

# St John's CofE Primary School

Commonside Road, Worsley, Manchester, M28 1AE

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress.
- Standards have improved in Years 1 to 6 and many pupils have made better than expected progress in the current year.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges that teachers plan for them.
- Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour help them to make rapid progress. They feel entirely safe in school and say that they are very well cared for.
- Outstanding direction from the headteacher has driven the good improvement. In particular, the highly effective leadership and management of teaching are bringing about rapid improvement to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement.
- Governors have improved their effectiveness well. They challenge the school vigorously over standards and teaching and contribute strongly to the drive for further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is the potential for standards in writing and mathematics to be higher.
- Occasionally, teaching assistants' time is not used well particularly at the start of lessons and this slows pupils' learning.
- The leadership of some subjects other than English and mathematics is not firmly established.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw 11 teaching sessions, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with members of staff, pupils, parents, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were 46 responses from parents via Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments of pupils' progress; samples of pupils' work; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own view of its work and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- Similarly, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school works closely with a nearby primary school as part of a soft federation.
- The executive headteacher is also the head of Tyldesly Primary School and was appointed as executive headteacher of both schools in the federation in September 2012.
- The headteacher is a National Leader in Education and, in that role, has supported other schools.
- Before- and after-school care is provided on site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. Reports about this provision may be read at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics further and thereby raise achievement by making sure that teaching assistants' time is always used to best effect to support pupils' learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of the curriculum by using the subject knowledge and skills across the soft federation more effectively to improve the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's knowledge, understanding and skills are generally below typical expectations for their age when they enter the Reception Year. Children make excellent progress and most achieve a good level of development, or exceed it, by the time they move into Year 1. This reflects the huge improvements brought about by the outstanding leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 has improved rapidly, particularly over the past year, since improvement plans have been implemented and stronger, more settled teaching has taken effect. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are currently above average, and are the best seen in the school for a number of years. Pupils' work and assessments in Year 1 show that improvements are on track to be sustained.
- Outcomes in the phonics' check (knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make) at the end of Year 1 are above average. This has a very positive impact on standards in reading and writing in Year 2.
- Progress has reached a rapid pace in Years 3 to 6 due to leaders dealing very effectively with previous issues surrounding teaching quality and introducing much better systems for checking pupils' work. Virtually all pupils in all year groups have made at least the progress expected of them and many have done better than this.
- Current standards at the end of Year 6, though not finally validated, are higher than they were in 2013, but are still broadly average. Taking into account pupils' starting points and the setbacks they faced previously due to some turbulence in teaching, they have made up lost ground well and achieved well overall.
- School leaders are not complacent, however, and fully recognise that standards in writing and mathematics for all pupils could be higher.
- Achievement in reading throughout the school is good. Pupils in Year 2 are very enthusiastic about books and really enjoy talking about all the stories they have read. They read confidently, using their phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar words. All read regularly at home. By the end of Year 6, pupils read widely and express clear preferences for the authors they like most, including some from the past. They read aloud fluently and with good understanding.
- Pupils have a good grasp of how numbers work. They learn their multiplication tables and investigate number systems. There is usually a strong focus on problem solving which allows pupils to use what they know. For example, pupils tested their knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages by working out their equivalents. They are able to use what they know about ratio to solve real-life problems.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. There is a rising trend in their progress since the previous inspection. Pupils are very well supported when working in focused groups outside of the classroom. The work planned for them is usually matched purposefully to their particular needs, and the quality of their learning and progress is checked closely.
- The most able pupils are challenged well in lessons and they generally relish the opportunities they have. When pupils were being taught geography, a pupil showed excellent attitudes by commenting, 'This is going to be hard, but I like a challenge.' The needs of these pupils are well provided for within teachers' planning and some pupils in Year 6 have demonstrated their confidence by attempting the highest Level 6 paper in mathematics.
- Those supported by the pupil premium achieve well. The attainment of the Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2013 was about six months behind their peers in mathematics and about four months behind in writing. It was similar to other pupils in reading because this group of pupils had made particularly swift progress in this subject. The attainment gap is closing quickly for pupils currently in the school. Indeed, in the current Year 6, this group of pupils has done better than others in reading and writing and equalled them in mathematics. Effective use of the funding to provide additional teaching and resources ensures equality of

opportunity for all pupils.

