

St Chad's CE Primary School

Gladstone Street, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 4AT

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Despite this, progress is not consistently swift enough to close the gaps in pupils' learning for them to reach higher levels of attainment, particularly in writing.
- In some classes, pockets of underachievement linger due to weak teaching in the past.
- Teaching is not yet consistently strong enough in all year groups and all subjects to make sure that pupils make good progress.
- On some occasions, teachers do not check how well pupils are learning and do not adjust the tasks set for them to secure faster rates of progress.
- Marking in a few classes does not tell pupils exactly how to improve their work.
- Leaders and governors have a wealth of accurate information about pupils' attainment and progress. Nevertheless, it is not pulled together as tightly as possible to provide an overview of pupils' performance. It is not analysed sufficiently well to identify strengths or see where common weaknesses persist.
- Plans for improvement include important aspects that need to be improved but they are not specific enough. Indicators of success are not directly linked to pupils' achievement.
- The governing body is strongly supportive of the work of the school. However, their developing systems have meant that they have not evaluated pupils' achievement information as rigorously as possible to quicken progress rapidly.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has steadied the turbulent waters experienced by the school over the last few years.
- Children achieve well in the Reception class, receiving a strong foundation on which their education can be built.
- Teaching in Year 6 is outstanding so that pupils make swift progress in this class.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and behave well.
- Links with parents are developing well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The headteacher and deputy headteacher then met together with inspectors to discuss the observations and to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- One inspector and the deputy headteacher jointly looked at a wide range of pupils' workbooks which reflected all subjects of the curriculum.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, an officer of the local authority, a representative of the diocese, a group of teachers and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors met with four groups of 10 pupils and a group of parents to hear their views of the school. There were no responses to the Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to take into account but inspectors took account of the school's own survey of parents conducted in November 2014.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break times and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils' current attainment and progress, improvement planning, the use of the pupil premium and primary school sport funding, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, minutes of governors' meetings, and records of leaders' evaluation of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Mulgrew, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- St Chad's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from other heritages. All pupils speak English as their home language.
- Over a third of all pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding; this figure has increased over the last three years and is above average. This funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils who are looked after by the local authority and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that it is consistently good or better across all year groups and subjects, especially in writing, by:
 - using the strong teaching which exists in the school to model practice so that other teachers can see how they can further accelerate the progress of their pupils
 - giving pupils more chances to write at length and use their grammar, punctuation, spelling and creative writing skills in subjects across the curriculum
 - making sure that incisive marking in some classes happens in all year groups so that pupils know exactly how to improve their work
 - adjusting learning during lessons so that pupils secure faster progress.
- Improve leadership, including governance, by:
 - making sure that leaders summarise the information they hold on pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups, and analyse it to highlight the areas of strength and relative weakness across the school
 - ensuring that senior leaders, subject leaders and governors use this information to draw up a plan for improvement which is sharply focused on what needs to improve
 - making sure that targets set for improvement link directly to accelerating rates of pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have successfully steered the school into a calm harbour; the choppy waters which characterised the school over the last few years are a thing of the past. The school has a stable staffing profile, stronger partnerships with parents, the church and the wider community. Consequently, all aspects of the school have improved since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff mirror the headteacher's aim to raise pupils' achievement while nurturing their personal well-being. The headteacher has established a culture of team working and set the course for the school to flourish and become a good or better school in the future. All involved with the school have ambition to achieve such success.
- Senior leaders have put essential procedures in place so that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- Improving the quality of teaching is at the heart of the school's improvement. Through a robust system of observing lessons, checking pupils' assessments, scrutinising pupils' workbooks and talking to pupils, leaders identify what training teachers need. Whole-school and individual training has been provided for teachers and teaching assistants so that teaching is better, especially in reading and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are making better progress than in the past and underachievement, caused by earlier weak teaching, is being remedied.
- The system for setting staff targets and checking on their performance is much more rigorous. Objectives are set for teachers and teaching assistants so that they all know that they will be held responsible if pupils do not make the progress expected.
- Leaders and governors know the overall strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. Middle leaders have started to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects and several have checked on pupils' progress. All know what action needs to be taken to improve performance in their subject.
- Through ensuring accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work, leaders have generated a wealth of data on pupils' progress and attainment. However, this information is not pulled together as sharply as possible or analysed rigorously so that strengths and persistent weaknesses in pupils' performance can be identified.
- The plan for improvement has been effective in moving the school forward. Nevertheless, leaders know that to steer the school to good or better, they need a specific plan which contains targets that are readily measurable against pupils' improved achievement.
- Teachers plan topics that cover a variety of subjects each term and interest pupils. Homework activities are linked to the topics and stimulate pupils' imagination. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to use their developing skills across all subjects, especially writing skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught the Christian faith and also about other faiths, beliefs and traditions in Britain today. The use of the 'what if' approach stimulates discussion and debate so that pupils learn to confidently express their views while showing understanding of others. Equality of opportunity and respect are central to the school's ethos; discrimination is emphatically not tolerated and the school's ethos underpins positive, harmonious relations. Pupils learn about democracy through topics they study, for example by discussing the women's fight to gain the vote or through visiting the Houses of Parliament. Voting for members of the school council enables pupils to experience the democratic process.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to make sure that disadvantaged pupils access all subjects and activities. Additional funding for sport has been used to provide specialist teaching and to develop the skills of teachers, as well as to increase the range of sporting activities available to pupils. Pupils can choose which sports club to attend. Leaders are checking the attendance of different groups of pupils at these clubs to ensure that no one misses out.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school through organising support from consultants, evaluating the progress of the school and by challenging the school through the senior officers' termly meeting. The diocese has provided support for governors and by providing direction for the shift in culture.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the process they must follow if they have concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is stronger than at the last inspection. Governors have been unwavering in their support for

