

Stoneleigh Academy

Vulcan Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL1 4LJ

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are broadly average and rising quickly. Given that starting points to school are well below those typical, this equates to good achievement overall.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium all make equally good progress.
- Children get an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are extremely well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The academy cares for pupils very well and its procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are outstanding. Pupils are happy, enjoy learning and are proud of their school.
- Mutual respect is at the heart of the academy's values. Pupils behave well and show kindness and consideration to others.
- The headteacher has created a strong staff team who are driving up standards quickly. They have secured the trust of pupils and parents and rebuilt their confidence in school.
- Pupils are well taught. They enjoy learning activities that are carefully planned and interesting. They have access to a wide range of clubs and activities, which broaden their horizons.
- Leaders and governors have established very effective systems to track pupils' progress. As a result, they know precisely what is needed to improve the academy even further.
- Staff are very well managed and benefit from regular training to sharpen their skills.
- As it grows in popularity, the academy moves from strength to strength. It is supported by a strong governing body, which contributes well to the academy's improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in Key Stage 1 and 2 is not yet outstanding. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply their skills of writing and mathematics in other subjects.
- Pupils' handwriting is not consistently good in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not achieve consistently well in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 11 lessons and part lessons.
- Many aspects of the academy's work were evaluated, including the support for pupils who need extra help. Inspectors heard pupils read and conducted discussions with pupils to establish their views of the academy. Inspectors examined pupils' work in their exercise books and that displayed in classrooms and around the academy.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included: records of notable incidents including bullying, the tracking of individual pupils' progress, the academy's plan for improvement, the use of additional funding for supporting pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the impact of the primary school sports fund, safeguarding and child protection arrangements and pupils' attendance records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to evaluate their impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Meetings were held with the middle leadership team, the manager of provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and also with the academy's sports coordinator. A discussion was held with three governors and a telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors evaluated the overall views of parents. A meeting was conducted with 14 parents on the second morning of the inspection. An evaluation was also made of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The views of staff were gathered by analysing the views of 10 questionnaires returned by staff and discussions with them during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Deane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school was opened as an academy under the leadership of the current headteacher in September 2012.
- It is sponsored by the Oldham College and is part of a network, which incorporates Waterhead Academy, the Oldham College and University College Oldham.
- It is a smaller-than-average sized primary school although its popularity is growing with numbers rising quickly since September 2012.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average but is increasing steadily.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is high and about three times the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard. This is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The academy offers a breakfast club each day and holiday care throughout the year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 from good to outstanding by:
 - enabling pupils to write more often in subjects other than English
 - deepening pupils' mathematical ability by enabling them to apply their mathematical knowledge in all subjects
 - raising expectations for the standard of handwriting in Key Stage 2
 - improving the achievement of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the academy has opened, the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has significantly improved. Children make rapid progress, including those who need to catch up, and by the time they move in to Year 1, a higher than average proportion have skills above those typical for their age. Children do very well in establishing good attitudes to learning and many start to read and write and confidently explore mathematics. This represents outstanding achievement because most children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are well below those typical for their age.
- In 2013, results in the national reading screening check of pupils understanding of letters and the sounds they make, known as phonics, at the end of Year 1 were below average. Very effective action by staff has raised standards significantly. Pupils now learn phonics very well. The reading skills of most pupils currently in Year 1 are much more advanced than is seen nationally. This prepares them well for reading and writing as they move through the academy.
- The outcomes gained by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are increasingly feeding through to the learning of pupils in Years 1 and 2 where they make good and improving progress from their previous starting points. In 2013, standards by the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics but currently in Year 2, there is a significant increase in the proportion reaching and exceeding the expectations for their age particularly in reading and mathematics.
