

St James' Church of England Primary School

Crossfield Road, Wardle, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 9JW

Inspection dates 16–17 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders and managers including governors have not ensured that the good-quality teaching and good achievement found at the time of the last inspection has been consistently maintained across Key Stage 2.
- Not all leaders have an overview of pupils' achievement and progress across the school in their areas of responsibility; therefore their impact on whole-school improvement is limited.
- Too few pupils do better than expected in writing by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in lessons is not always good because work set is too easy for some pupils.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good in all year groups across Key Stage 2. Teachers' questioning of pupils is not always sufficiently searching to make sure pupils think hard about their learning.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write at length across other areas of the curriculum and high-quality writing is not promoted rigorously enough
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively throughout all parts of the lesson.
- The pace of improvement has been too slow to ensure consistently good progress across Key Stage 2 in order to raise standards by the end of Year 6.

The school has the following strengths

- This welcoming school provides a safe haven for its pupils. The principles of respect for themselves, others and the environment permeate every aspect of school life. This ensures they are prepared well for the future.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The nurturing setting enables them to settle quickly to their learning. As a result of activities and teaching that enthuse them, children make good progress and are well-prepared for Year 1.
- The school provides a rich curriculum. It is enhanced by school trips, visitors and the many sporting and musical clubs on offer to pupils, before, during and after the school day.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are happy to be in school. Their above-average attendance pays testament to this.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the exemplary care the school provides for their children.
- The school's successful focus on mathematics since the last inspection has seen standards rise faster than they have nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time including looking at the school's own progress data, pupils' workbooks and observing lessons.
- The inspectors observed 15 part-lessons and observed all teachers teaching at least once over the two days. Of these, two were observed jointly with the headteacher and the headteacher designate. In addition the inspectors observed the headteacher and headteacher designate giving feedback to staff.
- The inspectors met with two groups of pupils, talked to pupils informally in lessons and at play. Inspectors observed how well reading is taught through witnessing sessions in phonics (sounds that letters make). Inspectors also talked to Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils about how the school helps them to read.
- Meetings were held with the Chair, and vice-chair, of the Governing Body. Meetings were also held with the assistant headteachers responsible for the curriculum and pastoral issues, including special educational needs, and the teacher based in the Reception class.
- The inspectors took account of parents' views from the 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition the inspectors talked to several parents at the start of the school day.
- The school's work was observed and the inspectors looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, documents relating to the school's own self-evaluation of its performance and the school's data for tracking pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheryl Farnworth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. (These are pupils supported through pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Children in the early years attend full time in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is being shadowed by the headteacher designate, who is due to take over the role of headteacher in September 2015 when the current headteacher retires.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good, particularly across Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that activities are at the correct level of difficulty to consistently challenge pupils to think hard about their work
 - developing the questioning skills of teachers so that they encourage pupils to deepen their thinking and reflect on their learning
 - using classroom assistants more effectively across all parts of the lesson.
