

St Stephen's CE Primary School

Audenshaw Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5HD

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils' achievement over time is not good enough, particularly for boys and those eligible for the pupil premium, and is not rising quickly enough, including in reading and mathematics.
- In particular, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2013 was not good enough and reflected the quality of teaching that they had received over time.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching which is not yet consistently good or better. This does not allow older pupils to gain enough ground. Consequently, for this group, learning and progress overall are not yet good.
- Teachers do not always keep a close check on the progress of pupils' learning in lessons.
- When leaders are observing teaching and linking this to their judgements on the quality of teaching, they do not always consider how well the pupils are learning and progressing.
- Leaders and managers do not make the best use of the accurate data available to them, to intervene when individual pupils or groups fail to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Where teaching is less than good, some pupils become disengaged and occasionally disturb the learning of others.

The school has the following strengths

- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. Children get a particularly good start to their life in school.
- Leaders, managers and governors are bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching and achievement.
- Effective initiatives are improving reading and writing, particularly for boys and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- This is a harmonious school where pupils show respect and understanding of each other's differences. They feel safe and describe their school as a friendly one.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of 13 lessons, including those in which pupils were being taught about how letters in words represent different sounds.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was examined, particularly that related to keeping pupils safe, and their behaviour and attendance.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress was checked and pupils' work in books was examined.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Only five replies were made to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), but inspectors took note of the 83 replies received to the school's own questionnaire for parents.
- Inspectors analysed 31 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Nixon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Allyson Ingall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little below average in size for a primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British, but about a third comes from a variety of other minority ethnic groups. An increasing proportion of pupils, more than in most schools, speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported at school action, is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- There have been changes to staffing since the last inspection.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for its own pupils.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - improving the effectiveness of teaching over time, so that all pupils make effective progress in all year groups
 - improving teachers' use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and progress in lessons
 - ensuring that all pupils are given opportunities to respond to marking
 - improving basic calculation skills to ensure that pupils are better equipped to tackle the demands of the curriculum in Years 5 & 6
 - giving pupils the opportunity to develop their reading skills regularly and systematically.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the use of the data to know precisely which groups of pupils are underachieving from their key starting points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
 - focussing the monitoring of the quality of teaching, including during lesson observations, on its impact on learning
 - ensuring that action plans have clear, measurable outcomes by which governors can check that they are working.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress that pupils make is not always good enough across the school to ensure that they all reach the levels of which they are capable. While many pupils make the expected amount of progress, too few do better than this, particularly in Key Stage 2. The most-able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- An increasingly large proportion of children enters the school at a level of development that is well below that typical for their age. By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage pupils have made good progress, with a significant proportion of them being at least in line with age-related expectations and a small proportion of pupils exceeding this.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the national expectations in the Year 1 phonics screening check has doubled since 2012 and is now broadly in line with the national average. Significant ground has been made in closing the gaps for key groups of pupils, such as those with special needs and those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. A high proportion of pupils who did not meet the standard for the phonics check in Year 1 are successful in Year 2.
- Generally pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment has risen over time, particularly in writing, and is now in line with national averages for all subjects. Those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, girls and those pupils with special needs do well, compared to their peers nationally. However, boys perform less well than other groups, particularly in reading and writing. Too few pupils reach higher levels of attainment.
- Over time, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently in line with national averages. However, in 2013 attainment fell significantly below the national average in reading and mathematics. The school's own data and evidence in pupils' work indicate that standards are rising again. Pupils eligible for pupil premium do not make the same progress as that of their peers and are approximately two terms behind. However, over time the school is closing the gap for these pupils year on year.
- Over time, progress in Key Stage 2 has been in line with the national average with a dip in 2013, particularly in reading and mathematics. Too few pupils make better than expected progress. Changes in staffing continue to stall progress in Year 5, resulting in inconsistent progress across the key stage and the need to accelerate learning in Year 6. Generally all groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups or those who have English as additional language, do as well as their peers. However, some groups, such as those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium do less well than those nationally, but this gap is closing. Some pupils are hindered in the progress they make in mathematics because of their limited calculation skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs generally make better progress than their peers due to the effectiveness of additional support.
- More-able pupils make expected progress in all subjects, particularly in mathematics where more-able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now grouped together to undertake more difficult work to allow them to shine.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is too variable, meaning that all pupils are not always achieving as well as they could. However, teaching in the school is improving.
- While there are examples of good and outstanding teaching in different parts of the school, particularly in Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6, too much teaching isn't good enough. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is slowed.
- Where teaching requires improvement, activities do not bring the best out of all pupils nor do teachers clearly explain what they want pupils to do. In these lessons teachers do not always check on the progress pupils are making and when they do, they do not adjust the lesson to ensure good progress.

