

# St Thomas CofE Primary School

St Thomas Street, Werneth, Oldham, Lancashire, OL8 1SE

**Inspection dates** 17–18 April 2013

<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.

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. By the time they leave Year 6, the vast majority of pupils have made at least good progress.
- The school's extended services for parents are outstanding and have significantly improved attendance and achievement.
- The school has worked successfully to ensure that attainment has improved over the last three years, and that it has improved even further this academic year.
- Teachers work imaginatively to capture pupils' interests. They aim to enrich pupils' life-experiences, and work well to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are inquisitive. They listen to what adults have to say and show high levels of respect towards each other and their teachers. Pupils feel safe, are very polite and accommodating and conduct themselves well around the school.
- The headteacher knows clearly what still needs to improve and is well respected by staff, parents and members of the local community. Together with a strong senior leadership team and committed staff, she ensures that pupils are taught and learn well and enjoy school.
- Governors know how well the school is doing, and what leaders need to do to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school does not yet have a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Too few opportunities are available for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and participate in problem-solving activities.
- Lessons do not always move along quickly enough, and not all pupils have a clear enough understanding of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve further.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons as well as small group activities, parts of lessons and the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds). Two assemblies were observed.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3, and 6 and held discussions with three groups of pupils from across the school.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons and separately with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views. Questionnaires completed by 26 members of staff were taken into account.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice chair.
- Various school documents were examined. These included the school's view of its performance, school improvement partner reports, school data on pupils' progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching, development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Read

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The vast majority are Pakistani and Bangladeshi with an increasing proportion of pupils from Eastern European countries. The overwhelming majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school is high and a significant number of pupils join the school at times other than the beginning of term or academic year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, a number of new teachers have been appointed, the management team and governing body re-structured and the school building extended to accommodate increasing numbers of pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is always good or better and so raise pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that a consistent approach is taken to the teaching of phonics
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply what they know to real-life situations through solving problems, investigating and using their mental mathematics skills
  - making sure that learning in lessons moves along at a brisk pace at all times by, for example, moving pupils on to individual activities more quickly
  - making sure that all pupils, particularly the more able, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The vast majority of children join the nursery with skills and abilities which are much lower than those expected for their age. Children learn in a stimulating and welcoming environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, benefiting from an experienced team of teachers and other adults. Due to good teaching, children soon enhance their understanding of the world, develop in confidence, acquire good communication skills and make rapid progress.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and enjoy their learning. Through Key Stage 2 many pupils do better than expected in reading and writing. Although below the national average, pupils' attainment has continuously improved over the last three years to 2012. Rigorous tracking has enabled even more focused teaching and has ensured further improvement this academic year.
- The school challenges discrimination well, and ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. Those who are new to the school are quickly assessed and support is put in place for those who need it. One-to-one tuition and small group mentoring for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been particularly effective in boosting boys' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Support for pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs is of a very high quality. Good one-to-one teaching for pupils with complex learning needs ensures that they make good progress and can fully participate alongside their classmates most of the time.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well and enjoy their learning. In 2012, their attainment was as good as their non-free school meals classmates at Key Stage 1, and better by the end of Key Stage 2. They are successful because the school uses the pupil premium funding well to ensure that small group support is targeted where it is most needed.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and read widely. Practically all of those who read for inspectors said that they are members of their local library. Dyslexic pupils and those in the early stages of acquiring reading skills said that teachers and other adults helped them to read. Typically, pupils commented, 'I really like reading for my mum and dad and for my teachers'.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most teaching observed during the inspection was good, with some outstanding and with a little that still requires some improvement.
- Teachers are well trained and the vast majority have very good subject knowledge of mathematics and English. Most lessons move along at a steady pace, but sometime the pace slows when teachers take too long to describe lesson activities or allow too much time for younger pupils to write detailed learning objectives into their books.
- Teachers almost always do all they can to make lessons as interesting as possible and set high expectations for pupils. In an outstanding Year 1 lesson focusing on writing about the senses, pupils' interest in chocolate was captured when they were asked to think about smell, colour, texture and taste. All pupils enthusiastically set about their writing after having a piece of chocolate to savour.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers take care to ensure that pupils of all abilities can participate and make at least good progress. Good planning ensures that teaching assistants are well deployed, and effective one-to-one and small group support enables all pupils to participate in lessons.
- During the inspection, an example of outstanding phonics teaching for a small group of boys with special educational needs was observed. The school has done a lot to improve reading, and has invested in, for example, extensive library resources including 'boy-friendly' books. Phonics training has been provided for staff and the leadership and management of phonics has been strengthened. However, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent, with teachers using more than one programme, which can confuse pupils.

