

# Kirkstall St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Aided School

Morris Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS5 3JD

**Inspection dates** 18–19 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This highly caring and successful school has the whole child and local community at the heart of all it does.
- The passion and determination to improve shown by the headteacher are shared by the very able deputy headteacher, staff and governors. As a result, achievement throughout the school has improved since the last inspection, particularly in writing. Teaching is improving and standards are rising.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The really positive relationships pupils have with staff help them to be confident learners and to work hard.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They are eager to learn and have a pride in their school. This is shown by their average and improving attendance.
- Very positive relationships exist with parents who are actively involved in the education of their children and the life of the school.
- Strong partnerships exist with the local authority and other schools. These help to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors know much about the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. They are fully committed to making the school the best it can be and provide the right amount of support and challenge to school leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, particularly the most able, do not always get on to harder work quickly enough. This results in them not always achieving as well as they should, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Plans to improve the quality of teaching and pupil achievement are not always clear in how they will be measured. Leaders do not always make enough checks on how well they are working.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes in the school, including a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked closely at a wide range of school documentation including the school's own view of its performance, plans for improvement, records of the progress of pupils and their behaviour and safety. Inspectors also checked on the work of governors and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' work in lessons, in books and on display around the school. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their views of school and listened to some pupils read.
- The views of parents were considered through the school's own surveys of parental opinions and the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to a range of parents and took account of the views of staff expressed in the 27 responses to the voluntary questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Randall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A broadly average number of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds and cultural traditions, including some who are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above average. This additional government funding is provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets 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 school is a member of the local Family of Schools and the Inner North West Family of Schools and works closely with Lawnswood High School.
- The school has been accredited with the Leeds Healthy Schools Award and the Leeds Sustainable Schools Award.
- There have been significant changes in staff and governors since the previous inspection, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club which are subject to separate inspection by Ofsted.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding and so raise the achievement of pupils, particularly those reaching the higher levels, by ensuring that teachers consistently:
  - plan work that stretches the abilities of all pupils, especially the most able
  - provide pupils with clear guidance through marking on how to improve their work, and time to show they can.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders by:
  - ensuring planned actions are crystal clear in how they will improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, and that more frequent checks are made on their success.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's drive to continuously improve the school has inspired staff and governors to work with one aim in mind: to successfully improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of all pupils.
- The clear focus is on supporting and challenging teachers to improve. Staff receive good-quality training and opportunities to share and improve their practice through strong links that have been formed with other schools. Staff morale is high. A typical comment was, 'I have always felt happy and well supported.'
- Checks on teaching help staff clearly understand how to improve their practice, and appropriate and successful links are made to their performance management. Senior leaders have no qualms about tackling underperformance of staff because they realise the importance of supporting each pupil in making the best possible progress.
- The monitoring of the progress of pupils has improved. This has led to increases in the achievement of pupils throughout the school, and those needing additional support being identified earlier and given the help they require.
- The work of the learning mentor is a particular strength of the school in helping to improve attendance, ensuring smooth transition from pre-school, strengthening links with families and in keeping children safe.
- Senior leaders have targeted the right areas for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements in pupils' writing throughout the school show the success of measures to improve the training of staff in teaching writing, and increased opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their skills across subjects.
- Middle leaders share the vision for making the school the best it can be. They have good subject knowledge and work hard. However, not all actions by middle or senior leaders demonstrate precisely and helpfully whether steps to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils have been successful. Checks on their effectiveness are made, but these are not always frequent enough to result in pupils making rapid progress.
- The range of subjects is creatively planned to offer stimulating opportunities to learn and a rich variety of sports, music, health-promoting activities, visitors and visits, for example to places such as Murton Park to study the Tudors. Caring for the environment is given a strong profile through the Eco Club and the importance of leading healthy lifestyles is emphasized. The school's healthy tuck shop gets particularly busy.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The Global Committee helps pupils understand their place in the wider world and the lives of others through excellent links with a school in Sri Lanka, which also involves teacher exchanges. The promotion of British values and pupils' understanding and respect for other faiths are strong features of the school. The school is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and tackling discrimination. This helps to explain why the achievement of all pupils is improving.
- Pupils deepen their understanding of the lives of others and ways they can help them by their involvement in a wide range of charitable work, such as supporting Children in Need. Pupils also enjoy helping local causes such as the church roof appeal or food banks.
- Strong links exist with parents, who confidently told inspectors that their children enjoy school, learn well and feel safe.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional teaching assistants who deliver skilled extra support to those who are eligible. There is clear evidence from school records that these pupils are achieving well.
- Good use has been made of additional sports funding to improve the quality of physical education. New clubs like yoga, dance and sports coaching, particularly in gymnastics, have been introduced through the involvement of a specialist sports coach from Lawnswood High School. A teacher said, 'My physical education teaching has improved after watching the sports coach.'
- The school has received good support from the local authority in checking the accuracy of the school's judgements about how well it is doing and in tackling underperformance of staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well and visit regularly; they have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing in comparison with other schools. There have been significant changes in membership in recent times, but throughout the period they have kept focused on continually improving the school and the effectiveness of their work. Under the skilled guidance of the new Chair of the Governing Body, governors ensure that they work together and those new to the team have the right skills to hold school leaders rigorously to account. Governors are well trained; they carefully check that any extra funding is

