

St Aidan and St Oswald's RC School

Roman Road, Royton, Oldham, Lancashire, OL2 5PQ

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- St Aidan and St Oswald's is a happy school where relationships between adults and pupils are excellent.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding.
- Staff morale is high and team spirit is very strong. All staff are committed to continued improvement.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour is excellent inside and outside classrooms. They have positive attitudes towards learning.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children are eager to learn new things and are encouraged to be inquisitive. They achieve well.
- Currently, teaching is good and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising rapidly.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from their starting points and as a result, attainment is rising.
- The curriculum is exciting. It includes an extensive range of visits and provides pupils with invaluable opportunities to add richness to their learning.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Visitors and trips bring learning to life. Pupils enthusiastically engage in sports and music.
- The school prepares pupils extremely well for life in modern British society.
- The school works closely with parents. Virtually all parents hold very positive views about their children's progress, safety and happiness at school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not adjust their teaching well enough or adjust activities to ensure pupils receive sufficient challenge throughout lessons to enable them to make outstanding progress.
- As yet, neither teachers nor teaching assistants have sufficiently well-developed skills to ensure children in the Reception classes and pupils in Year 1 make outstanding gains in the early stages of learning to read.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. They also gathered other evidence relating to the quality of teaching over time.
- The inspectors observed two lessons jointly with the headteacher and two with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. They also met with two governors, a representative of the local authority and the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the discussions with parents who brought their children to school and the 37 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Owens	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Aidan and St Oswald's Catholic is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is a strategic partner with the local authority and the diocese to provide support to other schools.
- There have been many staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- Although the proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for support through the pupil premium, is average the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was above average in 2014. The pupil premium is additional funding that the school receives to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- Throughout 2013 and 2014 a larger proportion of pupils, than would normally be expected, joined the school during Key Stage 2. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The early years comprises two Reception classes that children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school holds a number of awards including Healthy School (Platinum), Investors in People (Gold), the Full International School award, Artsmark and the Eco School award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers regularly check learning in lessons and adjust activities so that pupils are continuously challenged and can move onto the next steps in learning more quickly.
- Raise attainment in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) by building on and further enhancing the skills of teachers and teaching assistants so that all children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 make the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership is outstanding because leaders work extremely hard and successfully to create an exceptionally strong climate for learning, which makes a significant contribution to meeting pupils' needs academically and personally.
- The headteacher, most ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is relentless in his drive to ensure the highest levels of attainment and progress for pupils. His ambitious vision is shared by senior leaders, governors and staff, who constantly challenge themselves to improve the school's provision for learning. The wholly positive responses to the staff questionnaire show that staff fully support him.
- Over recent years, the roles of middle leaders have developed greatly. Senior leaders and managers recognise their wide-ranging expertise and the contribution they can make to develop the curriculum further and to extend pupils' skills and knowledge across subjects. This has had a very positive impact upon the delivery of their areas of responsibility and in raising pupils' achievement across the school.
- The leadership and management of the early years has improved and it is now managed well.
- Leaders manage staff performance extremely well. They check the quality of teaching very carefully and give staff challenging targets that reflect the school's high expectations. The school knows where the best practice exists and this is shared within the school. Leaders give staff, including new staff and newly qualified teachers, very good support towards meeting these targets. As a result, teaching and standards are improving rapidly.
- Teachers feel very well supported by the headteacher and senior leaders and welcome feedback about their performance in lessons. Feedback is sharp and focused. Clear targets are set and training and support are given to ensure that they are met. This process has played a significant role in current rapid improvements in teaching, progress and standards.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Overall, the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged and those at an early stage of learning English are identified promptly and support is provided where most needed.
- The local authority has a very strong partnership with the school. It has worked closely with staff since the previous inspection to improve teaching and learning. The school has welcomed this support.
- The school prepares pupils extremely well for life in modern British society. Assemblies, classroom activities, organised debates and the process of electing members to the school council emphasise the importance of the democratic processes. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'Well, only last week we saw democracy when the country voted in the general election to elect the next Prime Minister.' The school promotes values such as individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As one pupil told the inspectors, 'All that matters is what is in your head and in your heart.' This reflects the school's success in tackling any form of discrimination and fostering good relationships with all. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely. Each pupil is identified, their needs considered closely and the funds used to provide additional support or assistance for educational visits. This is helping them to make progress similar to that of their classmates.
- The primary school sport funding is used to very good effect to broaden sporting opportunities. It also provides for specialist staff to develop the sports-coaching expertise of teachers. This has led to an increase in opportunities for pupils to engage in activities at lunchtime and after-school such as ballet, dodgeball, multi-skills, swimming, rounders, cross-country and outdoor adventure activities, in addition to many more. Since the introduction of the sport funding there has been an increase in the uptake and interest in sport. The school's monitoring of the use of the funding shows that almost 80% of pupils take part in at least one sporting or physical activity. Leaders are keen to increase this number to help pupils stay healthy and promote their well-being.
- Parents strongly support the school. Those who spoke to the inspectors said they particularly value how well all the adults know the children and their families. This was exemplified by one parent who said, 'Everyone in the school works so hard, they are fantastically dedicated and immensely caring to the children, the parents and each other.' Indeed, child protection and safeguarding policies and practice are exceptionally effective and fully meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. It plays an influential part in leading the school forward by ensuring that plans for development are fully focused on the most important aspects of school life. Governors have undertaken a relevant range of training and as a result have an excellent understanding of how to fulfil

their roles successfully.

