

St Thomas' Church of England Primary School Heaton Chapel

Wellington Road North, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 4QG

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are curious, keen to learn and well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in reading and writing throughout the rest of the school. Their achievement in mathematics is outstanding.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in reading and speaking skills which gives them a firm foundation for learning in all subjects.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Pupils recall facts and develop skills well because teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), role play and thought-provoking questions to deepen their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the progress made by all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They are very polite and friendly. They are considerate and reflective and take good care of each other.
- Pupils' health and well-being and personal development are promoted very well. Exciting themes and visits develop their understanding of themselves and their world. They regularly participate in a wide range of artistic, sporting and musical activities.
- The headteacher provides clear and passionate leadership. She is well supported by an ambitious senior leadership team and effective governing body. As a result, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have continued to improve since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils do not receive enough guidance from marking and feedback to rapidly improve their work, especially in writing.
- Occasionally, a few pupils do not concentrate hard enough so they do not make the best possible progress..

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, including several observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with several groups of pupils, the Chair of Governors and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of the 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the results from the school's own regular consultations and communications from parents. The responses from staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Craig Richardson

Additional Inspector

Stefan Lord

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than an average-sized primary school. The numbers on roll have increased by over a fifth since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive the pupil premium funding is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is above average and increasing.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is 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 to the school in September 2012 after the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the already good quality of teaching in order to further increase rates of progress and raise standards in reading and writing to those of mathematics by:
 - making full use of marking and feedback to help pupils speedily improve their own work
 - ensuring pupils are consistently engaged in all aspects of their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally those typical for their age. There is a general trend of rising standards and children of all abilities make good progress overall. There has been good improvement from the last inspection. Children's early speaking, reading, writing and number skills are well established and they show a keen interest in the world around them through, for example, their work on space and rockets.
- Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress through the rest of the school. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave in Year 6 and high in mathematics. This is reflected in the results of national tests which show an increasingly rising trend at both Year 2 and Year 6. There is no significant difference between the achievement over time of boys and girls or pupils of different national heritage.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is particularly rapid and sustained. For example, by Year 1 pupils independently work out real-life addition and multiplication problems using coins of different values. In Year 6, pupils have an excellent knowledge and recall of algebra and geometric formulae to calculate the area of irregular quadrilaterals and circles. In the 2013 Year 6 national tests, almost two thirds of pupils attained results normally achieved by pupils two to four years older.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding achieve well and make at least good progress. In 2013, the results of national tests for English and mathematics in Year 6 for these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, were largely in line with those of other pupils in school. In Year 2, their test results were largely above those of their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. The strong focus given to communication skills such as speaking, reading and writing, sometimes with specialist support, ensures pupils can express their thinking and succeed in a number of other subjects.
- The most able pupils achieve well and are increasingly working at high levels in all subjects. They take good levels of responsibility for organising and managing their own work. By Year 6 they show a good capacity to recall key facts and apply their knowledge and skills in different subjects. They are analytical and persistent in solving problems.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They often make speedy progress in settling into school life and they develop their speaking and reading skills well.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed and they reach above average standards. Early readers understand the link between letters and their sounds and use this to identify unfamiliar words. This is reflected in the above average scores they achieve in national checks of these skills at Year 1 and 2. By Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of different genres and talk knowledgeably of the styles of a wide range of authors including C.S.Lewis, Shakespeare, Philip Pullman and Michael Morpurgo.
- Pupils increasingly make good progress in writing. They develop a good understanding of grammatical structure, spell accurately and present their work well. This is evident in results of national tests for these features by Year 6. They understand how to use language to create a range of effects. They work at length and take pride in the presentation of their work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children are eager to learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff engage children through well-planned activities and attractive resources which interest all groups of learners. There is a strong focus on quickly developing children's speaking, listening and social skills to support the development of reading and writing skills. This is a continuing improvement since the last inspection, especially through the use of outdoor activities.

