

St Michael and All Angels CofE (Foundation) Primary School

Meadow Close, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 7QU

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not consistently good over time.
- Pupils' spelling skills are weak and this affects the quality of their writing.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems. Many lack speedy recall of number facts; for example, when multiplying numbers.
- There is still some teaching that requires improvement and so pupils do not all make good progress in all classes and in all subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always use the information about how well pupils have learned to plan lessons that meet the needs of the most able.
- Leaders' monitoring of lessons does not look closely enough at the quality and speed of learning by different groups of pupils and the improvements required in the quality of teaching.
- Over time, children in the Reception class have made satisfactory rather than good progress in most areas of their learning. There are limited learning opportunities for Reception class children choosing to work outdoors.
- The school takes good care of its pupils overall, but at the inspection a few potential hazards were identified that compromised pupils' safety.

The school has the following strengths

- Reading is taught well across the school so that most pupils enjoy reading and make good progress.
- Teachers have good behaviour management skills so that pupils' behaviour is good and lessons run smoothly.
- Pupils enjoy school. Outstanding relationships at all levels support pupils well. The strong Christian ethos provides many opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance and respect for others.
- The new, ambitious leadership team has developed an effective whole school approach to raising standards. Pupils' progress is accelerating quickly.
- Governors have the skills and enthusiasm required to drive the school forwards; they provide good support and challenge.
- The good curriculum and exciting visits to interesting places provide pupils with memorable experiences.
- Attendance has improved and is now good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors considered a sample of pupils’ written work, mathematics and topic work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject coordinators, a group of pupils, two members of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- The inspectors took account of 34 staff questionnaires, the results of recent school surveys of parents’ and pupils’ views, and the 30 responses to Ofsted’s online parent survey, Parent View. Parents’ views were also sought at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the information on pupils’ progress, the school’s evaluation of its current strengths and areas for development and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with staff about their training, systems for checking pupils’ progress and plans for future development.

Inspection team

Brenda Clarke, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Davis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below that seen across the country. (Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Children attend the Reception class on a full time basis.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher (previously the assistant headteacher) were appointed in March 2014.
- Angels before- and after-school club, for pupils who attend the school, runs daily in the school bungalow.
- The school shares its site with Angels Pre-school which children aged from two-and-a-half years attend. The setting was not part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards further in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and across subjects
 - ensuring that pupils spell age-appropriate words correctly in all their written work
 - finding exciting ways to encourage boys to write at length
 - providing practical activities for pupils to use their mathematical skills when solving problems
 - sharpening pupils' mental arithmetic skills, especially their knowledge and use of multiplication tables
 - providing more learning opportunities in all areas of learning in the outdoor area of the Reception class and more opportunities within the classroom for children to develop their writing skills when working independently.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and a greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use their information about how well pupils have learnt to plan tasks that closely match pupils' needs and help the most able pupils to make progress at a faster rate
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and feedback help pupils to know how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities to encourage pupils to think for themselves and for pupils to plan some of their own next steps in learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning focus more specifically on the progress of different groups of pupils and give teachers clear guidance on how to develop their teaching further
 - developing rigorous systems to ensure that frequent checks of the school are undertaken to secure the safety of staff and pupils at all times.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because actions have not been in place long enough to raise pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics. Not all groups of pupils make the progress they are capable of. There is still some teaching that requires improvement.
- When checking the quality of teaching in lessons, leaders sometimes place more emphasis on the activities undertaken rather than the quality and speed of learning by the different groups in the class. Leaders' written feedback about the lesson often lacks clear, precise targets for improvement so that, when revisiting, leaders cannot check that targets have been achieved. This goes some way to explaining why teaching is not consistently good overall.
- Other initiatives, such as the quality of teachers' marking, have been addressed but there has been too little time to ensure a consistent approach by all teachers.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and seek additional training to develop their skills. Middle leaders know the strengths and areas for development and are beginning to work on areas of weakness; for example, developing consistency of approach to the teaching of spelling. However, this is at an early stage of development and has had too little time to impact on pupils' spelling overall.
- The headteacher is giving a strong steer to the school. Together with the leadership team she has developed a whole school approach that is firmly focused on rapidly improving pupils' attainment and progress, but it is too early to see the full impact of this in pupils' work.
- Leaders have quickly identified the right priorities for future development and have enlisted the expertise of other agencies to quickly bring about change. For example, working with a literacy consultant, staff have recently introduced a system for checking pupils' writing on a regular basis and addressing gaps in their learning. This is successful and is beginning to lift the quality of pupils' written work and speed up their progress.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed an effective system to keep a very robust watch on pupils' progress. They know the areas where pupils are now making good progress and have quickly put interventions in place for those who are falling behind.
- Leaders know where teaching requires improvement and have provided extra support, both in lessons and through visits to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.
- The school's provision for pupils' welfare and safeguarding requires improvement. While most systems and policies are rigorously upheld, some day-to-day details that could affect pupils' safety, such as the unsafe condition of mats for use in physical education lessons, are missed.
- The school's curriculum is good, and is enriched by an exciting range of additional experiences, such as the Year 6 residential visit to Llandudno.
- Partnerships are strong and add well to the school's work; for example, providing training opportunities for staff or competitive sporting events for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The well-planned daily assemblies give importance to the school's Christian values. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their social skills in a variety of clubs, but opportunities are missed in lessons for pupils to work cooperatively in groups. Pupils are taught the importance of British values and display high levels of tolerance and respect for others.
- Links with parents are good. Leaders go the extra mile to inform parents about the systems for teaching such aspects as letter sounds (phonics), enabling parents to support their children's learning at home.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is at the heart of the school's provision. All staff are taking steps to reduce the gap in achievement between boys' and girls' writing. For example, the Reception class teacher has introduced a 'Rumble in the Jungle' theme to excite and interest boys. This is proving successful, encouraging more boys to write. Leaders acknowledge that there are not enough opportunities for the most able pupils to work at a higher level.
- The additional sports funding has been spent wisely. Teachers have had effective training to develop their gymnastic skills. Pupils' wellbeing has been boosted by additional opportunities for swimming and exciting opportunities such as riding bikes during the recent Tour de France.
- Good use is made of pupil premium funding to raise attainment and narrow the achievement gaps between pupils who are disadvantaged and those who are not. The school has used the funding in a variety of ways such as the provision of effective additional one-to-one support for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has been instrumental in closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates.
- The local authority has been quick to respond to the dip in pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014. Local authority representatives are working effectively with school leaders to improve weaker aspects by

