

East Crompton St James' Church of England Primary School

St James Street, Shaw, Oldham, Lancashire OL2 7TD

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The progress of upper ability boys in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average in 2013. Although achievement is now improving in both subjects, teaching over time has not improved quickly enough to bring attainment in mathematics in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics, a legacy of weak teaching over time, are slowing pupils' progress in this subject, particularly in upper Key Stage 2.
- A small minority of pupils use homophobic and other prejudice-based language.
- Behaviour logs maintained by class teachers are not kept up to date. As a result, information about the impact of the school's policies in relation to rewards and sanctions is not readily available.
- Some teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, does not provide pupils with enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Consequently, opportunities are missed for pupils to learn from their mistakes.

The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to do well.
- The executive headteacher has inspired his colleagues with his vision for improving the school and generated a rapid pace of change.
- The teaching of literacy, and in particular writing, is at least consistently good and achievement in this subject is accelerating.
- The interim executive board (IEB) is fully supportive of the executive headteacher and his colleagues in their drive to improve the school. Board members strike an effective balance between support and challenge, competently holding senior leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven part lessons taught by seven teachers. Six of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. All the teachers in each key stage and the reception class were seen teaching.
- Separate meetings were held with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector met the group of teachers with leadership and management responsibility for literacy, numeracy, science, Key Stage 1 and the reception year. Meetings were also held with the special educational needs coordinator, a group of classroom teachers, a representative of the Church of England Diocese of Manchester, a group of parents and groups of pupils of differing ages.
- The inspector heard children read to assess how fluent they were as readers and also determine their understanding of what they had read.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the inspector to scrutinise pupils' work. The inspector analysed the school's development plan and leaders and managers' evaluation of how well the school is doing. He also examined senior leaders' records on the quality of teaching and learning, information related to the performance management of teachers, data relating to pupils' progress in a range of subjects and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspector took account of the opinions expressed by 59 parents in response to a questionnaire issued by the school and also the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- East Crompton St James' is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is located in the Shaw district of Oldham, about three miles to the northeast of Oldham town centre.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional help through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra funding the school receives for pupils who are entitled to free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority or children of service families.
- All pupils are educated on the school site.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage; few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and who are supported at school action is below average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is currently being supported by St Thomas' Moorside Church of England Primary School. The headteacher of St Thomas' Moorside is also the executive headteacher of St James'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 2, in order to drive up achievement even further by:
 - ensuring that any gaps in pupils' knowledge, resulting from weak teaching in the past, are filled so that pupils have a firm foundation upon which to make even further progress
 - making sure that pupils are given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of mathematics by giving them activities that challenge them to think hard and apply their skills and knowledge in new and exciting ways
 - bringing all marking in the school up to the standard of the best, so that teachers comment on what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve their work, then make sure that the pupils act on the advice given.
- Improve the behaviour of a small minority of pupils by:
 - addressing their use of inappropriate language in order to increase their understanding of the impact that homophobic and other prejudicial words can have on others.
- Tighten the school's systems for monitoring rewards and sanctions by:
 - making sure that the behaviour logs kept by class teachers are regularly updated
 - ensuring that information from these logs is periodically reviewed in order to provide senior leaders with concrete evidence of the impact of the school's behaviour policy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics declined from being above national averages in 2012 to below in 2013. This decline was due to the weaker performance of upper ability boys.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching have resulted in achievement in both subjects beginning to recover. However, the rate of recovery is stronger in reading than it is in mathematics.
- Concerns with pupils' underachievement in writing, identified at the time of the inspection in February 2013, have been addressed. In 2013, attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was above average after being below the previous year. This improvement was largely due to higher attainment of the most able pupils. The school's current progress data are indicating that improvements in the quality of pupils' writing are being sustained.
- Children enter the reception year with levels of development which are typical for their age. As a result of effective teaching, they make good progress during their first year in school, which prepares them well for their move to Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' progress throughout Key Stage 1 continues to be strong and their attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing is above average. However, although attainment in mathematics is also above average, the trend has been downwards for the last three years, with fewer pupils reaching the higher levels for their age.
- At Key Stage 1, the gap in attainment between the few pupils entitled to free school meals and their peers is not as wide as that found nationally. Accordingly, these pupils started Year 3 in September about a quarter of a National Curriculum level behind their peers. This compares to a gap of about one-third of a National Curriculum level across the country.
- The small numbers of pupils with special educational needs are well supported and, as a result, make better progress than their peers nationally. The school's performance data show that in Year 6, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs in reading matches that of their peers in the school.
- The provision of extra lessons in literacy, the employment of additional learning support assistants and the use of specialist resources, all funded by the pupil premium, have been effective in closing the attainment gap in reading. The school's monitoring data indicate that pupils in Year 6, supported by this additional funding, are one term behind their peers in this subject. This compares to a national gap, in 2013, of two terms. In writing, there is no difference, currently, in the progress being made by both groups. The attainment gap in mathematics is also closing but from a much lower base. In 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium left Key Stage 2 four terms behind their peers. The school's data for current Year 6 pupils are showing that this gap has narrowed to that seen nationally of one and a half terms.
- Those parents who expressed an opinion said that they felt their children were making good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although current data are showing an improving picture in mathematics, teaching needs to improve at a more rapid pace, particularly at lower Key Stage 2, in order to overcome a legacy of underperformance.
- Teachers in upper Key Stage 2 are working hard to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics which are a result of weaker teaching in the past. However, securing pupils' understanding of the key ideas has slowed their progress.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly by their teachers in accordance with the school's marking policy. However, some marking, for example in mathematics books, is not precise enough. Teachers indicate whether pupils' answers are right or wrong but often miss the opportunity to comment on what pupils need to do to improve their work and ensure that they correct it. Consequently,

opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes are missed. Marking of pupils' work in literacy, however, is much more detailed and is having a positive impact on the good progress that pupils are making, for example, in their writing.

- Nonetheless, senior leaders' determination to improve the quality of teaching, coupled with carefully targeted staff training and supportive yet rigorous monitoring of classroom practice, is having a positive impact. This has led to considerable gains in pupils' literacy across the school and an improving profile of class teaching in upper Key Stage 2 mathematics. However, this improved profile of teaching has yet to impact on results at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teachers encourage their pupils to read often and pupils have the opportunity to read, in school, every day. The pupils who read to the inspector are fluent readers, able to apply their phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) effectively, to read less familiar words. However, some pupils display a weak understanding of what they have read. This has been recognised by the school, and staff are due to receive training to improve this aspect of the teaching of reading.
- Careful planning to meet the needs of learners has been at the heart of the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching and push up standards of achievement. Pupils make the best progress when teachers plan engaging activities that capture pupils' imagination, appeal to the different ways that they learn and challenge them to think deeply about the subject.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of pupils with special educational needs; as a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils use computers effectively to help them learn. The inspector observed them using computers to find information from the internet in mathematics and science and using digital recording equipment in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson.
- Most parents who responded to the school's questionnaire agree that their children are well taught and almost all parents agree that their children are now making good progress. The inspector would agree that this is the case in literacy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because a few pupils use homophobic and other prejudice-based language around the school, for example the term 'gay' to describe something that they do not like. All pupils spoken to by the inspector found the use of this language, by a very small minority of their peers, offensive.
- Each class teacher, quite rightly, is given responsibility for maintaining the record of behaviour and rewards for the pupils in their care. However, a number of these records have not been completed. Moreover, it is not clear which member of staff in the school has responsibility for monitoring these records and making sure that they are kept up to date. Consequently, there is not enough written evidence of the impact of the school's behaviour policy.
- Nevertheless, the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils around the school is exemplary. They work hard in lessons, are well mannered, cooperative and polite. School uniform standards are high and the litter-free school site reflects pupils' respect for their environment.
- Pupils value the recently introduced 'Always Badge' awarded for consistently good behaviour. It reinforces the school's message that only good behaviour is good enough. Holders of the badge can have it taken away from them, temporarily, should their conduct fall below expectations. This is seen by all the pupils and almost all the parents spoken to by the inspector as a justifiable sanction, and effective in developing pupils' sense of right and wrong.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils met by the inspector agreed that since the appointment of the current headteacher, behaviour at the school has improved. They say they feel safe, well cared for and have faith in the support that is available to them. Incidents of bullying have declined; when bullying does occur, it is now dealt with effectively. Pupils view their class teacher as an effective source of support and help when they are feeling vulnerable.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about some of the forms that bullying can take, including how people can be unkind to each other, either directly or through the internet and mobile phones. They