- Improve the progress that pupils make so that they reach higher standards in writing by:
 - offering pupils more opportunities to write at length across other subjects
 - raising the profile of writing in the school to encourage pupils to want to write.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by extending the monitoring of individual subjects to speed up the pace of improvement in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders' actions to improve the school have not been equally effective in all key stages. The good progress pupils make by the end of key Stage 1 is not built upon across Key Stage 2 because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning has not been maintained since the last inspection. As a result leadership and management require improvement.
- Although there is good teaching in the school, it is not evident in all classes. Monitoring to check on the quality of teaching is undertaken regularly and feedback given to teachers, but this has not been fully effective in ensuring all teaching is consistently good in all classes.
- The school undertakes evaluation of its own performance but this is not always accurate and tends to be over-generous in its judgements.
- There are no individual subject leaders in this relatively small school and so monitoring of individual subjects is limited. This hinders the pace of improvement in the school.
- Leaders make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils in school. As a result of such small numbers in any one year group, it is not always possible to accurately compare their achievement to pupils nationally or their classmates. The school fosters very strong relationships and the school takes effective steps to tackle any discrimination and treat pupils equally. However, there is still some work to be done to make sure that all pupils have an equal chance to achieve well across the key stages.
- The primary school additional sports funding is used very well. The school holds the highest Gold Kitemark award for physical education and there is a plethora of sports and exercise clubs available to pupils. This gives pupils the opportunity to take part in many sports that are new and different to them, such as golf.
- The school is rightly proud of its rich and varied curriculum and its philosophy of respect that underpins and permeates the whole culture of the school. Pupils say how much they enjoy topics and theme weeks, trips and visitors to the school. However, in some classes in the school the curriculum does not meet the need of all its pupils because work is sometimes too easy and pupils are not challenged to do their best.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very well developed. Many groups and committees are available to pupils to join, such as the Eco committee, School Council and Healthy Schools Task Group to name just a few. As a result of these opportunities, together with the teaching of Christian values, pupils develop tolerance, understanding and empathy towards others. This promotes British values well.
- The local authority has provided light touch support and its impact has benefited both staff and governors in the training provided.
- The safety of its pupils is of paramount importance to the school and safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. The school site is secure and pupils and parents agree that the school looks after its pupils well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are proud of the school and its pupils. They visit the school when they can and receive regular updates and reports from the headteacher and other staff to keep them informed about the school including the quality of teaching. Minutes of their meetings clearly demonstrate that they offer good support to the school and carry out their monitoring duties conscientiously. They understand national data to enable them to fully understand issues of progress and attainment. Governors are aware of teachers' pay awards and recognise that they must be linked to their effectiveness in the classroom and the impact teachers have on pupils' achievement. They are closely involved in setting targets for the headteacher, linked to the school's priorities for improvement and are fully supportive of the headteacher when rewarding staff or tackling any underperformance. They have not held leaders fully to account for making sure that the good-quality teaching and good achievement found at the time of the last inspection has been consistently maintained across Key Stage 2.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils wear their school uniform with pride and classrooms are kept neat and tidy.
- Pupils behave well not just in classrooms but also when moving around the school at less structured times. When lessons are less engaging however pupils' enthusiastic approach to learning wanes and they