offering training and advice on a regular basis.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well. For example, they responded quickly when pupils' standards declined in 2014. Governors set up a committee that rigorously checks on pupils' progress and asks searching questions about those who may be falling behind. Governors give good support and challenge and play a key role in planning for the future development of the school. Governors bring a range of skills that complement the school's provision. Governors keep a close eye on the school's budget and have effective systems in place to ensure that pay awards are linked to teachers' and leaders' performance. The governors are very aware of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and support the headteacher in finding ways to overcome this. Governors seek help, advice and training to address gaps in their understanding and are in a strong position to assist the headteacher in improving provision further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school. They used words such as, 'magnificent, caring, and fabulous', to describe their school when talking with an inspector.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. A small number behave less well when away from the watchful supervision of an adult, for example when eating lunch or moving around the school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and most work hard, concentrate and persevere to complete a task. Pupils show care and concern for others. They willingly share resources and give help to their classmates when the need arises.
- The school's rules are well established and pupils clearly know right from wrong.
- Pupils willingly take on additional duties such as serving on the School Council or selling healthy snacks at playtime.
- Staff have excellent relationships with pupils and support them well. This enables pupils to develop high levels of confidence and to be happy learners.
- Attendance levels fell in 2013 but a range of effective measures have halted this trend and attendance is now good.
- Ninety per cent of parents who completed the on-line Parent View agree that the school makes sure that pupils behave well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- The school carries out rigorous checks when recruiting staff and has good systems and policies in place to safeguard pupils. However, at the inspection a small number of issues were identified that compromised pupils' safety.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. They say that there is an absence of bullying and they trust adults to help them when problems arise.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep safe. They talk knowledgeably about 'stranger danger' and cyber bullying but their knowledge of other forms of bullying is limited.
- Pupils play safely at playtime and are mindful of each other when playing robust games.
- Leaders keep accurate records about pupils' behaviour and well-being and work effectively with parents to overcome issues affecting their children.
- There have been very few exclusions in recent years.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time is not consistently good because it is not fully effective in accelerating pupils' learning and promoting good achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' progress well enough to ensure that the most able pupils receive work that stretches them in writing and mathematics. This goes some way to explaining why fewer pupils than is the case nationally attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics at both key stages. Inspection evidence also indicates that the lower attaining pupils are sometimes given work that is too hard for them. They do not always have appropriate resources available to make their learning

easier.

