

St James' CofE Primary School Gorton

Stelling Street, Gorton, Manchester, M18 8LW

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Not enough has been done to identify and halt the marked decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Governance is ineffective. The governing body is not aware of pupils' poor performance and does not hold leaders effectively to account.
- The achievement of pupils is inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards are below average. Pupils' progress is too slow.
- Pupils with special educational needs, the most able pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils supported through pupil premium funding also make inadequate progress.
- Insufficient consideration is given to pupils' starting points for learning and subsequent targets for achievement are set too low. Progress is not reviewed regularly enough to make up lost ground.
- Teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, is inadequate; weaknesses in teaching are not acted upon quickly enough and this hampers pupils' progress. Pupils are not challenged enough and this leads to some inattention in lessons.
- Significant staffing changes have adversely affected pupils' learning and their achievement.
- The curriculum is not well matched to the abilities of pupils. Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not developed well and there are too many gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Behaviour is inadequate. Incidents of poor behaviour are not managed well enough and this adversely affects the learning of other pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Nursery and Reception make good progress because they are taught well.
- Pupils in the Resource Base are carefully supported to become more confident, successful learners.
- Pupils are courteous and respectful around school and in the playground.
- Staff share the headteacher's ambitions to improve pupils' standards and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 11 lessons and part lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher. An inspector observed one assembly. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school was checked by inspectors.
- Discussions were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders. Discussions took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work including support for pupils who require extra help. They listened to pupils read and reviewed pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of school documents, including plans for the school's improvement, the school's use of the primary sport funding and the pupil premium, arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, records of governing body meetings, reviews of the quality of teaching and information about the standards and progress of pupils across the school.
- The views of parents were taken into account by considering their responses to school questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View survey to take into account. Staff views were evaluated through their 18 responses to the staff questionnaire and by discussions with staff throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school operates an on-site Resource Base for up to seven pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and/or speech and language impairments. Currently, the four pupils attending spend part of their time in the base and the rest of their time in mainstream lessons.
- An above-average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual time.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body manages the before-school care in the school and this formed part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that work is set at the right level so that all pupils are stretched to achieve the standards of which they are capable, especially boys in reading and writing, girls in mathematics, and the most able pupils
 - checking what pupils already know and understand, and planning work that enables them to make up any gaps in their knowledge and skills
 - ensuring marking is thorough and tells pupils clearly how to improve their work
 - setting high expectations for pupils' behaviour and for how well behaviour is managed in lessons
 - making sure that lessons are enjoyable and challenging so that pupils are interested, keen to learn and concentrate on what they are learning.
- Raise standards so that they are above average by improving pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects throughout Years 1 to 6 and

most particularly in Key Stage 1

- focusing on pupils' acquisition of basic skills and knowledge in English and mathematics
- emphasising the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation from Year 1
- setting more challenging targets for pupils and regularly checking that pupils are on track to achieve those targets.

■ Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:

- tackling weaknesses in teaching as a matter of urgency
- setting clear targets that are used by all staff based on pupils making at least good progress from their starting points in Year 1
- evaluating pupils' progress towards meeting challenging targets regularly and acting on any underachievement immediately
- focusing all leaders' attention on the priorities of improving teaching and accelerating pupils' progress to reach above-average standards
- ensuring that the curriculum is effective in building pupils' knowledge in all subjects, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and their basic skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy, so that they are well prepared for their future
- improving the effectiveness of the governing body so that governors are trained and knowledgeable about holding the school to account for its performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are currently below average in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially for the most able pupils. From their individual starting points this represents inadequate achievement. Progress in lessons and over time as seen in pupils' books is inadequate. In some classes in Key Stage 2, pupils' current good rate of progress is still not enough to make up for previous underachievement.
- Pupils' knowledge and basic skills in literacy and numeracy are weak. Writing standards are low, especially for boys, and pupils' standards in reading, especially for boys and, in mathematics, particularly for girls, are below average. Work in other subjects, such as humanities, is sparse and lacks depth and knowledge.
- The most able pupils do not do as well as they should as they are not routinely stretched by the work they are asked to do in lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language make inadequate progress because they are not challenged or supported to achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils from the Resource Base have complex special needs and make effective progress because expectations for their achievement are high and they are specifically supported to improve their basic skills from the outset.
- The pupil premium funding is used in different ways in an attempt to support pupils' personal development and to raise the standards they reach. It helps many pupils to, for example, take part in educational trips and attend the breakfast club. It is also used to provide additional one-to-one teaching and small group teaching sessions.
- The attainment and progress of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority are in line with other pupils in the school.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Overall, children enter the setting with skills that are below those typically found for their age. They make good progress and develop skills in line with the average for their age by the time they leave Reception Year. They become keen readers because staff make listening to stories and reading books fun for children. Many books are available for children to look at and enjoy.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teachers' low expectations of pupils' achievement have resulted in below-average standards currently and over time. Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should.
- Targets set for individual pupils are not challenging enough. Pupils' progress is not reviewed regularly enough by teachers and leaders to check whether pupils are achieving well. School targets are not clearly understood or applied by staff and so, for example, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to extend their knowledge while others do not understand precisely what is required from them.
- Pupils' knowledge of the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling, or in number, is not routinely reinforced in all subjects. Teaching does not ensure that pupils recover lost ground from earlier years and consequently they struggle to move on to more advanced work.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. When pupils are not sure how to improve their work, and this is not checked by their teacher, their standards deteriorate. When marking is thorough and pupils act on guidance in teachers' marking, their work clearly improves.
- Work in pupils' books shows that their progress over time is inadequate across subjects. Previous underachievement and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not checked on well enough and pupils have insufficient prior knowledge to call on, for instance when solving problems in

mathematics. Pupils struggle to write detailed paragraphs that are grammatically correct and where the spelling is accurate.