- They are extremely insightful and very skilled at analysing data. Hence, they are knowledgeable about how well the school is performing in comparison with others. They are, therefore, extremely well equipped to provide leaders with strong levels of challenge, as evidenced in the governors' minutes.
- Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and by making regular visits to the school to work in classrooms and meet with teachers, leaders and pupils. Their systems for rewarding good teaching through performance management are thorough and they tackle any underperformance in the classroom with rigour. They have a very good knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school.
- Financial management is rigorous. Governors ensure that all spending is focused sharply on improving provision for pupils. They make sure those resources, including the pupil premium are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They look very smart in their uniforms and are unfailingly polite and courteous to one another, adults and visitors. They get on extremely well together and, as a consequence, the school is an extremely happy and harmonious community.
- Pupils take their responsibilities, for example as school councillors, world ambassadors, green ambassadors and school chaplains, very seriously.
- Pupils throughout the school have the greatest respect for those who hold positions of responsibility, especially the school chaplains who have been commissioned by the Bishop of Salford and who play a significant part in helping to resolve concerns brought to them by their schoolmates.
- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic learners. They enjoy the interesting activities they are provided with and strive to do their best. They respond extremely well to their teachers and other adults. They apply themselves equally well when working on their own and in pairs or groups. Even a slight lack of concentration is unusual.
- The school's systems to encourage good behaviour are understood by pupils and applied consistently by staff, who have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Consequently, poor behaviour is extremely rare. The school has been very successful in bringing about significant improvements in behaviour over time. This was exemplified extremely well by one parent who said, 'I can't thank the school enough for helping my son's behaviour to improve. It's brought him new friends and is giving us our family life back.'
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is currently above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and they are very confident that adults tackle any unacceptable behaviour very quickly. They appreciate the 'worry box' because they know that it is regularly checked and that the problem will be sorted out almost immediately.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what comprises bullying and the many forms that it can take, including that based on prejudice. They have a keen awareness of the potential dangers they may face when using social media and know exactly what they should do if they have a concern. This is because cyber-bullying and the dangers of the internet are taught in assemblies, discussed in classrooms and taught in lessons.
- Parents place a very high value on the school's work. Virtually all parents who responded to Parent View, say their children are happy, safe and well looked after.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching throughout the school, including the early years, is good with some that is outstanding. It contributes much to pupils' rapidly improving standards and good levels of progress.
- Teaching is characterised by high levels of enthusiasm, high expectations, excellent relationships and well-considered and probing questioning, which is successful in encouraging pupils' to engage in lessons. A particularly good example of this was observed in a class debate in which pupils chose to discuss whether

or not the Pope should feel uncomfortable asking others to share their wealth, when he himself lives in a palace. This approach to teaching has resulted in developing an excellent climate in which pupils can learn and feel safe. Consequently, pupils are inspired to learn and are prepared to work hard because they are not afraid of making mistakes.