- Teachers do not always insist that pupils spell frequently used words correctly and, therefore, spelling mistakes recur in pupils' written work. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to organise their writing by completing longer pieces of written work for a variety of purposes.
- Reading and phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are taught consistently well. This, together with the good opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to practise their reading and letter sounds at home, explains why pupils make good progress in reading.
- Teachers and teaching assistants sometimes give pupils too much support and provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or plan their own learning. This limits opportunities for pupils to become independent learners and to develop confidence when working in a less supervised way.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge overall. They plan activities that are relevant and grab pupils' attention. For example, when learning about the passage of time, Year 1 pupils gained a good understanding of seconds when watching a video clip of an athlete running a nine-second race.
- Staff have outstanding relationships with each other and pupils so that pupils enjoy their learning and work hard in lessons.
- Teachers often ask pupils challenging questions that help them think more deeply about their learning.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but teachers do not always make clear to pupils how to improve their work, and time is not always allocated to this activity. As a result, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers have good behaviour management skills so that lessons run smoothly and without interruption.
- Knowledgeable teaching assistants work effectively to support small groups of pupils so that they can extend their skills and make progress similar to their classmates.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not consistently good because by the end of Year 6 pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not as good as it is in reading.
- In 2014, standards dipped to well below those seen across the country. In reading, writing and mathematics fewer pupils than do so nationally made the progress expected in all subjects. The best progress was in reading.
- Achievement is held back in mathematics because many pupils do not have quick mental recall of numbers and this slows their learning when solving mathematical problems. Many older pupils still count on their fingers rather than instantly recalling their multiplication tables. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to a range of activities, and experience difficulty when solving problems with more than one process involved.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent, because most pupils have too few opportunities to write at length they do not always develop flair and depth in their writing. Pupils' spelling skills are weak. Leaders have identified this as an area needing improvement and are taking action to introduce consistency to the teaching of spelling.
- While both boys and girls achieved less well than pupils nationally in writing, the attainment and progress of boys lag behind those of girls in the school and boys nationally. The school is beginning to address this issue, and has ensured that its new curriculum includes many topics designed to engage and interest boys.
- The progress of the most able pupils is similar to that of other learners. In 2014, at Key Stage 1, very few pupils achieved the higher levels in reading and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, significantly fewer pupils than nationally achieved the higher levels in mathematics, reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics shows that the most able pupils frequently get all their answers right, indicating a lack of challenge in their learning and missed opportunities to work at a higher level.
- The sounds that letters make (phonics) are effectively taught so that in 2014, results for the Year 1 screening check were in line with those seen nationally. This indicates good progress and build up of skills from children's entry in to the Reception Year.
- Inspection findings indicate a rapidly improving picture. Leaders now rigorously and frequently check pupils' progress and provide effective interventions for those who may be falling behind. Pupils' progress in reading has accelerated across the school and is now consistently good.
- There is evidence that pupils' progress is accelerating across the school in writing and mathematics but not as fast as in reading. The most able pupils are beginning to make faster progress but are capable of

more than their current work suggests, especially in Years 1 to 5. In Year 6 consistently good teaching, together with well-planned interventions, is speeding up all pupils' progress.

- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, make progress in line with their classmates at Key Stage 1. They make rapid progress at Key Stage 2. In 2014 the gap in attainment between these pupils and others nationally, as well as pupils in the school, in reading, writing and mathematics had closed due to carefully thought out additional learning opportunities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special needs achieve well overall. Good leadership, good support in lessons from well-trained teaching assistants and carefully planned activities address their differing needs.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Most children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those typical for their age in most areas of learning. Children's early phonics and writing skills are lower. By the time they leave the Reception class, a similar number of children to that seen nationally reach a good level of development in most areas of their learning but their achievement in writing lags behind. These factors represent satisfactory rather than good progress for children from their starting points at the beginning of the Reception Year.
- Much has been done recently to improve the quality of provision. Inspection findings indicate that children are now making good progress in most areas of their learning. Their progress in writing is not as fast. Opportunities are sometimes missed for children to write words and sentences when working independently.
- Children's speaking skills are developing strongly. Adults skilfully question children to enable them to express themselves, and provide good opportunities for speaking in 'class together' times. Well-chosen resources develop children's vocabulary; for example, in the 'Rumble in the Jungle' area, children name the binoculars, search light and rucksack.
- Daily well-planned teaching sessions are paying dividends, so that most children count accurately to 20, and a significant number are using letter sounds in their early writing and reading.
- The outdoor provision requires improvement. The outdoor area is small and often muddy, limiting opportunities for the learning outdoors to be of a similar quality to that seen in the classroom. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their early reading, writing and counting skills when working outdoors. As there are fewer activities to engage children, opportunities to practise and consolidate learning are limited as are opportunities for children to organise and follow their interests outdoors.
- Teaching is well planned and effective overall. Children receive a good mix of teacher-led and child-chosen activities. This fosters good levels of independence as children make choices in their learning.
- Children are taught to listen carefully to others. Interesting activities engage them so that children concentrate and persevere for good periods of time.
- Adults are very good role models for young children who, in turn, learn to be polite and caring towards others. Children are happy and enthusiastic learners who take a full and active part in class activities. Children behave well and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- The early years coordinator plays a key role in developing links with the Angels Pre-School on site and is working with staff to further develop the early years curriculum.
- Staff plan good opportunities for parents to visit the Reception class to learn more about their children's learning and also to learn new ways of helping their children at home.

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	107570
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	456102

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clem Rushworth
Headteacher	Claire Berry
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2012
Telephone number	01274 676246
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