sometimes become a little restless.

- The school promotes a climate of collective responsibility and pupils are consulted regularly. Indeed, the Healthy School Task Group had requested to try more exotic meats for their school lunch. As a consequence, during the inspection, pupils were enjoying a taste of ostrich, kangaroo, venison and shark meats alongside their more usual lunches.
- Lunchtimes are very pleasant social occasions when pupils from all different age groups sit together for their lunch. Older pupils enjoy chatting to their younger schoolmates and helping them with their lunches.
- The good level of respect they have for each other and their enjoyment of school results in friendly, polite and happy pupils who attend school regularly and on time.
- Staff have a good awareness of pupils' personal needs. Pupils are treated with respect by all the adults in the school and are available to listen if pupils are anxious about anything.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with swiftly. They understand the potential dangers when using the internet or mobile phones.
- Both parents and pupils hold positive views about behaviour in the school. Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying and are adamant that school is 'bully-free'. They say that should anyone misbehave they are dealt with promptly by staff in the school.
- The care given to pupils at St James' is exemplary. Pupils relate well to each other and share their learning. Inclusion is good and pupils are keen advocates of their school's philosophy of 'Be respectful, Be Responsible, Be ready to learn.'

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. This has resulted in some variation in pupils' progress over time in literacy, reading and mathematics. Not all teachers have the same high expectations of pupils and, consequently, work is sometimes too easy and fails to make pupils think hard about their learning.
- Teachers do not always use questioning well enough to make pupils reflect on their learning; for example, teachers are often satisfied with simple answers and do not probe more deeply to promote pupils' thinking skills and procure detailed full answers.
- Teachers usually have the assistance of another adult in the classroom. However, the use of the teaching assistant is not always used effectively during all parts of the lesson to support learning.
- The school works hard to ensure pupils master the mechanics of writing, through the effective teaching of phonics and spellings. Pupils' reading and writing skills have improved. However, some pupils have too few opportunities to write at length across all subjects; the use of worksheets at times limits challenge and opportunities for extended pieces of writing, and so some pupils, including the most able, do not reach the higher levels in writing.
- In some lessons across Key Stage 2, the work set is the same for all ability groups and so some pupils find the work too easy. This is particularly so in writing and at times in mathematics.
- The school has led an effective focus on mathematics since the last inspection and has been successful in ensuring that standards in mathematics have improved faster than they have nationally over the last three years.
- Most pupils enjoy their learning. This was particularly evident in a literacy lesson when a variety of teaching strategies were used to motivate pupils to discuss the features of the peregrine falcon. This lively session ended with pupils working in groups on choral speaking. This encouraged their reading skills and added expression to their reading of the verses of a poem.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. As a result pupils quickly develop a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and develop a love of reading.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress data held by the school, work in pupils' books and other inspection evidence confirm that progress, although showing signs of improvement, has not been good enough over time across Key Stage 2. Therefore, achievement requires improvement.
- For the past three years, test results show that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly average. However, in the 2014 national tests, the attainment of Year 6 pupils in writing was significantly

below average in writing.

- In 2014, most pupils made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. A similar number of pupils to the national average figure went on to make better progress in reading and mathematics. However, significantly fewer pupils than nationally did better than average in writing. Assessment information and inspectors' observations show that the progress made by pupils in the school is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there is increasingly better progress being made, some unevenness between subjects and year groups remains.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reach the required standard in the phonics check is above average. Pupils in Year 2 who read to an inspector used their knowledge of phonics well to help them to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Key Stage 2 who spoke to an inspector were very positive about their reading and could say which authors they particularly liked and why. They read fluently and with expression.
- Pupils at the end of Year 2 attain standards that are broadly average and improving at a similar pace to national trends in reading and writing. Standards are rising faster in mathematics. Nevertheless, in 2014, fewer pupils than average attained the higher Level 3.
- In 2014, although the most able pupils reached the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics, in writing the proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 were below average. In fact none of the most able pupils made more progress than they were expected to make in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Their progress is closely tracked by the school and they are well supported both in school and in individual and small group sessions. The school works well with other agencies when necessary.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils attained approximately six terms behind their non disadvantaged classmates in reading and mathematics and five terms in writing. When compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils attained approximately two-and-a-half terms behind in mathematics and three-and-a-half terms behind in reading and writing. Despite the gap in attainment in 2014, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally in mathematics and the same in reading. Although numbers in any one year group are small, the tracking data provided by the school shows that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently in school is much closer to that of their classmates.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision is nurturing, safe and effective. When children start in the Reception class their stage of development, knowledge and skills overall vary year on year from those that are typical for their age to those whose skills are below. Children make rapid gains in their learning and catch-up quickly due to effective teaching and activities that motivate and enthuse them. As a result children make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are at least typical for their age.
- Children display many characteristics of effective learning: they are resilient, show good concentration and are able to initiate their own learning through imaginative play. They enjoy their learning; for example, they are eager to play in the pirate ship. Various linked activities support their learning well.
- Planning is thoughtful and themes permeate well across all areas of learning. This encourages children to continue to practise and enhance their skills even when not supported by adults.
- Children have a good grasp of phonics and some children are beginning to apply their knowledge to articulate and write in sentences and read words with familiar letter strings. Children display confidence in ordering numbers when choosing them randomly; for example, one child was eager to tell the inspector that she was leaving spaces because she 'hadn't picked up the right number yet'.
- Leadership of the early years is good, resulting in the good progress the children make.
- Children show positive relationships and behave and play well together. They respond easily to instructions and present as happy, confident and relaxed little people in the setting, both inside and outside.
- Adults give support to learning. They engage in discussion and use questioning well to explore children's thoughts and understanding and encourage them to think deeply.

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	105848
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	461909

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Castledine
Headteacher	Catherine Aden
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2012
Telephone number	01706 378268
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