

St Stephen's Tockholes CofE Primary School

Rock Lane, Tockholes, Darwen, BB3 0LX

Inspection dates

5 March 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

- From their starting points, most pupils make the progress expected of them but too few make better progress than this, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average but too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing.
- The quality of teaching is too variable to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve or of the quantity of work produced are not high enough. Pupils' work is not always presented well. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 do not use joined handwriting.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they can because work is sometimes too easy for them.
- Pupils do not always concentrate as well as they should because not all lessons captivate their interest.
- School leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance is too positive. Consequently, they have not done enough to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The role of a middle leader has yet to be developed. They do not yet play a full part in checking that teaching and learning in their subject areas are always good, nor take necessary action to respond to any dips in achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Attendance is good because pupils enjoy learning and being a part of St Stephen's.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Over the last year, governors have been more closely involved in the life of the school and in checking its performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors were unable to make contact with the school the day before the inspection and arrived unannounced in the morning.
- The inspectors observed six lessons or part lessons taught by teachers. They observed both classes being taught, as well as groups of pupils supported outside the classroom.
- Inspectors met with parents and took into consideration their views. Responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View) were too few to report.
- The inspectors observed teaching in a number of short reading sessions at the start of the day. They listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and across Key Stage 2 and met with a group of pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke to school staff including the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher.
- The school's work was observed and the inspectors looked at documentation, including: policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour; information on pupils' progress; attendance figures; the school's improvement planning and records of checks carried out by leaders on the quality of teaching. They observed playtimes and lunchtimes, and looked at the school's website.
- Work in pupils' books was reviewed during classroom observations and the inspectors scrutinised, in detail, pupils' books from all year groups.

Inspection team

Robert Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Stephen's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all the pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.) The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and receive support through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012. There have been a number of changes to the school teaching staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and therefore raise pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing by:
 - providing pupils with challenging work, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write across a range of subjects
 - making sure that pupils have more time to complete their tasks and understand what a good piece of work looks like
 - ensuring that pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to form letters correctly and that pupils in Key Stage 2 apply these skills in order to write in a joined-up, fluent style.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, particularly their attitudes to learning, by ensuring that pupils' interest is captivated in the work that they do so that they are motivated to do their best.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, to be at least good, by:
 - ensuring that school leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance
 - rigorously checking the information collected about pupils' progress and sharing the results of this fully with all teachers so that any underachievement is identified and remedied quickly
 - developing the role of a middle leader, by making sure they check up on teaching and learning in their subject areas and take effective and immediate action in response to any dips in pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. The school has had an unsettled period since the last inspection and achievement has declined. Recently, however, there has been a rise in attainment reflected in the improved performance in 2013 tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Nevertheless, achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement because pupils' progress from their starting points is not consistently good across all year groups and across a range of different subjects.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge broadly expected for their age. The improvement in the quality of what is on offer in the Early Years Foundation Stage is helping children to get off to a quicker start. Most children are now making good progress and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above that expected nationally.
- In Key Stage 1, there has been a steady rise in attainment. In 2013, this was above the national average for the first time.
- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 6 varies from year to year. In 2012, for example, attainment was below that found nationally, while it was above in 2013.
- Most pupils make the expected rate of progress between Years 3 and 6. However, the proportion of pupils that do better than this is lower than average, especially in mathematics and writing. This is due to variable quality of learning between the different age groups found within the class. These variations mean that pupils do not always build well on what they already know and can do.
- Many pupils in Key Stage 2 do not yet use a joined-up handwriting style. Some do not form their letters correctly and therefore find this task difficult. Across the school, work is sometimes untidy and appears to show a lack of commitment from pupils to do their very best. This prevents some pupils from achieving well.
- The most able pupils are only making the progress expected of them in mathematics and writing. This is because expectations are not high enough to help them achieve more. They are not always provided with the challenging work needed for them to reach their potential.
- Across the school, pupils achieve well in reading. Most have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and know how to 'break words down' when they are unsure about new vocabulary. Pupils read a wide range of books in school and enjoy opportunities to read widely. The best readers are fluent and read with expression.
- The additional support provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that they make progress in line with that of similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in the school. In 2012, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was about three terms behind their peers in mathematics. However, despite this gap, these pupils' achievement was still ahead of the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven and requires improvement. Pupils do not learn well enough to ensure they make good progress in both classes and across subjects.
- The work set is not always challenging enough, especially for the most able. Pupils sometimes spend too long on a task before moving on to harder work.
- Pupils do not always understand what quality or quantity of work is expected of them across a range of subjects. Consequently, they do not always produce a sufficient amount of work to enable them to extend their writing skills into other subjects, such as science. On a small number of occasions, work is not completed.
- At times, new learning does not inspire pupils to do their very best. For example, some writing

tasks occasionally require pupils to copy-write rather than produce their own work, while on other occasions older pupils simply cut out pictures and stick them in their books. Consequently, some of the work produced reflects a lack of interest and is often untidy, and not to the same standard as that found in their literacy books.