- Throughout school, pupils are ambitious and aim high. This is the result of clearly stated high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' learning skills, such as resilience and precision, are promoted through good example and direct teaching. This contributes to the achievement of all groups of pupils including the most able and those who find learning difficult.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects because teaching is well-informed through continuous good quality training. Very good use is made of staff with specialist skills, especially in mathematics, to raise standards and challenge all learners.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants through the use of regular assessments of their academic, physical, emotional and social development and activities to develop their skills.
- Pupils who are new to English, including those who start school at times other than Reception, learn well in response to speedy assessment of their needs and support in their heritage language.
- The most able pupils often make good progress because staff ensure such pupils can quickly engage in work which fully challenges them right from the start of lessons. The vocabulary pupils use in different subjects and their deeper understanding of new ideas are well-developed through thoughtful and incisive questioning. Rarely are anything less than clearly spoken, full and thoughtful answers accepted.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are speedily and effectively established. Brief well-planned sessions for learning new skills, including the use of ICT, and regular opportunities to apply them ensure pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is complemented by the regular use of homework in partnership with parents.
- Pupils are not always given precise enough guidance through marking and feedback to help them improve their own work and ensure they do. The school have introduced new procedures which show an improvement but are not yet consistently applied.
- Very occasionally, pupils do not concentrate and pay enough attention to make the best progress they could, for example, when they do not have enough opportunity to question and discuss.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent overall. Pupils are polite and considerate towards each other because of the good example all adults set for them. As a result, pupils' behaviour is sometimes exemplary.
- Pupils' pride in their school is evident in their smart appearance and the careful presentation of their work and tidy books. They value the care staff take in ensuring they work in attractive and orderly classrooms with good quality displays of their own work.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and are punctual and well prepared for the day's learning. Attendance is above average. The school works closely with parents to encourage the best levels of attendance and school readiness.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe and well looked after. Parents are fully confident that their children receive the highest levels of care.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how their behaviour affects others and that they should be kind and considerate. Staff make good use of a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes to reinforce positive attitudes and to promote excellent social skills. Assemblies, often taken by local clergy, reinforce these messages. Consequently, pupils have a good knowledge of potential bullying situations including racial and homophobic concerns. They are certain that very little takes place and any events are successfully managed by the staff. This is confirmed by the school's good record-keeping procedures. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Pupils learn to take appropriate risks and to keep themselves safe. They enjoy adventure on residential and other visits but know the dangers and how to stay safe. The school has worked closely with contractors and architects during recent building work both to keep pupils safe and to teach them about safety in the workplace.

- On a few occasions, pupils of all ages are not as enthusiastic and engaged in their learning as they could be and this limits the progress that they make.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clarity of purpose and determination ensures sustained improvement to pupils' achievement. Following recent reorganisation she has developed an effective senior leadership team which is driving forward improvement in many areas. The ambitious pursuit of standards in the school's work has particularly led to good improvements to teaching and learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and contributed to the high standards in mathematics.
- Senior leaders act as good role models for other staff to follow especially through their own teaching and their skills in supporting others. There are increasingly rigorous procedures to measure and analyse pupils' progress and other aspects of the school's work. This is used well to plan for future improvements.
- Subject leaders are clearer and more effective overall in their roles than at the time of the last inspection. They now produce good quality reports based on an increasing first-hand knowledge of their areas of responsibility. Consequently, the school is well prepared for forthcoming changes to the National Curriculum. The impact of the leaders' approach to ensuring equal opportunities for pupils and staff are evident in the good and sometimes better progress made by all groups of pupils and staff's high morale. There is no evidence of discrimination in the school.
- Staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make and they have to meet stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- The school receives good support from the local authority. Local authority staff make regular visits and produce challenging reports which have supported the leadership well especially during the last two years since the headteacher's appointment. The school works in close partnership with other similar schools and the local cluster of schools to provide a good range of training opportunities, some of which the school leads on.
- Pupils' physical health and well-being are especially well promoted through the many visitors to school and the visits all pupils participate in. The curriculum is rich and exciting and promotes all aspects of literacy and numeracy extremely well. Topics and themes build learning on exciting real-life experiences. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibilities as play leaders, play buddies as well as school councillors.
- The school makes very good use of the new primary school sports funding to improve teachers' skills and support pupils' sporting and other achievements. This has already contributed to the development of teachers' skills in physical education, increased participation in clubs and revived success in inter-school competitions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is led and managed well. It is fully informed through detailed headteacher's reports linked to the school improvement plan, its own regular systematic checks on the school's work and accurate analysis of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that the school's mission statement and aims are at the core of the school's work and drive for the highest standards. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met in full and supported by excellent record keeping. Governors are involved in decisions as to whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher. The governing body manages finances very well by ensuring the budget is used to promote high achievement, evident in the effective use of pupil premium funding, management of major building work and improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	106128
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	439526

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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Whittell
Headteacher	Karen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
Telephone number	0161 432 6809
Fax number	0161 975 5064
Email address	schooladmin@st-thomasheaton.stockport.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