- In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils demonstrated their ability to systematically solve problems linked to their knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and ratios. However, pupils' books showed that too few opportunities are provided for them to solve problems and apply their mathematical skills to real-life situations.
- The best lessons start with very clear lessons objectives and expectations of what pupils will learn. Typically such lessons end with, for younger pupils, a 'thumbs up or down' self-assessment to establish pupils' views on how much they have understood.
- While older pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are learning and what they need to do to further improve, the understanding of lower Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 pupils, especially those who are more able, is less well developed.

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

- Pupils welcome visitors into the school, they are curious, and very interested in finding out new things. Their behaviour around the school and at play is never less than good as is their behaviour in lessons and their attitude to learning.
- The school's records of behaviour show that very few pupils break the rules. All pupils know the consequences of this and are eager to be on their best behaviour and work in a caring and cooperative way with their classmates, teachers and all members of the school community.
- Pupils say that all forms of bullying are rare and that all incidents are taken seriously and dealt with immediately. The school's own surveys and Parent View confirm that the overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the school and that it is a safe place for their children to learn. Those parents who spoke to inspectors noted that the school had a welcoming and friendly feel and that they appreciated all opportunities to be directly involved in the education of their children.
- The majority of pupils know what constitutes safe and unsafe situations. This is because they learn how to stay safe through discussions in lessons and through talks that visitors give on, for example, the dangers of talking to strangers, how Childline works and road safety.
- The school prioritises safeguarding. It works successfully to ensure that pupils fully understand dangers and risks and that all staff are vigilant in ensuring that safeguarding measures are fully in place and regularly reviewed.
- Pupils have a highly developed understanding of how to conduct themselves when using computers and working on-line. As one pupil noted, 'I never give out information about myself and keep things private.'
- The school does all it can to ensure that pupils attend regularly, and the breakfast club makes a good contribution to pupils' good punctuality. The school's parent support worker is well respected and knowledgeable. He works directly with parents focusing on promoting their children's good attendance.
- Pupils have a highly developed sense of social justice, they can clearly define, and are fully aware of the damaging effects of all forms of discrimination. This strengthens their resolve to work together and play their part in ensuring that the school is a safe and happy place for everyone.

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

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are ambitious and know clearly how to improve the school further. This is linked to ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations and that pupils' standards and their overall achievement continuously improve. The leadership and management of the school are not outstanding because teaching and pupils' overall achievement is not yet outstanding.
- All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire said that they know what the school is trying to achieve, and indicated that they are proud to play their part in ensuring that the school

achieves its ambitions. The overwhelming majority of staff strongly agree that the school is well led and managed.

- Strong and determined leadership, careful consideration of the senior leadership team structure and well thought out staff deployment, have been key factors in driving the school forward and ensuring continuous improvement since the last inspection. Good leadership of teaching has ensured that standards have continued to improve in all subjects and for all groups of pupils.
- The school works well, and shares resources effectively with its family of schools. The recently refurbished and extended facilities ensure that pupils' educational, emotional and social needs are met and good links are established between home and school.
- The extended services offered through the school are outstanding, and the work of the school's extended services manager is highly effective. She has encouraged well over 100 women, many of whom speak little or no English, to enrol on year long mathematics, information and communication technology and English courses. This has had a significant impact on parental involvement in the school's work and on raising pupils' attainment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, as evidenced by their behaviour during assemblies, and what they learn from school visits and visitors from different faiths. Pupils have a good appreciation of the visual arts and have achieved the Artsmark National Award.
- The school's international primary curriculum helps to develop pupils' understanding of global issues and provides them with many memorable experiences. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about science, dinosaurs and the Romans. Pupils are offered a wide range of after-school activities, including film club, choir and mathematics.
- Teachers, including newly and recently qualified teachers, say they have benefited from training that has supported them in improving their practice. All teachers are expected to meet specific targets before they can qualify for a pay award or promotion.
- The school has worked very closely with the local authority school improvement team since its last inspection. Most recent work has successfully focused on enhancing the quality of teaching and on improving aspects of leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The school's record of visitors shows that governors come into the school on a regular basis, and for a variety of reasons. Typically, they are involved in events which celebrate pupils' achievement and participate in planning meetings linked to school improvement. Governors know the strengths of the school and are especially proud of its community and partnership approach, and its success in involving parents in their children's education. Governors are aware that the school must continue to raise standards; they know that teaching is good, because they have been involved in recruiting teachers and visiting classrooms. Governors ensure that teachers' performance is thoroughly monitored and consider the headteacher's recommendations for pay awards only if teachers have met their targets. Governors make sure that pupil premium funding is spent wisely and closely monitor all the activities it funds, including one-to-one tuition and mentoring support. Governors are well trained and aware of their challenges, they receive regular reports from the headteacher in whom they have high expectations and for whom they set high expectations.

## 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>	105698
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	400793

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>	427
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pamela Brocklehurst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Knowles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 633 0539
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 652 8794
<b>Email address</b>	head@stthomaswerneth.oldham.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

