

St Herbert's RC School

Edward Street, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9SN

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Effective leadership, particularly by the headteacher, has consolidated and improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Both are now consistently good.
- The supportive governing body has an effective structure to support school improvement and works closely with the headteacher and other senior staff to drive improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they are eager to become successful in their learning. They feel safe because of the school's effective safeguarding routines.
- Most teaching makes learning interesting and so pupils respond positively and are enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They make good progress from their starting points because, in most lessons, they are given work that challenges them.
- Additional adults within the classroom are adept at supporting the learning needs of pupils.
- Children make good progress in the early years. The care and attention of adults enable children to develop their skills confidently.
- New technologies are used very effectively to increase pupils' interest and participation in lessons. They have a good impact on pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils exactly what they should learn in lessons and, as a result, progress for all pupils is sometimes not as fast as it could be, particularly in mathematics.
- The most able pupils are not always given work that is hard enough to ensure they reach their potential.
- Not all teachers give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Leaders at different levels do not always use the wide range of information they have available in order to plan accurately for improvements and then check that these improvements happen.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons throughout the school, including an observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. They also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and several other members of the governing body, external advisers and members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). The responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including: information on pupils' current and recent 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

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Woodhouse

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils who were or are eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the early years are in Nursery part-time or full-time and in Reception class full-time.
- The school has a breakfast club and after school club run by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school in 2014, after the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring teachers' expectations are consistently clear about what pupils are to learn, particularly in mathematics, and that pupils are always given work that is hard enough, particularly the most able
 - developing a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work so that they know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve, have the opportunity to make improvements and use their increased understanding in subsequent lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing all leaders' skills to more accurately plan for improvements, with clear goals so that success can be checked and measured.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management of the school, including that of the early years, are good. The headteacher's vision and drive for improvement over the past five terms has ensured that the school continues to improve. The large majority of issues raised at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. As a result pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good.
- As a result of a sharp focus on improving teaching across the school, the dip in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 has been reversed. The leadership team has been effective in identifying aspects of teaching in need of improvement and working closely with staff to bring about these improvements.
- Leaders at different levels have clear plans to improve the school further. There have been some specific successes over the past year, for example, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in different year groups. However, there is not always a clear and accurate understanding of exactly what improvement is expected to be achieved in what timescale, and leaders are not all held fully accountable for the success of their actions.
- Systems for improving teaching are successful and a wide range of information and data is collected by leaders. Teachers are given clear guidance to help them to improve their teaching and leaders are rigorous in providing training as needed. Careful checks on teachers' performance, linked to salary progression, have had a positive impact on lifting standards of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders have some knowledge about the next steps needed in the aspects they manage and there are plans in place to support teachers and to improve their impact on achievement. However, these plans are not checked fully by all leaders to ensure that success is being achieved. For example, there is an effective system for checking pupils' learning in lessons but the information collected is not always used by teachers to ensure that all pupils are then given work that is hard enough, particularly the most able pupils.
- The school is well organised in its curriculum planning and provides many additional experiences that enrich pupils' understanding and their enjoyment of school. This includes the 'super learning days' which are held every term where the whole school focuses on a particular theme, for example French or mathematics. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities are provided for pupils of different ages, including less popular activities such as water polo and chess. There is good provision for pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, preparing them well for the next steps in their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the good examples set by members of staff, links with the church and the local community and work in lessons and assemblies. For example, pupils are taught to recognise the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to discuss these aspects, from when children start school in the early years onwards. British values are promoted well, including an emerging understanding of democracy through roles on the school council and individual responsibilities, preparing them well for life in modern Britain. Good relations are fostered and discrimination of any sort is tackled effectively.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and are effective. Adults working in the school are checked for their suitability. Training on how to keep pupils safe is kept up to date.
- Disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives additional funding are provided with appropriate and effective support for their specific needs. For example, funding provides targeted learning support from additional members of staff, including a learning mentor whose work is highly effective. Pupils who receive additional funding are making good progress and catching up with other pupils.
- The primary school sport funding to improve physical education and sport has been effectively spent on a range of resources. These include the skills of an external sports and fitness coach, Commando Joe, who effectively develops pupils' skills in, and enthusiasm for, sport. As a result, participation in physical education and sport has improved and a wide range of additional out-of-school activities and competitions that contribute well towards the pupils' health and well-being are organised.
- Parents are pleased with the school. They typically are happy with communications and relationships with the school and make comments such as, 'My children are nurtured and supported well, but also challenged to be the very best they can be.'
- The local authority has not had a great deal of involvement with this school in terms of providing support, other than coordinating work with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and managed. Governors are kept fully informed, through detailed reports from the headteacher linked to the school improvement plan, and through their own checks on