- In Years 3 to 6, the rate of progress has accelerated rapidly since the academy was formed. Pupils now make good, and at times, outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are rising quickly from a low base in the past. An above average proportion of pupils across Key Stage 2 are making more than expected progress.
- In 2013, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly average overall but below average in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Decisive action by leaders to improve teaching and achievement means that current standards across Key Stage 2 are now significantly higher. In the current Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at the nationally expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics have all improved and achievement in grammar, punctuation and spelling has increased significantly compared to 2013.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good and accelerating and this is leading to an increasing proportion of pupils now working at levels that exceed the expectations for their age.
- Achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not yet outstanding because in subjects other than English and mathematics, achievement is not consistently good. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use and apply their writing skills in other subjects to fully develop their ability. In mathematics, progress is sometimes hindered because pupils' expertise in applying their basic skills to a variety of problem-solving contexts are not yet fully developed.
- The academy is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. Rigorous and systematic assessments identify precisely each pupil's academic and personal needs. This information is very effectively employed to intervene and support any at risk of falling behind. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress towards their individual targets.
- Across the academy pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. Their attainment is close to their classmates.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The key to the good and rapidly increasing learning across the academy is the very warm relationships that staff build with the pupils. This enables pupils to feel safe and valued and to come to class confident and willing to learn.
- Children get off to an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Whether it is sitting on the story chair outdoors, having a go at mark making indoors or attempting to use their developing knowledge of phonics to read new words, children thrive and love learning. They are nourished by a wide array of activities that entice them to learn as they play.
- Pupils benefit from excellent guidance and support in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 when learning phonics. This gives pupils very secure foundations for reading and writing as they progress through the academy. Reading has had an increased emphasis over the last two years through reading clubs and increased opportunities for pupils to read in class and at home.
- Across the academy, frequent assessments of progress means that pupils get just the right level of support and challenge they need. The most able pupils do very well in response to the high expectations made of them, reflecting the ambitious character of the academy.
- Pupils respond positively and learn particularly well to the opportunities they are given time to debate and discuss together in order to develop their ideas and thinking. For example, Year 2 pupils were inspired by the book 'Michael Recycle' which promoted great debate about how they, as pupils, can help to save our planet.
- Learning accelerates when adults question pupils to check on their pupils' grasp of ideas, which also deepens their understanding. In mathematics in particular, pupils are encouraged to work out the answer, frequently within partnerships with their classmates. This helps them to develop both their understanding and confidence in their own ability.
- Skills in reading, writing and mathematics are developed well, although there is not enough focus on writing in subjects other than English. In Key Stage 2, some pupils struggle to write neatly and to present work at standards that reflect their ability. The basic skills of mathematics are given much attention but pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply such skills to solve mathematical problems practically in subjects other than mathematics.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind benefit from purposeful and effective support by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils who have social and emotional difficulties are given very astute and caring support. This enables them to be included in all aspects of academy life.
- Marking is frequent and older pupils in particular understand what they need to do to reach higher standards. Pupils are encouraged to reflect in lessons on how well they have learnt. Homework is set regularly, and most pupils read frequently at home. This makes a meaningful contribution to pupils' progress and keeps parents in touch with their children's learning. Parents praise the way they are encouraged to get to know the academy and value the target strips they receive indicating what their children are aiming to achieve.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and pupils are unanimous in their praise for the way behaviour has improved since September 2012. The academy works in close partnership with parents and families to provide a calm and secure environment.
- Close friendships and very positive attitudes to learning developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage set a very positive base for pupils' behaviour as they move through the academy. Pupils are usually polite and courteous with adults and treat one another with respect. Most are eager to learn and appreciate the support that they get from staff, but occasionally a few pupils lose their desire to learn and need adult intervention to keep them working.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel valued and are very well looked after. They have a strong sense of belonging and are proud of their school. Initiatives are successful in raising pupils' awareness of safety for example; a skilled teaching

