

St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Audenshaw Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, Tameside, M34 5HD

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear and rigorous leadership. They are well supported by a strong team of staff and an effective governing body. They have ensured the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is now good.
- Provision in the early years is good and children are well prepared for their future education.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics. They work hard and present their work well.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Marking and feedback are used effectively to help pupils improve their work. Teachers' expectations are high. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to boost pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They take a pride in their work and play and work well together.
- The curriculum is well planned and successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils participate in a wide range of stimulating creative and sporting activities, which contributes to their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. As a result pupils do not always make rapid progress.
- On a few occasions opportunities are missed to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through different subjects.
- Pupils' punctuation skills are not as well developed as other aspects of their writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching throughout the school and conducted several short observations of teaching and learning. This included three observations carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese education service and members of school staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- The inspectors took account of seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the results of 190 responses from the school's own consultations with parents, and spoke to parents during the inspection. The responses from staff to the inspection questionnaires were also considered.
- The 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

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- About two thirds of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a breakfast club run by the school.
- Children attend the early years full-time.
- 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.
- Over a third of the staff are new to the school since the previous inspection, including members of the senior and middle leadership. A significant number of these teachers are new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding in order to further accelerate progress by:
 - making effective use of learning in all subjects to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
 - improving pupils' punctuation skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher set a clear direction for school improvement. They have made sustained improvements to the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. There is an accelerating pace of improvement despite a period of staff changes and significant building work. Staff morale is high and senior and middle leaders support the school well.
- Procedures to analyse the school's measures of pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. These are now more accurate and used effectively to set precise targets for school improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. As a result the leadership has a clear knowledge of the few aspects of teaching and learning still to be improved and has a good capacity to address them.
- Middle leaders contribute well to the increasingly effective use of strategic procedures to develop the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. This has helped to raise achievement in many subjects through school and in the early years and has helped to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The local authority provides strong support to the school in partnership with the local diocese education adviser. In particular, this support has helped to sharpen the use of data, and the governors to develop their skills.
- The school has appropriate and rigorous procedures to ensure staff are held accountable for the progress pupils make. Teachers have to meet stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to narrow the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. The impact of all areas of expenditure is carefully analysed and, if adjustments are needed, then these are made in a speedy fashion. As a result, historical gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are rapidly being addressed.
- Additional funding for sports and physical education is used well. The school is developing the skills of all staff and the quality of curriculum planning. This contributes well to pupils' health and also to their behaviour and general well-being. This is evident in pupils' good achievement in physical education and their increased participation in sports clubs and team games, despite the lack of outdoor space.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed and to participate fully in the life of the school. They promote positive relationships and there is no evidence of discrimination.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are based on detailed and accurate record keeping and well trained and vigilant staff.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Religious, historical, geographical studies and personal and social education promote pupils' appreciation of others' views and different cultures and faiths. Weekly themes in assemblies and class worship enable pupils to explore and debate personal qualities such as tolerance and resilience. Pupils undertake valuable practical experiences in democracy through school council elections and visits to the town council to elect a junior mayor. This is complemented by an exciting range of visits, including residential visits, and visitors and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved since the previous inspection and now provides rigorous challenge and support to the senior leadership. It is well led and managed. The governors' raising attainment committee is particularly effective in ensuring that leaders are fully accountable for all aspects of pupils' progress. The governing body now has a sharp understanding of data on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching from precise feedback given in the headteacher's reports, and the deputy headteacher's and middle leaders' evaluations of teaching and progress in their areas of responsibility. The governing body undertakes a good range of activities, including learning walks and discussions with pupils, to further inform their understanding. They have taken full advantage of training opportunities from the local authority and the diocese including a very thorough and useful external review of their effectiveness.
 - The governing body has a range of professional skills, which are closely matched to their areas of responsibility. Policies are regularly reviewed and meet statutory requirements. The governors are fully and appropriately involved in reviewing targets for the headteacher and making decisions as to whether staff should receive a salary increase. Finances are managed well. For example, governors are fully involved in decisions on the use of pupil premium funding that are leading to reducing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved well since the previous inspection. All adults have high expectations for good behaviour and pupils rise to the challenge. As a result low-level disruption in lessons is now rare and pupils generally concentrate well on their learning.
- Pupils are polite and considerate towards each other and they respond well to the care that all adults show them. Pupils are proud of their school. They play and work together well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and consistently try their best. This is evident in all their work. They move quickly and efficiently to their tasks and work well with others. They are rarely badly behaved and there are few exclusions. This is supported by the school's good record keeping.
- The school uses primary sport funding well to engage pupils in exciting physical and mental challenges at playtimes and lunchtimes. This makes a good contribution to their positive behaviour and attitudes.
- Classrooms are calm, orderly and attractive. Good relationships are established in the early years and children share and work together well. Older pupils take their responsibilities as school councillors and in other organisations seriously.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe, and the large majority of parents agree. Attendance has improved and is currently above average. Pupils are punctual and well prepared for each day's work.
- Pupils understand that their behaviour affects others and know that they should always try to be kind and considerate. This is promoted well through assemblies and class themes on consideration of others and self-awareness.
- Pupils have a good understanding of potential bullying situations, including those that may be racially based and when using the internet; they are confident to discuss any concerns and have every confidence that staff will address any issues that emerge.
- Those who have emotional and social concerns are helped, successfully, to manage their own behaviour, especially through work with the learning mentor and support from well-trained teaching assistants.
- Pupils are well prepared for keeping themselves safe in later life. For example, the well-planned programmes of personal, social and health education ensure pupils have an informed understanding of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Older pupils participate eagerly in role-play activities led by emergency services, which contribute to the development of a deeper understanding of how they can tackle any issues they may meet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Marking and feedback are used consistently to guide pupils to improve their own work and ensure they understand their learning fully. Teachers set precise and purposeful targets for pupils to achieve, and make certain they have opportunities to address them. This focus on pupils' progress to targets has been a key tool used by teachers to raise standards rapidly.
- Teachers, including those new to the school and some new to the profession, set high expectations for all groups of learners. As a result pupils are ambitious and aim high. This is evident in the pride they take in presenting all their work well and consistently trying hard.
- Pupils learn in a calm working atmosphere in all year groups and classes. They know that they come to school to learn and are ready and able to do so. This is encouraged by the purposeful and positive relationships the headteacher and her staff have established.
- The teaching of reading is good. Effective teaching of letters and the sounds that they make from the early years onwards increasingly contributes to pupils' success. Whole-school reading projects contribute to pupils' enjoyment of reading and the development of their comprehension skills. Enrichment days and effective use of the school library supports the teaching of pupils' referencing and non-fiction reading skills.
- Writing skills are taught well overall. Pupils are taught to write in clear and fluent handwriting. They are taught to spell accurately and the precise marking helps to address any weaknesses. Teachers regularly expect pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and apply the grammatical skills they are learning effectively. For example, by the imaginative use of connective phrases in accounts of the Vikings' tours of Britain linked to their history and geography work in Year 2.
- Nevertheless, teachers do not routinely ensure that younger pupils consistently mark sentences with a