- Teaching assistants are not routinely well-briefed on pupils' current standards or the targets of pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, they do not provide sufficiently focussed and challenging support. In contrast, those support staff who are more knowledgeable about pupils' achievement, provide guidance which is well planned and tailored to maximise pupils' potential. Teachers and teaching assistants supporting the Resource Base accurately assess pupils starting points and progress and they provide effective individual and small group support to extend pupils' knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is not a clear focus in other subjects and this means that basic skills are not consistently reinforced to help eliminate common weaknesses. There is an insufficient focus on the teaching of reading to ensure that pupils gain necessary reading skills.
- Pupils make better progress when teaching is more effective such as in some classes in Key Stage 2. In these classes and as seen in pupils' books, over time the expectations of pupils' achievement are high and pupils persevere in their tasks. Nevertheless, this better quality of teaching is not good enough to make up for previous gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills or to raise the overall quality of teaching to any level other than inadequate.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy themselves as they learn. They grasp early writing and number skills because they are stimulated and challenged by knowledgeable and aspirational staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Pupils' learning is slowed when poor behaviour is not successfully managed or when teaching does not challenge pupils enough to gain their interest and attention. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1.
- Many pupils, particularly older ones, believe that behaviour in lessons is usually good. However, pupils are aware of some disruptions to their learning, especially in Key Stage 1. Inspectors observed lessons across the school where pupils lost their focus and became uninterested in learning.
- Pupils say that behaviour outside of lessons is better than in some lessons and that they feel safe in their lunch and break time play times. Inspectors confirmed this in their observations of behaviour at break times.
- Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to be helpful. Pupils elected to the school council are proud to represent their school friends and to help improve the school. Pupils appreciate the many extra activities provided for them such as international trips, music tuition (especially drumming), sporting activities and assemblies. This involvement and passion does not extend to routinely positive attitudes to their work, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are prepared well for school life through the introductory lessons and activities before they begin school and so they settle down quickly in Nursery and Reception classes. They are encouraged to share and take turns. Children are invited to take part in many activities which stimulate their independence and promote their perseverance. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. It is not good because some pupils are concerned about behaviour in their classes and this makes them feel less safe. Attendance has risen to average and persistent absence has reduced thanks to school actions to encourage pupils and parents to recognise the importance of coming to school.
- Pupils feel safe and their parents agree. Pupils know who to turn to if they are bullied. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, particularly on the internet, but know how to keep safe.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and are polite and helpful. They enjoy assemblies which promote their spiritual and cultural development.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- There has been a significant decline in the school's effectiveness since its previous inspection. Standards have fallen and are below where they should be. Pupils' progress is inadequate and weaknesses in teaching are evident.
- Senior leaders and governors have faced the issue of significant staffing change and the task of managing staff absence. Although staffing is now more stable, with only one temporary teacher now employed, leaders have not managed to eradicate weaknesses in teaching and so pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Although the headteacher correctly identifies key actions to improve pupils' outcomes, these are not sufficiently rigorous or systematic. As they are not the prime focus of all senior leaders, their impact is patchy. The impact of middle leaders is inconsistent because they are not solely focused on improving pupils' achievement.
- School targets to raise pupils' standards are not high enough and, therefore, expectations of pupils' performance are too low. Evaluations of pupils' performance are too infrequent and so actions to improve their achievement are delayed.
- Weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled effectively. The school's evaluation of teaching has not been sufficiently linked to pupils' progress and leaders believe that teaching is better than it is. Senior leaders are not modelling best practice to others often enough or checking the quality of teaching for its impact on raising pupils' standards.
- Performance management targets for teachers and teaching assistants have been changed this year. They are more precise and link pay progression explicitly to the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. However, these are still not challenging or specific enough in targeting pupils to attain standards that are based on good progress.
- Support and professional training for staff are provided but are not sharply focused on precise improvements to pupils' outcomes. Good practice in school is not routinely shared.
- The curriculum does not build on what pupils already know and understand and it does not make up for any lost ground or help to raise standards. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are not developed in other subjects and pupils are not prepared properly for the next stage in their education. Consequently, pupils do not have equality of opportunity to achieve well.
- The spiritual and cultural development of pupils is supported effectively within the curriculum. Pupils are generally polite and value people from different walks of life. Their positive relationships reflect their sociability and confidence and help with gains in their moral and social awareness. However, teachers' low expectations mean that pupils do not behave well enough in lessons which fail to keep their interest.
- Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff share in the drive to improve children's knowledge and skills because they are well trained and are involved in applying consistent systems to support teaching.
- The additional primary school sport funding is used appropriately to support the appointment of a sports coach. Pupils now participate in more organised games at break and lunchtimes such as group skipping and dodge ball activities. More pupils are members of school sports teams and they are enjoying increasing success in various sporting competitions. Pupils look forward to physical education lessons and are developing their skills as a result. Teaching assistants are also being coached to develop their knowledge and skills. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles is emphasised and pupils consciously eat sensibly and take regular exercise.
- The local authority has recognised weaknesses in the school's performance, although this has been recent and too late to stop its decline. It is too early for the additional support to have had an impact in raising pupils' standards. The local authority is committed to helping the school to improve.
- The school engages well with parents, who are welcome in school. The school has worked successfully with parents to improve their children's attendance. Parents are positive in their views about the school and would recommend it to others.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is ineffective. Governors have not understood how information about pupils'

standards and progress suggests inadequate achievement. As a result, they have not acted effectively enough to improve pupils' performance. Weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled and performance management targets, though recently changed to be more specific, have been too general to hold teachers accountable for ensuring their pupils make good progress. Consequently, most staff have progressed through the pay scales regardless of how well their pupils are doing.

- While governors have a sound understanding of how to manage the school's finances and maintain a secure overview of the budget, they were not aware enough that the pupil premium has had insufficient impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are very involved in the life of the school and are keen to be as supportive as possible of the headteacher. Although governors have begun to monitor the school's effectiveness more strategically this has not yet been effective in improving pupils' outcomes.
- The governing body fulfils its duties in safeguarding 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	105497
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	432384

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Barraclough
Headteacher	Sara Bayley
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2011
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