the school's work. One of the committees regularly receives up-to-date and precise information on children's achievement and the quality of teaching. Although governors use this information to hold the headteacher to account, there could be a stronger emphasis on using the information they have to more accurately plan improvements with clear goals and criteria so that success can be checked and measured.

- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching in order to support decisions as to whether teachers should be rewarded with salary increases and to review targets for the headteacher. The school's policies are updated regularly and the governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met. The governing body manages finances very well by ensuring the close scrutiny of all aspects of budget-planning and the use of specific funds, such as pupil premium and sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well both in class and when moving around the school. During lunchtime, in the dining hall, pupils get on well and enjoy eating and talking together. Pupils respect one another, are friendly, and care for each other.
- Pupils clearly want to learn and do well. They work collaboratively during activities and confidently share their ideas with each other when completing tasks. Pupils are articulate when expressing their views and most take care in their work. They are eager to explore further, by using books or participating in role-play and practical tasks.
- Pupils enjoy sharing in the wider aspects of school life. Respect for the school environment is clearly evident. Pupils are especially active in promoting the school's values by acting as school councillors or school chaplains. Older pupils help and support younger children when they play together.
- School records show that these positive attitudes are typically characteristic of pupils' behaviour. There are few incidents of poor behaviour and any disruption in class is extremely rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that staff are always on hand and willing to help should they have any concerns. They say their teachers and other adults are kind and listen to them so that they can do their best.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying and learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils say their school feels like a 'big family' because it is a place where they are accepted for who they are. They say discrimination by other pupils of any kind is very rare.
- The attendance of pupils is high. The very large majority of parents who participated in Parent View said their children are both happy and safe in this school. School staff also agree with this positive view.

The quality of teaching is good

- The work in pupils' books and school evidence of the progress being made by pupils show that the quality of teaching over time is good. Teachers work well together and this good quality teaching ensures good achievement over time.
- Teachers encourage positive attitudes toward learning. Displays of pupils' work celebrate their success and pupils are proud of their work and what they have learned. They participate with enthusiasm in class or in discussions with their classmates. This was especially evident in a Year 3 literacy task in which pupils were required to share their ideas of how to develop their use of direct speech, based on work they had done the previous day.
- A particular feature, which teachers use well to promote and share learning, is the use of new technologies. Electronic tablets are linked to class whiteboards and pupils are able to see what they and others have learned. Parents are given the opportunity to share and contribute to pupils' learning via their access at home and their support with homework.
- Writing is taught well and, as a result, outcomes are improving. Teachers effectively build on pupils' previous learning by requiring them to apply their literacy skills in other subjects. For instance, effective teaching of writing in Year 2 enhanced pupils' understanding of new words they had learned in science. Pupils' skills were successfully developed to enable them to produce well sequenced writing about the process of how a snake sheds its skin, using the new vocabulary they had learned.