capital letter and full stop. They do not always encourage older pupils to use punctuation to bring their writing to life.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Mental and calculation skills are taught systematically and regularly. Pupils can apply their skills through mathematical problems and investigations that extend and deepen their understanding. Work is accurately matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Teachers ask well-considered questions to help pupils to secure new knowledge and develop their thinking skills. They rarely accept superficial or simplistic answers, and often ask supplementary questions to explore and address any misunderstandings. They routinely question pupils to check their progress during lessons, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- The learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are understood well and teaching assistants and other staff who work with them are well-trained and well-informed. Small-group work on specific literacy or numeracy skills is linked to pupils' other studies, when appropriate, to help embed new learning.
- The most able pupils are taught well. Pupils of all abilities, but especially the most able, are effectively taught the skills to assess their own progress and work things out for themselves. For example, through using information around the classroom and in dictionaries and internet searches. This helps secure and deepen their learning.
- Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially through the use of the school's website and computer activities, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- A few opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills even further through different subjects. For example, sometimes teachers do not expect pupils to use the full range of their writing skills in geography and history work, accepting short one-word answers instead. Some opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in scientific investigations, for example, when measuring heart rates, are not taken. However, overall there are many good links between subjects that engage pupils' interests.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils now make good progress through school. In particular, teaching is now good in Years 3 to 6 and builds well on the good earlier learning in the early years and Key Stage 1, as seen at the previous inspection. The progress of all groups of pupils is accelerating. This is evident in the school's tracking of pupils' progress and in pupils' work over time. Pupils of all abilities have strong skills for managing and improving their own learning, which contribute to their success.
- The results of National Curriculum tests for Year 6 were broadly average in 2014 and reflect a general overall trend of improvement since the previous inspection. However, overall standards in writing were lower than those seen in mathematics and reading because fewer pupils achieved higher levels. This largely related to historical gaps in their learning due to earlier weaknesses in teaching; despite rapid progress in Year 6, a few pupils did not fully reach their full potential. However, this is no longer a problem. The school has taken robust action to ensure that pupils now reach higher standards, and inspection evidence shows that almost half of the current Year 6 pupils are working at above-average standards.
- Results in mathematics tests and for grammar were slightly above average, especially for the most able pupils. Standards in Year 2 were below average but reflect sustained good progress over time. The current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are working at levels above those normally expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The evidence from inspection shows that pupils of all abilities are making good progress in all subjects throughout the school, including in the early years.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress overall and the gap between the standards they reach and those of other pupils is reducing. In 2014, the results of National Curriculum tests for these pupils in reading were approximately two terms behind other pupils in the school, in writing two and a half terms behind, and in mathematics they were three terms behind. The attainment of these disadvantaged pupils was two terms below national averages for non-disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing, and two and a half terms below the national average in mathematics. All disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made at least expected progress in 2014 and over a third made better than expected progress. From 2013 to 2014, the gap between the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils and their classmates closed by at least one term. The gap to the national averages also closed by more than a term. Throughout the school, including in the early years, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally is reducing. This is very evident in the school's own progress data and the inspection evidence.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall and the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels by