the school and have not shied away from taking difficult decisions. Governors are committed to improving the performance of the school. Their interest is shown in the numbers who have attended the feedback meetings following monitoring visits.

- Members of the governing body have carried out monitoring activities for themselves to build their knowledge of the work of the school. Through this they are in a better position to challenge leaders to take the right decisions for the benefit of pupils. Minutes of governor meetings show that this challenge is growing.
- A review of committees has led to a more business-like approach to holding meetings. As a result, governors have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and of how teachers are rewarded, or not.
- Governors are given an overview of the performance of pupils. This has enabled them to check on the effective use of the pupil premium funding. However, they realise that more rigorous evaluation of pupil performance will enable them to probe more deeply and offer the specific challenge that is needed to quicken progress further.
- Some necessary information was not posted on the school's website. By the end of the inspection, this had been rectified.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful of their teachers, visitors and one another. They are polite and were happy to share their views about the school with inspectors.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations of their behaviour, including the values which they are expected to promote. Assemblies introduce the value for the week, for example, kindness. Pupils can then record their thoughts in a whole-class 'values' book. These are beautifully presented and include some moving and thoughtful reflections.
- Pupils feel that adults manage behaviour fairly.
- Most pupils settle quickly in lessons as they want to learn. Most listen to adults so they know what to do. Occasionally, a few younger pupils become distracted by other activities in the class and their progress wains.
- Pupils really appreciate the activities that are provided for them during lunchtime or after school. Sports clubs are particularly enjoyed.
- Pupils feel that the introduction of 'play buddies' means that no one is left out. These Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities seriously in helping others to work out any squabbles peaceably. Pupils can also visit the 'butterfly' room during playtimes; there, they can talk to an adult about any worries.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. E-cadets help to remind pupils to be vigilant when using the internet. During this inspection, pupils received a presentation from an external provider about cyber bullying.
- Pupils consider that there is very little bullying or name-calling. If it happens then pupils are confident that adults will help them to sort it out. Several classes noted the use of 'wheels' which help them to pinpoint the exact course of action they should take to sort out worries.
- Thorough records of bullying or behaviour incidents are kept. These show that effective action resolves any issues that are raised. Parents believe their children are kept safe from harm.
- Exclusions have dramatically reduced due to the rigorous action taken to support individual pupils and their families.
- The school follows up all absences swiftly and meticulously. School is striving to maintain improved attendance which has currently dipped to below average. However, there are very specific reasons which account for this drop.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- During this inspection, inspectors observed much improved practice in the classrooms. However, over time the quality of teaching varies from class-to-class and between subjects. This means that some pupils are not consistently making the swift progress they need to make up for the gaps in their learning and reach expected or higher standards. This is not the case in Year 6 where teaching over time is outstanding.
- There are some notable strengths evident in all practice as teachers consolidate their training and this provides a firm basis from which they can improve. These include:
 - providing pupils with interesting activities which engage them in learning
 - modelling what pupils are to learn and providing resources to help their understanding
 - using questioning techniques well to deepen learning and make pupils think hard
 - maintaining high expectations of learning and behaviour
 - using teaching assistants effectively so that they contribute significantly to pupils' learning.
- The training that teachers have received has now gelled so that improved practice is gathering momentum. The teaching of reading is better due to training in the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and guided reading.
