assistants and other volunteers are used to support pupils' learning. In these lessons the adults know exactly what they have to do with a small group or with an individual to support pupils' learning. They make sure that they give pupils, and particularly those with special educational needs, all the help possible.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in lessons. Pupils are given opportunities to work together through joint tasks or through discussion in pairs and groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils are polite and welcoming. For example, they ensure that they stand aside for adults to pass on stairs.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school because, if there is a problem, it is dealt with by the staff quickly and effectively. Pupils are well prepared to keep themselves safe through the work the school does on, for example, e-safety. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying and how they should behave if they experience bullying in school. Parental comments and school records show that, although rare, there are a few incidents of bullying at school. The school is aware of this and is taking effective action.
- As they move about the school most pupils are polite and considerate. However, behaviour is sometimes over-boisterous, such as when they are in the dining hall, and occasionally pupils misbehave when they are out of sight of the staff. They respond very quickly, though, to additional guidance about how to behave better.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive. For example, in some classes pupils do not always behave as well as they could and this slows down their learning and that of other pupils in the class. This is frequently, but not always, linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' interest in what they are learning. A few parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agreed that pupils were not always well-behaved.
- Attendance is consistently high. Pupils say that they are proud of the school and the work they are involved with to raise funds for charity.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection the school has made sound progress in addressing the issues identified at the time. Better systems that give pupils short-term targets for improvement are now in place and this is having a good effect on increasing pupils' progress. In addition, evaluation of the quality of the plans made for pupils has been successful. Now, each class compiles a file of memorable moments which show a good level of enjoyment.
- The school's views about how well it is doing are not fully accurate. In checking its performance the school has overestimated its impact on some areas. For example, the school judges teaching to be good, while inspectors found that it needs improvement. The quality of teaching has improved overall, but there is still not enough good teaching to move learning on at a fast pace. When observing lessons senior leaders concentrate on the quality of teaching rather than the quality of pupils' learning. This is reflected in teachers' planning, where not enough emphasis is given to what each group of pupils is to learn. Procedures are not sharp enough to identify quickly the progress of all pupils and ensure that individual needs are met.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is spread amongst too many teachers, some of whom are not in the leadership team. This means that there is a lack of clarity and focus about what needs to be done and how it is to be achieved. As a result, achievement in these subjects is not as high as it should be.
- The school's procedures for checking on the performance of staff are undertaken regularly. The results are used to provide appropriate professional development for the staff and for the

governing body to make decisions about pay progression.

- The plans made for pupils prioritise their spiritual and cultural development very well and are enhanced by the partnership with the link school in India. The more recent focus on planning 'memorable events', alongside the priority given to literacy and numeracy, has the potential to engage pupils well. However, this creative approach to the curriculum is not applied consistently in all classes. Occasionally lessons are limited by a lack of information and communication technology (ICT) hardware.
- The local authority recognises the school as needing support. It has provided regular support visits but there have been many changes of personnel which have limited the impact of this support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance requires improvement. Governors recognise many of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they support the headteacher and staff in their work. The governing body holds the school to account. However, governors rely too much on the headteacher for information about how well teachers are performing, how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve the school further. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances and ensure that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Governors are clear about how pupils eligible for the pupil premium are progressing as a result of the decisions they make about how the extra funds are spent.

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	105720
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	400795

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cannon E Dolan
Headteacher	Peter Moore
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
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