have learned about bullying in assemblies and, in lessons, discussed the impact of racist behaviour on people of backgrounds other than their own. However, they are less knowledgeable about homophobic behaviour and what effect this type of behaviour can have on others.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their current rate of attendance, which is well above average and reverses the decline that was evident last year.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher, allied to a strong and determined IEB, has enabled the school to improve at a vigorous pace since the previous full school inspection.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, has united the staff behind his vision for improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise attainment and improve pupils' progress. Improvements have been most marked in literacy.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and this evaluation has been used to write and implement the priorities in the school's development plan.
- Senior leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing in each of their subjects. This enables them to identify quickly those pupils who are not working at their best, and to put in place extra help to get them back on track.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the work of teachers. They regularly observe teaching and identify strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school, particularly in literacy, has improved substantially since the previous inspection. However, senior leaders are aware that there is work still to be done to continue to improve the quality of the teaching of mathematics, particularly in lower Key Stage 2.
- The role of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility is developing. For example, the subject leader for mathematics is now observing her colleagues teach numeracy, providing them with feedback on their practice and, where appropriate, support to improve it. Management responsibilities are beginning to be shared among a range of professionals. This is reducing the burden on senior leaders.
- A robust system of performance management of teachers is now in place; as a result, teachers are now held rigorously to account for the standards achieved by their pupils and the quality of their work in the classroom. Because of inadequate arrangements for managing teachers' performance in the past, teachers were not awarded a pay rise in the most recent performance review.
- All the teachers spoken to by the inspector agreed that the quality of teaching across the school has improved. They believe that this is a consequence of the effective link that has been forged with the executive headteacher's school. This link has given them the opportunity to experience high-quality teaching and bring good ideas back to their own classrooms.
- The school's efforts to promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination continue to bear fruit. However, it has been more successful in some areas than others. For example, gaps in attainment in some subjects are closing but achievement in mathematics, although improving, needs to accelerate to bring it, at least, in line with that of literacy.
- The use of additional finance the school receives through the pupil premium has been targeted effectively by senior managers. Additional staff have been appointed and extra resources purchased to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The extra funding that the school receives through the primary school sport funding has been used effectively to improve provision for pupils to participate in competitive sport. Pupils are able to join after-school clubs, run by specialist staff, in football, athletics, dance and hockey. This is promoting healthier lifestyles and contributing to pupils' improved physical performance.
- The local authority has provided effective support on the school's journey of improvement. It brokered the link with the local successful primary school and has helped to finance consultants to work with staff to improve teaching in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Safeguarding procedures, identified as an area for improvement at the most recent inspection,

have been addressed. Key policies are in place and subject to review by the IEB.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The IEB has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. The IEB meets regularly to monitor the work of the school and the progress it is making against each of the development priorities. The Chair of the IEB has collected direct evidence of the work of the school, including observing lessons and examining the work in pupils' books. As a result, she and her colleagues have a good understanding of the improvements in teaching that have been made since the previous inspection and are able to robustly hold senior leaders to account for the standards achieved by the pupils. The IEB has a good range of skills and professional experience. The local authority and diocese are both represented on this group and, as a result, are able to provide senior leaders with effective support and challenge. Arrangements for performance management have been agreed by the IEB and its members have supported the headteacher's decision to withhold salary increases this year. They have an overview of how the extra funding the school receives from the pupil premium is being spent and how it is effectively closing gaps in attainment. The IEB has agreed plans to put in place a shadow governing body with the intention that this group will ultimately be responsible for governing the school by the end of the year. The IEB has ensured that the statutory requirements for safeguarding are being met.

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	105710
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	432724

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Simmons
Executive Headteacher	Adam Laskey
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2013
Telephone number	01706 847360
Fax number	01706 299601
Email address	info@st-james.oldham.sch.uk

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