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to learn.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide them with work that is generally well matched to pupils' needs. However sometimes teachers do not check learning sufficiently well during lessons to adjust activities so that the level of challenge consistently promotes rapid progress.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. This results in very clear and precise explanations delivered confidently and enthusiastically, ensuring that pupils understand exactly what is required as lessons progress.
- Teachers share targets with their pupils. These give pupils a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants play a key role and are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils with particular needs. Support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged is good across the school.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Pupils say they like reading and enjoy the many opportunities they are given to read in class. They have access to books in classrooms and in the attractive library area.
- Until recently, phonics was not taught well enough and as a result the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level by the end of Year 1 was consistently below average. However, through a focused and well-planned programme of training the teaching of phonics is improving rapidly.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils write confidently, fluently and at length, benefiting from regular opportunities to talk through their ideas and improve their word choices.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils are able to draw upon a range of methods in order to carry out mathematical activities independently.
- Mostly, pupils are given excellent guidance by teachers on how to accelerate their learning. This high-quality guidance includes clear marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils are given time to read and respond to the comments by making corrections, trying additional challenges or redrafting pieces of work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014 standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 were average. From pupils' below-average starting points on entering Year 1 this reflects good progress.
- At Key Stage 2 in 2012 and 2013, the standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were slightly above average. These standards reflect very good progress from pupils' starting points placing the school in the top 25% nationally. In 2014, standards dipped, especially in reading, to below average. This was due to a small, but significant, proportion of pupils who joined the school throughout Key Stage 2 and did not have time to catch up. The proportion of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress in reading was below average, but close to average in writing and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' books, observations of learning in lessons and school performance data on the progress made by each year group shows that pupils who are currently in Key Stage 2 are now making good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, standards are rising rapidly. This is as a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The rapidly improving teaching of phonics is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. This is reflected in the school's data and inspection evidence, which show that the proportion of pupils on target to reach the expected level is above average.
- As pupils move through Key Stages 1 and 2 they continue to develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by a group of Year 6 pupils who agreed that they enjoyed, in their words, 'books that are full of excitement and let you escape from the real world and enter a new one.' They have well-developed skills to gain meaning from the books they read. This was demonstrated particularly well when pupils seized on the opportunity to discuss the underlying moral and ethical issues within Malorie Blackman's book, *Noughts and Crosses* saying that, 'Its message is that it doesn't matter how different you may be, there is a place for everyone in the world.'
- Standards in writing are improving rapidly. Pupils' writing is supported by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts the range of words that pupils understand and use, and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. Discussions before they set to work are enhancing pupils' fluency and the meaning of

what they write.

- Pupils are competent mathematicians. They show impressive dexterity in mental mathematics, especially in Year 6, and possess well-developed numeracy skills, which they apply confidently to problem-solving activities.
- Overall, the most able pupils achieve well. This is reflected in the average proportion of pupils who in 2014 reached the highest Level 6 in mathematics, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are very well supported to make progress similar to that of their peers. Teaching assistants, especially those who support visually impaired pupils, are highly trained in a range of intervention strategies that are well tailored to the needs of individual pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in their acquisition of English. School and published data show that the attainment of these pupils is similar to that of others in the school.
- In 2014, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was above average.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in 2012 and 2013 was above that of all other pupils nationally. Consequently, the gap in standards between disadvantaged pupils in the school and non-disadvantaged pupils, nationally, closed. In 2014, however, the gap widened. This is reflected in the test results, which show that standards attained by disadvantaged pupils were one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils, nationally, in writing, three terms behind in mathematics and four terms behind in reading.
- A similar gap widened between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. Consequently, the standards reached were two terms behind other pupils in the school in writing, two and a half terms behind in mathematics and almost four terms behind in reading.
- These widening gaps were due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this disadvantaged group and those who arrived at the school in years 5 and 6. Inspection evidence and the school's current data show that gaps in attainment are closing rapidly in all year groups. This is because expectations of what disadvantaged pupils across the school can achieve are high and levels of support are good.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Current data and inspection evidence show that disadvantaged pupils across all year groups are now making rapid progress and catching up with their classmates and non-disadvantaged pupils, nationally. This demonstrates the school's success in narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant improvements to early years with the result that all aspects are now good.
- Although the skills and understanding of children on entry to the Reception classes varies year on year, many are below that typical for their age, especially in communication, reading and writing.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has supported staff effectively in making changes to the indoor and outdoor learning environment and to planning and assessment procedures to improve provision in the Reception classes. This has ensured that all of the early years areas of learning are planned for and taught well. As a result, children's achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Hence, the proportion of children set to reach the expected level at the end of the current Reception Year is above the national average.
- Children settle extremely well because staff provide a warm, friendly and caring atmosphere in which all children can work and play happily. All children are kept safe and secure, whether indoors or outdoors. This helps children to become confident and independent.
- Teaching is good. Activities engage children's interests well and ensure that the essential skills acquired, especially in early reading, writing and number work, are transferable to all areas of learning. Training undertaken by all early years staff in the teaching have phonics have brought about more rapid gains in the development of children's early reading skills. However, as yet, neither teachers nor teaching assistants have sufficiently well-developed skills to ensure all children in the Reception classes make the gains in reading of which they are capable.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to discover and explore the world around them, both indoors and outdoors.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They behave very well towards one another and spend much time working together happily and productively. This was demonstrated exceptionally well by a group of

children who, with their cement mixers, wheelbarrows, bricks, shovels and buckets set about building a house in an area which they themselves coned off . They shared ideas and worked purposefully together for over 45 minutes before completing a 'house', which they were only too proud to show to the inspector.

- Children's positive attitudes and achievements ensure that all groups, including the most able, those supported by extra funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are well prepared to enter Year 1.

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	105721
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	461718

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	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Handley
Headteacher	Damian Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	27 Jun 2012
Telephone number	0161 6522558
Fax number	0161 6338671
Email address	info@ssaidanoswald.oldham.sch.uk

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