

Stansfield Hall Church of England/Free Church Primary School

Todmorden Road, Summit, Littleborough, Lancashire, OL15 9PR

Inspection dates 25–26 June 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 because

- All pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress from low starting points and achieve well. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that match the national average, with reading being a strength.
- Good teaching is secured by the determined drive from the headteacher to make it even better. The best teaching sees pupils who are highly motivated to learn independently, uses questioning skilfully to keep pupils on their toes, and provides many opportunities for them to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils play their part in the success of the school through their good behaviour and readiness to learn. They feel safe, valued and respected.
- Parents are unanimous in saying they would recommend the school to others and they are proud of its improvement since the previous inspection. They value the high levels of care it provides and the dedication of all staff.
- The curriculum excites pupils and enables them to develop a good understanding of a wide range of subjects.
- The headteacher is the driving force behind the improvements in the school. He is assisted by a very able deputy headteacher who shares the same commitment to take the school to the next level.
- Governance is good because the governing body has a knowledgeable grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and holds the school to account for pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards are not as good as they could be in writing, particularly at Key Stage 1, and the school lacks a strong strategy for teaching the sounds that letters make (phonics). Spelling could be better in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is not consistently outstanding because the needs of the most-able pupils are not always met.
- Provision for children to learn outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage falls below the standard required to meet the best practice.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons.
- Meetings were conducted with senior leaders, the staff team, five members of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority and two groups of pupils.
- Information from the scrutiny of a range of school documentation added to the inspection judgements. This included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, and records of pupils' standards and progress.
- The views of parents were gathered by analysing the responses to a questionnaire conducted by the school and by meeting with 10 parents at the start of the second day. Reference was also made to the 14 responses posted on the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- An analysis of 10 staff questionnaires, together with an ongoing dialogue with teachers and teaching assistants, gave the inspector an insight into the views of the staff.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The number on roll is increasing. It is not consistent because of an above-average movement in and out of the school throughout the year.
- Almost all pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is well above the national average. (The pupil premium grant is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from armed service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, does not apply in this school because fewer than 11 pupils took the recent end of Key Stage 2 assessment tests.
- Since the last inspection, there has been some disruption to staffing due to unavoidable absence. During the inspection, a temporary teacher taught one class.
- The school has gained a number of awards including the Eco Schools Bronze Award, International Schools Award (Foundation Level), Activemark and Healthy Schools Award. In addition, it has gained the 'ThInc Room' Gold Standard. This is for its work in providing a therapeutic inclusive play approach to enable pupils with social and emotional needs to overcome their barriers to learning.
- A free breakfast and after-school club is available to children each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, especially in writing at Key Stage 1, by:
 - implementing a robust scheme of work for phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 that is rigorously assessed and evaluated
 - ensuring that the curriculum places sufficient emphasis on improving pupils' skills in writing at Key Stage 1 and spelling at Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make better use of assessment data to set tasks to meet consistently the needs of the most-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of pupils making expected progress has accelerated over the last year. In 2012, every Year 6 pupil reached the expected standard for their age with a good proportion exceeding it. Year-on-year comparisons are difficult because of the small numbers involved, considerable variations in the nature of each group, the numbers who join partway through their schooling and a high percentage of pupils with significant special educational needs. However, recently, standards in Year 6 have been rising and progress is accelerating.
- From low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards are just below average, and pupils leave Year 6 with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. At all stages of the school, standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics, particularly so in Key Stage 1.
- In 2012, the result of the phonics reading check in Year 1 was below the national figure. In response, the school has taken steps to improve its systems for developing pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics). The strategies adopted are not yet fully embedded but they are already lifting standards. Past weaknesses in pupils' understanding of sounds and letters hold back their confidence to write when they are younger and hamper spelling in Key Stage 2.
- A good focus on the development of reading skills promotes a love of books across the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding for their age of a wide range of authors and genres. Those who do not read with confidence are able to access support from effective teaching assistants.
- In mathematics, pupils develop a secure knowledge of the basic skills expected for their age. The school is working to strengthen pupils' skills of solving mathematical problems in different subjects and contexts.
- School leaders are committed to equal opportunities and the removal of any discrimination. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive very skilled support. This enables them to manage some significant barriers to learning and make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils nationally in both English and mathematics but slightly below other pupils in the school. The school targets these pupils for accelerated improvement and the gap in attainment is narrowing rapidly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good in all subjects. At times it is outstanding but not consistently so because sometimes the most-able pupils are not fully extended. Children get a solid start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, enabling them to make good progress in the basic skills required for future learning. Limitations on the resources for accessing outdoor learning reduce the opportunities for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to exploit fully the benefits for children of learning outdoors.
- Recent disruptions to staffing have hampered the consistency of teaching in Key Stage 1. Wise decisions by the headteacher have minimised the impact on pupils' learning because the good quality of teaching in mathematics and English has been maintained.
- Where teaching is consistently good, teachers have high expectations of pupils and use questioning well to support learning and encourage independence. This was observed in a Year 6 English class. Pupils were studying idioms as part of literacy work connected with the class topic arising from the novel, *The Hobbit*. Where teaching is less effective, the more-able pupils find their work too easy. This occurs when teachers do not use the information they have of pupils' prior learning to plan sufficiently demanding activities.
- Teaching promotes very positive, nurturing relationships with pupils. Dedicated teaching