- Handwriting skills are not acquired sufficiently well by the end of Year 2. In some cases, pupils are not able to form letters correctly. Consequently, some pupils find it difficult to write in a joined-up manner. As yet, there is no consistent method across the school to address this and so many pupils continue to print their words.
- Pupils learn to read well. In the Reception Year and Key Stage 1, pupils quickly and systematically gain good understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). They develop confidence to use their phonic skills to help them with their reading. This is developed in Key Stage 2, where pupils extend their understanding of texts and learn how to read fluently and with expression. Most read regularly at home and they say they enjoy reading for pleasure and purpose.
- In Reception, children play and work together harmoniously in a safe environment. They are inquisitive and have an opportunity to read on a regular basis.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because skilled teaching assistants ensure that these pupils receive support that is matched well to their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons was mostly good. Most of the time, pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and settle well at the beginning of different activities. However, sometimes pupils lose concentration when they are not motivated or interested enough in the work they are asked to do. When work is too hard or too easy for pupils, they do not always produce good work. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning require improvement.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class. They learn to follow instructions and routines set by the older pupils in the class and, as a result, they behave well. Their personal, social and emotional development improves because of the opportunities children are given to work and play together.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They say that there are occasional instances of bullying but are confident that adults deal quickly with any concerns they have.
- The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour require improvement. However, scrutiny of the data available, as well as the observations inspectors made of life in the school, show that the behaviour of most pupils is good. For example, movement around school and during assembly is orderly. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to the adults that work with them. They look smart in their school uniform and are confident about talking about their work. Generally, they work in a pleasant, clean and safe learning environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They could give many examples of how to ensure their own personal safety and that of others – for example, by following rules for road and stranger danger and being aware of how to use the internet safely.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is now above average. Pupils arrive at school on time. They move quickly to lessons without a fuss.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school's evaluation of its performance is not accurate. While the headteacher has secured improvements in pupils' attendance and overall attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, he has an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. He therefore judged

teaching and achievement to be better than they actually are. Most significantly, there has been little improvement in achievement in writing and presentation of pupils' work since the previous inspection report. Leadership and management, therefore, require improvement.

- The monitoring of teaching has largely been undertaken by the headteacher. He has inherited a turbulent staffing situation, which has seen a series of temporary appointments. While he has been able to identify the aspects of the school that require improvement, he has not yet secured consistently good teaching. The role of the middle leader is still developing. They do not yet consistently check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, or use the information about pupils' progress to ensure their view of teachers' performance in the classroom is reflected in the progress pupils make.
- The headteacher has established a good system to track the attainment and progress of pupils. This gives a very clear picture of the achievement of individual pupils. However, leaders do not ensure that this information is used consistently well to plan and provide work to meet the needs of groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers' performance is monitored by school leaders and staff have targets linked to their classroom practice. A rigorous cycle of checking progress against these targets has now been established by the headteacher.
- Although the curriculum provides a broad base from which to learn new skills and knowledge, there is a lack of rigorous analysis of the impact of the different subjects on raising standards in this school. All pupils have equal access to all school activities and school leaders are committed to improving opportunities for all to succeed as well as they can.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school. Regular assemblies provide a good awareness of spirituality. A wide range of trips, visits and other curriculum enhancement activities ensure that pupils respect one another and have a good awareness of different cultures and religions.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to provide additional weekly physical education lessons led by skilled sports coaches from Blackburn Football Academy. Specialist teaching, such as that observed in Key Stage 2, motivates pupils to improve their physical skills, as well as their health and well-being.
- Partnerships with parents and the local community are strong. Parents commented to the inspectors that their children enjoyed school and that the headteacher was approachable and supportive.
- The local authority currently provides a significant level of support for the school in the form of assisting with staffing issues, providing training for leadership and helping in monitoring the school's achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors' general knowledge of the school is good. They set the headteacher challenging targets and have taken decisive action to ensure that all teachers are accountable for their work. Teaching in the Reception class now enables children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make good progress.
 - Governors know that the performance of pupils needs to improve. They ensure that the pupil premium makes a difference for entitled pupils, and know that the early intervention teaching that it supports is improving results for them. There is robust financial management and all safeguarding requirements are met. Governors keep themselves up to date and have attended substantial training in order to be able to assist and challenge the headteacher. The Chair of the Governing Body knows the school very well because he regularly comes into school and meets with teachers and pupils.

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	119459
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	440842

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terence Young
Headteacher	Dominic James
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
Telephone number	01254 701806
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	tockholes@blackburn.gov.uk

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