### **The quality of teaching**

**is good**

- There have been significant changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection. All current staff have responded well to the training and support provided by the school and the local authority. In addition, leaders have used the teaching strengths from the federation partner school well to share best practice and lift the overall quality of teaching. As a result, teaching over time is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils' varying abilities are taken into account when lessons are planned so that there is always the right amount of challenge. As some pupils put it, 'Work is never too easy...just a little bit hard at times'. This is a clear indication that expectations are right.
- Interesting topics are chosen to give learning some meaning, and links are made across subjects so pupils can practice a wide range of skills. This keeps pupils interested and focused on their learning. A good example is the current junior topic about coal mining. This connects pupils with their local heritage. They study local maps, learn about the life of their area in the past, use computers for research, and use their mathematical, writing and art skills effectively to record their findings.
- English is taught well. There is always a good focus in lessons on improving grammar, punctuation and spelling, and good opportunities for pupils to use those skills in a wide range of writing.
- Adults question pupils well to test their understanding and keep them on the right track towards their targets. They keep accurate records of pupils' progress which they use to reset targets. Marking gives pupils a clear indication of how well they have done and what they need to do next. A very good feature of marking is 'polish time' where pupils respond to teachers' marking and do their corrections.
- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They know pupils' needs and abilities well and usually complement the work of teachers effectively in the classroom. Occasionally, their time is not well used at the beginning of lessons. As a result, opportunities are missed for pupils to start their learning activities as quickly as they might do. This affects particularly those pupils who find learning more difficult. When concepts have to be re-explained, they have fewer opportunities than they need to discuss, plan and complete their work.

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

**are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and contribute significantly to their rapid progress over the year. Behaviour around the school, in the playground, dining hall and during assemblies is equally impressive and is a major element of the friendly and welcoming ethos that everyone recognises and enjoys.
- Pupils are proud of their school and describe it as, 'Unique... because it is a small school with a big heart'. They contribute a great deal to the everyday life of the school.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive punctually, dressed smartly in uniform and they keep their school tidy. The school council is active in giving all pupils a say in school matters and all are watchful over paper recycling and energy conservation. Older pupils are very mindful of younger ones.
- Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the centre of how they behave towards one another. They are invariably polite and well mannered and greatly respect each other's differences.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Playtimes are always enjoyable and the 'buddy bench' is usually redundant because pupils always have friends to play with.

They feel entirely safe in school and share very trusting relationships with adults who work there.

- Pupils state firmly that there is no bullying or offensive name-calling and are very clear about the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils learn about possible risks that they may face, including cyber-bullying, and are well aware of how to deal with them should they occur.
- Parents fully endorse pupils' views about how safe and well cared for they are and speak particularly highly about the way that the school cares for pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are sensible and self-assured, having developed all of the necessary confidence and social skills they need to move to their next schools.

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

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher has driven the transformation that has taken place in the school and brought improvements to all key areas of the school's work. School leaders recognise, however, that in order to raise standards in writing and mathematics further the current pace of progress must not slacken.
- A productive partnership with the local authority has supported the school's progress well. The partner school has been successful in establishing highly sustainable senior leadership with the ability and drive to maintain the momentum of school improvement.
- The management of teaching and learning has been pivotal to the school's improvement over the past two years. Teaching that fell below the expectations of the Teachers' Standards has been eliminated. Robust systems for checking the effectiveness of teachers' work are now in place. A settled workforce has been established and progress and achievement over the current school year are clear evidence of its success. All staff members know how they are accountable for school improvement and share a common commitment to making that happen.
- Middle leaders, in charge of subjects, although limited in number in a small school, have come a long way in improving their curriculum knowledge and leadership skills. Nevertheless, leaders have correctly identified the need to continue to draw on the strengths within both partnership schools, to ensure that leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly established in all subjects.
- The curriculum currently engages pupils well. They acquire the skills they need for learning and enjoy what they do. Learning and personal development are enriched by a good range of extra activities, including a residential visit.
- A good area of learning is music. The quality of singing in the school is very good and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments. Pupils' performance on xylophones is impressive. Year 3 pupils made effective use of musical instruments during science when investigating how to pitch sounds higher or lower and what made them work.
- Pupils have noticed the increased opportunities for sport and other physical activity, which are a result of school leaders' effective use of allocated sports funding. Teachers' skills are improved through their work alongside specialist coaches.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the previous inspection, governors have carefully reviewed the way that they work. Their self-evaluation has generated intensive training in many aspects of governance. Combined with their varied background experiences, they are better able to challenge the school, and do so vigorously. Governors are now familiar with national assessment data, for example. They measure the school's progress against that of all schools and hold leaders to account for standards and progress.
  - Governors have actively supported the school in making the right appointments in order to improve teaching. They have a very clear view of teaching quality and performance management and how these relate to the application of the school's pay policy. Finances and other statutory obligations are met efficiently, including the use of the pupil premium and sports funding. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet government 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106484
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	442355

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Stuckey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvonne Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 790 2195
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