the time they leave school is rising. The most able pupils show good levels of maturity, enthusiasm and an increasing ability to take the initiative. They make very good use of reference books and computers to research and investigate. In mathematics, they use calculation skills and general mathematical knowledge well to solve increasingly complex problems. For example, they applied logic and systematic notation and record keeping in order to create cuboids with a different colour for each face using 27 small cubes of nine colours. The most able pupils have good skills to improve their own work, and act on the guidance they are given in their marking.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. Their individual needs are accurately checked. Comprehensive, targeted teaching ensures these pupils make good academic and personal progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well. When needed, they are given carefully targeted support from an early stage. Their progress and achievement is similar to other pupils and this is reflected in the results from National Curriculum tests and other assessments.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is good. Pupils' phonics skills (matching sounds with letters in order to make words) are largely average in national assessments by Year 1. Pupils of all abilities read aloud with confidence, expression and fluency. They use their skills well in performances in assemblies. Older pupils use their reading skills well in a wide range of subjects. They have a wide vocabulary and a good understanding of plot and character. Above all, they enjoy reading and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good and rapidly improving. Their mental calculation skills are good and they increasingly apply these skills in problem-solving situations. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to make good use of their data-handling skills and knowledge of multiplication and division facts to identify sequences of prime numbers.
- Writing skills are now good overall and past weaknesses are rapidly being addressed. Spelling and grammar are largely accurate and used well in pupils' independent work. All groups of learners take pride in presenting their work carefully and forming their handwriting neatly. Pupils' writing is often lively and exciting with a good use of metaphors and similes to interest their audience. Many pupils by Year 6 use mature and imaginative phrases to communicate their ideas in their independent writing, for example, 'and now on a more serious note' and 'as they seem to be deceitful, mischievous and very guilty'.
- Although pupils attained above-average results in National Curriculum tests for grammar, spelling and punctuation in 2014 in Year 6, punctuation skills are less well developed than other aspects through school.

The early years provision

is good

- Relationships are good. Children come from a wide range of prior early years experiences before they start school. The staff establish good relationships with parents from the start through rigorous induction procedures. These procedures enable the staff to build a good initial knowledge of children's individual starting points and move quickly to eliminate any gaps in their learning.
- Good leadership and management of the early years provision has ensured that children have continued to achieve well since the previous inspection. The new leader is building on these strengths in teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations and a thorough understanding of the needs of young children.
- Children's starting points are generally below those typical for their age. In particular, children's social skills, including their ability to share and work alongside others, are below usual levels, as are their reading and writing skills. They make particularly rapid progress in these areas and, as a result, they are well prepared for their next stage of learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is in line with the national figure when they enter Year 1 and an increasing proportion is working above these levels.
- Disadvantaged children in the early years achieve well, making particularly good gains in their early language and communication skills. They are confident when talking to adults and other children, and say they feel safe and secure.
- The most able children make good progress because they make rapid gains in key skills such as phonics, comprehension and addition and subtraction.
- Writing skills are particularly well taught. Children of all abilities quickly learn to form letters and words accurately. Staff make good use of the children's indoor and outdoor activities to encourage writing. A few opportunities are missed to extend their reading skills further, for example through the use of labels in the outdoor area, and refining this aspect of learning is currently a priority for school improvement.
- Children of all abilities work and play very well together and concentrate on their activities. Their

behaviour and safety is good. They feel safe and are cared for well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and they are curious about the world around them. They tidy up with care and organise their work well. Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed effectively to have a good impact on children's achievement across all areas of 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

Unique reference number	106246
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	452004

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	V Tingey
Headteacher	C Masztalerz
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2014
Telephone number	0161 330 3818
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