assistants provide high-quality learning support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium. As a result, by Year 6, pupils have pride, belief in themselves and the vital qualities of never giving up and always trying their hardest.

- Varied and interesting teaching strategies, adopted by staff across the school, ensure that pupils remain motivated, engaged in their learning and make good progress. The very best teaching enables pupils to use computer technology independently to seek information and record their learning using pictures and videos. Some pupils were proud to share their video capturing the moment a butterfly emerged from the chrysalis. Such practical approaches have very positive impact on the quality of learning and give pupils a love of learning.
- The checking of pupils' progress is regular and accurate. Marking generally offers pupils clear guidance about the strengths of their work and how to improve. Homework is regular, systematic and contributes to involving families with their children's education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all of the time, pupils are polite and courteous. Younger and older pupils get on well together. They work and play well together and display a clear understanding of the school's positive approach to managing behaviour.
- Parents value the leadership of the headteacher in supporting their children and helping them and their families. Most parents who volunteered an opinion felt that their children were well looked after and kept safe. A small minority of responses posted on the Parent View questionnaire expressed concerns about the way the school manages bullying and the safety of their children.
- Inspection findings concur with the view of the large majority of parents. Incidents of bullying have reduced significantly in recent years; bullying is not a noticeable feature of school life. Pupils are adamant that bullying is well managed and report that they feel safe. The school takes care to provide pupils and adults with a safe, secure environment. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including that associated with prejudice, the internet and social networking.
- The school uses innovative approaches to support the significant number of pupils with emotional and social difficulties. At some point in the year, every pupil attends the room for supporting emotional development (the Tree Room). These pupils enjoy integrated activities with their peers. This successfully gives them the personal skills to deal with the emotional issues that can hinder their learning.
- As a result, all pupils are included in all aspects of school life and disruption to learning in lessons is minimal. This has a positive impact on the personal development of all pupils because it widens everyone's understanding of others with different needs to their own.
- The school works hard to promote the importance of being at school regularly, and attendance is typically average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership that is focused squarely on a successful and continuous drive to improve pupils' achievement and teaching. He benefits from good support from a skilled deputy headteacher and other staff. Leaders have high expectations and are realistic about the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement, such as phonics. The strong leadership should enable the school to continue to improve in future.
- Improvements in teaching are driven forward through a rigorous, concerted programme to evaluate the quality of teaching and regular appraisals of each member of staff's performance. Leaders take the necessary steps to improve any performance that does not come up to the mark.
- Good arrangements for the professional development of staff are aligned both to the school's

and individuals' needs. Good and better practice is recognised and shared, and new or temporary staff receive effective guidance and support.

- Teachers are individually accountable for their pupils' progress. This is regularly checked in meetings where assessment data and the quality of teaching are analysed and areas for improvement and targets put in place. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is evaluated towards their personal and academic targets. The success of actions to support pupils receiving the grant for the pupil premium funding is evaluated to seek where improvement can occur.
- The well-planned curriculum promotes good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils find their topics interesting and fun. They feel they learn better when they are given the chance to find answers to their own questions.
- Events such as the recent International Week provide an enthralling stimulus for pupils and staff alike. Pupils express excitement about the works of Shakespeare, emanating from a visit to the theatre, and their pride in their Enterprise activities.
- Relationships with parents are good and there is a strong sense of partnership. Parents value communications about their child's progress and say that the weekly newsletters are invaluable.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge for the school; educational consultants, the school improvement partner and the services available centrally have all played their part in securing improvements since the last inspection.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors are well trained and supportive of the school and its leadership. The relatively new Chair of the Governing Body ensures that governors challenge leaders. Governors ask searching questions during meetings. More challenge has been set for pupils' performance based on an understanding of what can be achieved when compared with other schools nationally. Governors have a secure handle on the school's finances and keep an eye on the use, and impact, of pupil premium funds. They make a link between teachers' performance and movement up the pay scale and set targets for the headteacher. Governors make sure that the school meets safeguarding requirements.

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	105810
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	400801

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Edmunds-Nicholson
Headteacher	Richard Walthall
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
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