- Where teaching is good or better, teachers use assessment to plan activities that are hard enough to extend some pupils and support pupils appropriately. They use questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and understanding which moves learning on and they check on progress to redirect learning, if necessary. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson on investigating natural objects, where focussed questions enhanced children's understanding and allowed the teacher to assess pupils' understanding.
- Any inadequate teaching, identified by the school, has been eliminated. However, not enough has been done to ensure that the current standard of teaching is sufficiently good enough to allow the pupils to make up lost ground.
- Lessons start promptly and where teaching is good, teachers plan hard enough work that stretches the most able, whilst offering support for the less able. In one lesson observed, time calculations were linked to a Winter Olympics racing theme. This particularly engaged the boys and offered sufficient levels of difficulty to challenge some very able pupils.
- Teachers mark work regularly, but the quality of feedback they provide for pupils is variable, and does not always help pupils to understand what they have to do to improve their work or correct errors. Pupils are not always given opportunities to respond to feedback and some teachers do not regularly check the quality and accuracy of the pupils' responses.
- Teachers use the school's limited outdoor space well to support and enhance learning. For instance, Key Stage 2 pupils were observed using fixtures and fittings in the yard to complete investigations in measuring, giving pupils real opportunities to practise their measuring, resulting in better understanding of how best to measure an object accurately.
- Standards in reading are not as good as they could be, despite the improvements in the systematic teaching of the relationship between letters and sounds, because reading for understanding is not given the priority it needs. In some classes there is a lack of regular and systematic teaching of this aspect of reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. This is because in some lessons activities planned do not bring the best out of all pupils or are not explained clearly enough to allow pupils to get the most from them. Consequently, pupils become disengaged and this results in low-level disruption and naughtiness that slows the pace of learning. Not all teachers deal as effectively with this as they could.
- Pupils' pride in their work is improving due to the focussed support of teachers and the regular teaching of handwriting.
- Around the school and at play times pupils' behaviour is good. They show respect for each other irrespective of gender, age or background and show courtesy to adults. They demonstrate the caring ethos of the school by the way they look after each other when accidents or 'fall outs' occur. An example of this was when an inspector was standing alone at lunchtime watching the children play. A Year 5 pupil approached the inspector to see if he was alright and enquired if he needed someone to play with, demonstrating a genuine concern to include all in the life of the school.
- Attendance over time is slightly below that found nationally, but in line with that of similar schools and is improving because of the actions the school is taking.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents support this view and pupils say that they like coming to school and feel safe. They are confident that staff will help them if they have any problems or concerns.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are aware of different types of bullying including cyber-bullying, homophobic bullying and racism but say that incidents are extremely rare and dealt with effectively by the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching is not good enough over time and as a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan appropriate actions for improvement. However, their plans lack the measurable outcomes from which governors can make accurate checks that they are working.
- When observing lessons, leaders are not consistently focussed on the impact of teaching on learning. Leaders are aware of the effect of low-level disruptions in some classes and are taking appropriate actions that are reducing its impact on learning.
- The appointment of the new deputy headteacher has strengthened the capacity of the leadership team, particularly in the use of data to inform evaluations of how the school is improving. However, too much emphasis is still placed on the tracking of how pupils progress during each academic year and not from key starting points. This masks 'slippages' in progress across a key stage. Leaders appropriately support the newly qualified teacher in school to develop their practice.
- Performance management is used robustly in school to hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils. Targets are clear and linked directly to teachers' national standards and the progress that pupils should make across the year. These targets are reviewed formally during mid-year reviews and more informally during the regular pupil progress meetings.
- The curriculum is broad and enhanced with activities that interest pupils and prepare them for their next stages of learning.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils speak of the lively and interesting assemblies that are held in school and fundraising activities they have undertaken for charities such as 'Water Aid'.
- The school uses the additional sport funding well to provide a rich variety of sporting opportunities for pupils, while also building staff expertise for their sustained delivery. The school does not have a sports field, but uses close links with a local secondary school to access high quality facilities and training for pupils and staff. This means that all pupils participate in sport and are developing healthier lifestyles.
- The school engages well with parents through regular newsletters and events. The large majority of parents expressed support for the school and would recommend it to other parents.
- Local authority support and challenge for school improvement has been inadequate and failed the school. The authority does not have an accurate understanding of the strengths or weaknesses of the school, as it has shown little interest in it since the last inspection. The school received only one visit relating to school improvement, in January 2014, from which no feedback or report has yet been produced.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses in achievement and the quality of teaching. They use performance management to hold staff to account and are aware of its link to pay awards.
 - Governors recognise the need to improve standards by holding leaders to account and, with better training and support, are well placed to do so. They visit the school regularly and ask challenging questions regarding staffing and finance. However, information provided is not sharp enough to allow them to ask the challenging questions about pupil performance and the quality of teaching.
 - Governors manage finances well and use them effectively. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is used and regularly check the increasing impact it is having on eligible pupils, including closing gaps in reading and improve attendance.
 - The Governing Body fulfils its statutory duties with regard to safeguarding.

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	106246
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	441201

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Tingey
Headteacher	Cathie Masztalerz
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2012
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