- Reading and mathematics are taught effectively. The teaching of phonics is good and pupils are encouraged to read different types of books, with older pupils able to discuss their favourite authors and give reasons for their choices. Mathematics teaching is increasingly effective at deepening pupils' understanding and giving them confidence to apply their skills to different types of problems.
- Most pupils say that they have a general idea of how well they are doing and understand their targets, although these are not known to all pupils. However, although teachers know the school's marking policy, it is not applied consistently when work is marked and feedback given to pupils. Some teachers' comments are more helpful than others in showing pupils how well they have done and how to improve their work. Pupils in some classes are more likely to be encouraged to act directly upon guidance than in others.
- Teachers mainly prepare activities that engage and interest pupils well. However, sometimes pupils are not always clear about exactly what they are expected to learn, particularly in mathematics and, as a result, their progress is not as fast as it could be.
- Teachers follow school policy and prepare work at different levels of challenge. For the most able pupils, however, even the more difficult level of work they are given is not always hard enough to stretch them sufficiently or deepen their learning to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- Other adults within the school are especially adept at promoting pupils' learning by offering them appropriate levels of individual guidance. They also lead group discussions to enable pupils who may need additional help to be confident enough to have a go at their work and consolidate what they have learned in their written tasks.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' good achievement is reflected in the good and increasingly rapid progress they make through the school. By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence seen in pupils' work and from school assessment information indicate that the recent decline in standards at Key Stage 2 has been reversed.
- Children join early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in all the areas of learning. Most enter Year 1 with skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics which are similar to or above those typical for their age. These good standards help them to make a confident start in Year 1.
- Pupils' good progress is maintained across Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, their reading, writing and mathematical skills are above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident readers. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to read unfamiliar words.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have not always been as high as they are now and progress across Key Stage 2 is good from pupils' different starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are good and more than half of the year group are working at levels above those expected for their age in both reading and mathematics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 read widely and fluently. They show a high level of understanding of the books they are reading and use their comprehension skills well in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the effective support and guidance they receive. They receive targeted help, often from skilful and well deployed support staff. Their support provides a correct level of challenge and a range of work which these pupils need.
- The most able pupils make good progress. However, some of the most able pupils do not always achieve the very high standards of which they are capable. This is because teachers' guidance and the work they give the most able pupils are not always based accurately on the pupils' higher starting points. As a result, the most able are not challenged soon enough in lessons or given hard-enough tasks or homework that fully challenges them.
- In 2014, the disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 were over two terms behind other pupils in reading and over three terms behind in mathematics and writing. When compared with other pupils nationally, they were over three terms behind in reading, over four terms behind in mathematics and over five terms behind in writing. The numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each class are sometimes small and this can have a large impact when comparing with national averages. The school's assessment information and evidence from scrutinising pupils' work indicates that disadvantaged pupils across the school are making rapid and sustained progress. As a result, the gaps in attainment between them and other pupils are closing.

The early years provision**is good**

- Leadership of early years provision across the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It is underpinned by close and effective collaboration between staff. Leaders ensure that established, well-considered routines are implemented effectively to keep children safe and to support their good learning in both classes.
- Children make good progress and achieve well across the areas of learning during their time in the Nursery and Reception. This is because good teaching and supportive links with parents promote the children's confidence and interest in learning.
- Children sometimes make rapid progress, especially when their interest is stimulated. For example, children in Nursery were absorbed in their learning when building towers from blocks and having to say which were tallest or shortest. Similarly, children in both the Reception and Nursery became very enthusiastic when being taught the sounds letters make because staff make learning fun, despite being careful to be completely accurate.
- Children behave well. Staff work well as a team and give children clear expectations of how to behave. Staff are also adept at showing children how to relate supportively towards each other. Some children enter with lower levels of awareness of how to treat other children, but all make good progress in their social development and learn to respect each other's differences. As a result, children behave well in the early years.
- Teaching is good. Activities set are effective at gaining and then holding the children's attention and strengthening their ability to persevere in their work. For example, in response to adult guidance, children joined in willingly when pretending to be Goldilocks and answering questions about how the bears might have felt when they were in her house.
- Teachers check the children's developing skills effectively and use them carefully to make sure that work is suitably challenging. As a result, disadvantaged children are enabled to learn as well as other pupils. Teachers also make sure that their questioning and support help the most able children and those with special educational needs to progress well.
- The learning facilities and equipment are well organised, including the developing use of new technology which is used very effectively. Provision has improved since the last inspection to widen the range of stimulating activities provided for the children in both indoor and outdoor areas. Staff and children now move freely between Nursery and Reception classes at certain times of day. As a result, children learn confidently.
- Over time, an increasing proportion of children achieve a good level of development across the areas of learning. This shows good, but not yet outstanding, achievement. Nevertheless, children are well prepared for future learning in 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	105722
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	461897

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P McKie
Headteacher	Susan Milligan
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2011
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