assistant enables pupils to gain a qualification in First Aid.

- Bullying is almost unheard of, parents and pupils are adamant that while it was once a problem, it has now been eradicated. Pupils are very knowledgeable about the different types of bullying, including name-calling and racism. They trust totally that staff will deal quickly and effectively with any problems that might arise.
- The pupils' opinions and views are greatly valued. Their ideas for improve the academy after consultations at the academy council and there are even pupil inspectors working with the headteacher to establish 'How Good Is Stoneleigh Academy?'.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra activities that helps them to develop their interests and talents as well as social and leadership skills. Since September 2013, pupils have been working with a Manchester based initiative to promote pupils' ability to be kind. Eleven pupils have successfully gained their 'Young Community Builder' badges to reward their attitude that 'it's cool to be kind'.
- Pupils are developing a healthy attitude to having an ambition for their lives. Personal plans for each pupil encourages them to consider possible careers and to identify what skills they will need to develop to reach their goal. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are promoted through events such as the recent 'Enterprise Week'. Pupils worked in teams to devise products and create marketing strategies to advertise them. The winners are preparing to present their products at a local superstore.
- The changed fortunes since the formation of the academy has brought about rapid improvement in attendance. The provision of the breakfast club and the all year around holiday clubs add to the desire of many pupils to be at school. The vast majority are regular attenders and the improvement in behaviour is reflected in the fact that there have been no exclusions.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is passionate about getting the best for all pupils and is in the process of securing it. She pursues the view that tomorrow is not soon enough because the pupils deserve the best now! Her determination and excellent strategies to raise standards are having a marked impact on the pupils' achievement and love of learning.
- Together with senior leaders and governors, the headteacher shares a crystal clear picture of where the academy is going, what it needs to do to improve and exactly how to secure its current rapid improvement. Since the academy's opening, the headteacher has gained the total confidence of all staff, pupils and parents. The view of one parent typifies those expressed by parents to inspectors, 'I can't praise the school enough. The headteacher has brought stability to the school after lots of disruption, given my child a love of school when he used to hate it and stopped me worrying about my child each day'.
- The procedures for tracking and recording the progress of pupils are outstanding and underpin the very effective decisions made to raise achievement. Very high expectations are set for all pupils and staff work as team to achieve these. A very strong team of teaching assistants are effectively deployed to make sure any one falling behind receives high quality support to catch up. Their contribution to the rapid improvement in achievement is invaluable.
- Teaching and support staff are valued. Regular reviews of their performance are linked to training to meet the academy's improvement targets to benefit the pupils. Staff are encouraged to improve their expertise; for example by working to gain the national qualifications for special educational needs. Teachers' targets for development link closely to the academy's action plan so everyone works towards the same goals. Financial reward by moving along the salary scale is linked to the individual's success in achieving their targets.
- Middle leaders share the leadership of aspects of the academy's development. All subjects are included in their role. Some staff are still developing their expertise in doing so but ensure the academy is well prepared for the new primary curriculum in September 2014 and for promoting links with parents and the community.
- A lively curriculum gives pupils access to a wide range of opportunities and promotes good

spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. A varied range of after-school clubs means pupils can try activities new to them, such as learning a new sport, cooking or gardening. This effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning. Because of these opportunities, some pupils are enabled to show hidden potential, such as sporting or musical talent, which the academy is helping them to develop.

- The academy has had marked impact on turning around the views of parents and the community to school and rapid improvement is underway. Initiatives such as creating a parent council and encouraging parents to join lessons in the academy coupled with welcoming them in to talk with staff has removed previous barriers. Beneficial links with the academy sponsor has enabled some parents the opportunity to improve their own qualifications by for example, gaining a GCSE in English.
- The academy makes good use of the primary school sports funding to promote sports and physical education. The fund employs a consultant who has widened the choice of sports available to pupils and increased their participation in inter-school events. Pupils report that they like the way that sport has improved recently.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are talented and skilled group who offer the academy excellent support and guidance. Since the formation of the academy it has been one hundred percent behind the staff and the decisions implemented to raise standards.
 - Governors do not take anything for granted and while the headteacher is trusted, they take time to make sure that the academy is performing as well as it seems. Checks are made of the academy's assessments data, regular visits made to the academy and opinions sought about it from parents and pupils.
 - The performance of staff is carefully evaluated and staff are enabled to move along the salary scale only when they demonstrate they are worth it in terms of their contribution to the academy.
 - The skills within the academy sponsors are harnessed to take some of the administrative tasks from the headteacher and office staff so that energy is released for the essential task of securing the best possible achievement of pupils.
 - Finances are carefully monitored. The impact of the pupil premium grant is scrutinised to make sure that it benefits the academic and personal development of the pupils. The effectiveness of the sports grant on widening existing opportunities and skills of pupils is checked so that it is wisely spent.
 - The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	138792
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	440110

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alun Francis
Headteacher	Catharine Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 770 5590
Fax number	0161 770 5594
Email address	head@stoneleigh.oldham.sch.uk

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