used well for the benefit of eligible pupils and that their progress is tracked.

- Governors ensure that the progress of pupils is closely linked to teachers' pay rewards and that good or better teaching is rewarded. They ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their average and improving attendance. A typical pupil comment is, 'Our school makes you feel at home.'
- Pupils have very positive and trusting relationships with staff, which motivates pupils to try their best. The provision of worry boxes in each classroom helps pupils to get support for any concerns they might have. As one pupil said, 'The staff are lovely and if you have any problems they sort them out.'
- Behaviour is at its best when learning is interesting and stretches their abilities. However, when the learning needs of pupils are not met well enough, some pupils lose interest and concentration. This slows the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and inquisitive. Pupils play and work harmoniously; they enjoy the company of pupils from different cultures and faiths. A typical pupil comment was, 'Everyone has the right to believe different things, as long as they live their lives in the right way and are kind to each other.'
- Pupils really enjoy the wide range of responsibilities they are given, such as being a member of the Eco Council, School Council, Global Committee, playground buddy or helping to run the very successful tuck shop. They particularly enjoy raising funds to help others.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and know a lot about staying healthy and safe, including when using the internet. They are aware of the potential dangers posed by strangers.
- Pupils benefit from good anti-bullying support from school and show a good understanding of the different forms bullying may take, including cyber bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They say it rarely happens but are confident staff always sort it out fairly.
- Conversations with parents, their views expressed in the school's own surveys and the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), show parents are happy with the standard of behaviour and safety in the school.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. All staff go out of their way to get to know pupils as individuals, treat them with respect and build caring and supportive relationships. This focus on developing the whole child is clearly in line with the school's strong Christian ethos.
- Teachers and support staff use their good subject knowledge to plan work that interests pupils and that they enjoy. As one pupil said, 'Teachers give us lots of fun and interesting things to do.' Teachers usually ask searching questions that make pupils think and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 2, pupils of all abilities progressed in developing their writing skills in using a crime scene from the traditional tale of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Staff used probing questions that challenged pupils' thinking in identifying what was needed in their witness statements for good-quality writing. The most able pupils responded well to their extra challenge and high expectations of staff to produce some high-quality writing such as 'Meanwhile an intruder snuck into the house.'
- A love of reading is encouraged by all staff. They are well trained in teaching reading skills and the quality of learning is improving as a result of their skilled use of assessment. Writing skills are particularly well taught throughout the school because staff are confident in how to develop these and in checking on how well pupils are applying them. They provide pupils with lots of stimulating opportunities to write.
- Tasks in mathematics are well focused on developing pupils' mental calculation skills and problem-solving abilities. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils accurately used their calculation skills to identify decimal fractions and when they might use these skills.
- There is some good-quality marking that provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work further and pupils are then given time to respond to raise their standards. However, this is not consistently

happening across the school.

