

# St John's Church of England Primary School

Johnson Street, Radcliffe, Manchester, Lancashire, M26 1AW

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because many pupils are still catching up on previous underperformance, particularly in the older classes.
- Too few pupils have made better than the expected progress in all subjects.
- Teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress slows when teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding during lessons and do not always use assessment accurately to match work to get the best out of all pupils.
- Pupils make a slow start in learning phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Sometimes, older pupils find what they read difficult to understand.
- Many pupils lack quick recall of number facts and times tables, and often do not select the correct method to solve word problems.
- Most pupils write confidently and imaginatively but careless spelling, punctuation and handwriting can let down the quality of their work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. All pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all activities in this very happy and safe school.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Some teaching is already helping to inspire staff to improve the quality of their own work.
- Pupils behave well in all situations, are keen to learn and enjoy everything they do at school. Their attendance has improved.
- Rigorous actions implemented by the newly established leadership team and staff are already proving effective in accelerating pupils' progress and raising attainment.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, visited small group activities and scrutinised pupils' workbooks.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, pupils and staff, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at how the school gathers an accurate picture of pupils' performance, and the data of pupils' current achievement.
- Records of how leaders monitor and assess the quality of teaching and learning and the arrangements for pupils' safeguarding were scrutinised.
- The inspector listened to some readers from Years 1 and 2 and observed pupils during break and lunchtimes.
- Not enough responses were recorded online in Parent View to show results, so the inspector took account of the 46 responses received in the school's own recent survey of parents' views and in the 9 questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

## Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About 18% are of other heritages and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and school action plus is above the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average, and some have complex learning needs.
- At almost 60%, the proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children who are looked after.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, these are the minimum expectations for pupil attainment and progress in 2013.
- There are more boys than girls on the school roll and a much higher than usual number of pupils enter or leave the school during their primary years.
- In recent years, the school experienced an unusual amount of change. This included changes of staff and governors, possible closure, an executive headship and soft federation with a local school. After a term as acting headteacher at the school, the current headteacher became the substantive headteacher in January 2013.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so all is consistently good or better by:
  - using assessment information more accurately and consistently to provide tasks that challenge and get the best out of all pupils
  - making sure staff check their pupils' understanding throughout lessons to ensure their progress is always good or better
  - further sharing and extending the high quality teaching skills already found in the school in order to develop and strengthen the skills of all staff.
- Continue to accelerate progress and raise attainment by:
  - developing pupils' ability to fully understand the meaning of what they are reading, particularly older pupils
  - organising phonics lessons so they are held when pupils are at their most receptive
  - improving pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly, and their confidence in selecting the right methods to solve word problems
  - making sure all pupils are using the new handwriting style and improving pupils' spelling and knowledge of how to use of punctuation.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time standards have been well-below national averages. Most pupils make the progress expected of them but few have done better than this, and many older pupils have gaps in their knowledge. For example, in quick recall of times tables, how to tackle word problems, punctuate their work or spell correctly. Work is presented with care but not all pupils use joined, fluent handwriting.
- The number of pupils in each year group varies and is often small, with varying proportions of boys and girls, pupils supported by the pupil premium or those with special educational needs. In addition, the unusually high level of movement into and out of the school means year groups change significantly over time. For example, almost half the pupils currently in Year 6 joined later than Reception class.
- Most children start school with skills well below those typical for their age, with particularly limited language and social skills. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress is scrupulously assessed and shared with parents in individual 'Learning Journals'. Children are taught well and make good progress but only about half are ready for Year 1 at the end of the Reception Year.
- Standards at the end of both key stages were below, rather than well-below national levels in 2013. Leaders have set aspirational targets and school data and inspection evidence shows that recent actions are already accelerating progress and boosting standards. Pupils currently in Year 6 are well on course to achieve their targets owing to high-quality teaching. This has enabled them to make good, and often better, progress in reading, writing and mathematics since the start of the school year. Pupils in Year 2 are also on course to reach their targets.
- Extra challenges and tasks for the most able pupils include working with older pupils for mathematics or daily letters and sounds activities to accelerate their progress and attainment.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium often achieve better than their classmates because they receive well-focused support and interventions tailored to their particular needs. Visits out of school and sessions in the nurture group boost their self-confidence. Data shows their attainment is about half a term above their classmates in reading and mathematics. Their attainment in writing is just over two terms behind but school data shows this gap is rapidly narrowing.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs or learning to speak English as an additional language usually progress as well as their classmates because they receive very well organised support, closely matched to their individual needs.
- Staff have received training in the delivery of lessons on phonics, and pupils 'sound out' and blend letters into words. However, the proportion who reached the expected standard in both 2012 and 2013 phonics screening checks was well below the national figure. Lessons are not consistently well organised or provided when pupils are most ready to learn. Older pupils read confidently but do not always 'read between the lines' to infer the full meaning behind the words. This can affect their ability to understand and solve word problems in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, prior to 2013, teaching left pupils with a great deal of ground to make up in their knowledge and understanding. Currently, pupils do not learn quickly enough when staff do not take enough account of how well pupils have achieved previously when they plan work and tasks. In addition, staff do not always check pupils' understanding systematically during the course of each lesson to spot where pupils may need extra help or have done well and need another challenge.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff use skilled questioning to encourage children to talk and discuss their activities and interests. For example, while children had fun mixing

imaginary cakes in the outdoor area, a member of staff got them talking about what they were doing.