- Teachers do not always use the information they have on how well pupils are learning to plan tasks that meet their differing abilities. Sometimes work is too easy and pupils have to wait too long to move on to more demanding work, especially the most able, and this is hindering the progress they make.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards by the end of Year 2 have been rising. In 2014, they were significantly above average overall and in writing. Standards were above average in mathematics and average in reading. This reflects the success of the school's work to improve the achievement of pupils, which had been lower in previous years.
- The successful drive to improve achievement has also been evident with rising attainment over time by the end of Year 6. In 2014, standards rose to broadly average overall in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. This positive picture reflects improvements in teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress was well above average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics.
- The work of current pupils in school shows that there is no significant gap between the progress of boys and girls and the improvements seen have been consolidated. Indeed, the drive to raise standards across reading, writing and mathematics in all classes is showing success.
- In Year 2 in 2014, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics compared well to the national average. Results in Year 6 showed that although the proportions reaching the higher Level 5 were above average in writing, they were below in reading and mathematics. The work and progress data of current pupils in school show that although more of the most able pupils are making better progress because they are being given more demanding work, this is not consistently so in all classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress because their needs are identified early and they are given the precise help they require to achieve well.
- Reading standards are rising due to the extra focus on developing early reading skills and skilled teaching as pupils move through the school. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors of their love of reading at home and school and their favourite authors, such as Jeff Kinney. In the 2014 Year 1 check on reading, pupils attained higher than pupils nationally, reflecting their increasing understanding of the sounds that letters make.
- Writing standards in all classes are rising, especially in spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is due to the whole-school focus on developing this area and the many opportunities pupils have to talk about their writing, as well as to practise and extend their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils are now achieving well due to the focus on the regular development of calculation skills, the systematic teaching of problem-solving skills and targeted extra help to those who need it.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because of the skilled and sensitive support they receive.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about one term above that of disadvantaged pupils nationally overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to other non-disadvantaged pupils in the year group and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, their overall attainment was around one term behind. This gap is narrower than those reported in Year 6 in 2013, especially in reading and writing. School data and inspection evidence shows that across the year groups in 2014 and for current pupils in school, the gaps in attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to others in the school are closing, and particularly so in mathematics.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children usually enter Reception with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. All children, including those with special educational needs and the most able, make good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is broadly average and children are well prepared for Year 1.

- Teaching in the early years is good. Children settle quickly due to well-established routines and the strong induction arrangements the school has with parents and the pre-school based on the school site. Staff demonstrate high expectations of what children can achieve. They use their good knowledge of the ways in which young children learn and quickly adapt any planned activities to meet the needs of the children so that they capture their interests and extend their learning.
- The good mix of activities that are led by adults and those which children choose for themselves helps children to progress well in all areas of learning. They learn to be curious and to investigate, such as when deciding where to blast off in their rocket ship. One boy said he had not been to Mars or Jupiter, but to Coventry instead! Some of the most able children quickly grasped how to write new words.
- The good behaviour of children is characterised by an eagerness to learn and listen attentively to staff. Children conduct themselves safely and show a good awareness of the safety of others, such as when riding tricycles. They show they are able to cooperate when sharing resources, such as UV pens when writing secret messages to aliens, or to listen carefully and concentrate hard when learning new sounds that help them to develop their reading skills. Rigorous risk assessments keep children safe.
- Good links exist with parents who value the opportunities they have to support their children's learning and contribute to their 'learning journals'.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The leader has a clear view of strengths and areas for further development, and rigorously checks on the performance of staff and how well children are learning.

## 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>	108043
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	448363

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>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Nigel Sinclair
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steven Viles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 382 1960
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