- In Years 4, 5 and 6 teachers' skilful questions are carefully phrased to stimulate pupils to really think and explain their answers. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils worked in small groups to decide the best method to solve a problem, and Year 6 pupils moved around, giving and sharing points for a balanced argument with different classmates.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They provide valuable support for pupils who may find learning difficult, those learning to speak English as an additional language and those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Their support helps these groups of pupils to progress at the same rate as their classmates.
- Pupils say they each have literacy, numeracy and personal targets which they are very keen to achieve so they can move on to the next one. Marking is thorough and staff make consistent use of the school's agreed marking code. Pupils understand this code and say teachers' comments help them know how to improve their work.

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

- Behaviour is good. Pupils, parents and staff agree, and evidence gathered during the inspection supports this. The school environment is calm, happy and friendly and outside the building there is plenty of space for games or quiet activities at break-times.
- Very supportive relationships between pupils and staff ensure lessons proceed smoothly. Pupils say they enjoy school because, 'there is lots to do', and they work happily together. Positive attitudes in lessons are helping them to make better progress.
- Pupils agree that bullying is not a problem in school. They know it may take different forms, such as name calling, online or text messaging, and are confident they would know what to do if they were to encounter any.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they always feel safe in school because they have lots of friends, no-one is left out and, 'Our teachers are always there.' They trust staff to listen and help if they have any problems.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as school councillors or running the tuck shop. Some Year 6 pupils are trained to act as 'peer mediators', helping other pupils to resolve disputes through discussion.
- The school has worked successfully to raise attendance levels, using awards and incentives. Attendance has improved and is now average, but not all pupils arrive at school on time.

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

- In a relatively short space of time, the new leadership team has implemented an ambitious vision for how good they want the school to be, and staff morale is high. School self-evaluation is very honest. Plans for improvement show exactly what needs to be done to raise achievement and provide all pupils with equal opportunities to learn well.
- Leaders' strategies and initiatives are quickly showing results. Progress is accelerating and the quality of teaching continues to improve. New leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage has overcome issues from the previous inspection, improved the way teachers track children's progress and the way information is used to plan stimulating activities. Consequently, children progress well in the Reception and Nursery classes.

Newly introduced systems to track pupils' progress in each class are now providing very detailed information. Progress is reviewed every half term and class teachers are now rigorously held to account for their pupils' progress. Rigorous performance management and appraisal procedures are supported with well-targeted staff development. Although there have been some opportunities for staff to observe good quality lessons, some would benefit from

more opportunities to see the good practice in their own school.

- Senior and middle leaders are good role models of high-quality teaching. Their professional and management skills are developed very effectively, focusing on improving outcomes for all pupils. For example, mentoring less experienced staff and working with external consultants.
- Careful adaptations to the curriculum meet pupils' individual needs and abilities and direct support effectively. Pupils' books show literacy skills are used in other subjects, such as describing investigations of space in science, but they have fewer opportunities to use their numeracy skills.
- The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, shown in pupils' good behaviour, caring attitudes and enthusiastic approach to all the school has to offer. This equips them well for future learning and becoming responsible members of society.
- Well planned, stimulating experiences enrich subjects and make learning more relevant. For example, Year 6 pupils' involvement in the Shakespeare project linking literacy, history and drama, as pupils rehearsed *Macbeth* prior to performing at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester.
- Visits out of school are popular and varied, support classwork and help pupils' experience activities they may not otherwise meet. These include a residential visit and trips to Skipton Castle, Jodrell Bank, Heaton Park and the War Museum.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Records are carefully maintained, staff training is up-to-date and staff are fully informed about any issues affecting their pupils may be experiencing.
- The local authority has provided good quality support for the school and for the governing body, with valuable guidance and staff development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The relatively new governing body is fully committed to the vision for school improvement. With good support from the local authority, they organised training and devised a 'Governors Development Plan' to ensure they have good knowledge of all aspects of school and clear understanding of their responsibilities.
  - They increasingly challenge and question, offer well-informed support and are well equipped to contribute effectively to procedures for evaluating school performance. Governors know that there has been underachievement over time and are rigorous in monitoring leaders' actions to overcome this. They use school and national data to ask questions about attainment and progress and to compare the school's performance with others both locally and nationally.
  - Governors are well aware of any differences in performance by different groups of pupils and make sure that those supported by the pupil premium, those who are disabled or have special needs or are learning to speak English as an additional language, progress as well as their classmates.
  - Governors have ensured the new sports funding is used to broaden pupils' experience and increase their participation in different sports, and for staff training, in order to secure long-term benefits to pupils' health.
  - The finance committee ensures funds are used wisely to support improvement. Governors ensure professional development is used to improve the quality of teaching, develop all levels of leadership and that outcomes of staff performance reviews are related to any rewards for good teaching.

## 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>	105349
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	430950

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>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	R Clarkson
<b>Headteacher</b>	J Harvey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 March 2012
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