- Training in the teaching of mathematics has especially shown improvements in lessons. For example, in Year 5, pupils were engrossed in 'working systematically' through 'trial and improvement' methods as they solved problems. Good quality equipment aided their thinking as they worked in pairs or groups cooperatively.
- The teaching of writing is less well developed. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are growing, especially for older pupils. However, leaders recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that teachers know exactly what action to take to improve writing across all subjects.
- Teachers set homework for pupils which is directly linked to the topics studied in class. For example, while studying Shakespeare in Year 6, pupils chose to make a model of the Globe Theatre or write a play which helped their understanding of the topic and developed their creativity. Homework is displayed very tastefully around the school, which shows pupils how much their efforts are valued.
- Teachers track pupils' progress regularly. They frequently meet together, and with teachers from other schools, to compare their checks on how pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. They have a more confident and competent grasp of pupils' attainment and plan work accordingly. This was not always the case in the past where assessments of what pupils had learned were sometimes over-generous and not always accurate.
- A few teachers give feedback to pupils during the lessons and reshape the learning so that pupils who have understood the concept move on quickly while those who have not receive support to enable them to catch up. This is not the case in all classes.
- The marking of pupils' workbooks is completed by all teachers and they affirm pupils' efforts. Despite this, marking in most classes does not pinpoint exactly what pupils must do next to make their work better, especially in writing.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- A scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, observations of learning in classrooms and an evaluation of the information the school hold on pupils' achievement, including for different groups of pupils, show that learning is uneven across classes and subjects. Consequently, attainment and progress is variable across the school.
- Pupils want to learn and please their teachers. Pupils feel safe in class due to the positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are confident to 'have a go' as they know their contributions will be valued. Pupils mostly concentrate and persevere with tasks because they know this will move their learning on.
- The number of pupils in Year 1 who have reached the expected level in the phonics (the sounds that letter make) screening has risen again this year and is much closer to that expected.
- Unconfirmed assessment results in Year 2 show that attainment in reading is average, in line in mathematics, and below average in writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and across the school are achieving well in this subject. They can talk about their favourite authors and many say they read at home to an adult or on their own. Improvements in pupils'

comprehension skills mean that pupils understand the text they are reading, so they can read with growing fluency and expression. Attainment in reading is starting to rise as pupils move through the school.

- Pupils are rising to the increasing challenges posed in mathematics lessons. In several classes, pupils use their recently learned skills to solve problems systematically. More are working independently as they have resources around the room to support their learning. Consequently, standards in this subject, although below expected, are starting to rise.
- Pupils' skills in writing are weaker than those in mathematics and reading. Pupils in Year 6 have many chances to write longer pieces of writing across many subjects. However, this is not the case in other classes where opportunities for pupils to write at length are missed. This is caused, in some cases, by the use of worksheets which do not allow pupils to use spelling, grammar, punctuation and creative writing skills as much as they need to do.
- In 2014, attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in reading, writing and mathematics after pupils made good progress over their final year. However, too few pupils reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 have made strong progress over this year, making gains in the gaps in learning caused by a legacy of underachievement. Teacher assessments for the current Year 6 show attainment in reading at Level 4 or higher is above average compared with the national average in 2014, slightly above average in writing and below average in mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils were just over a term behind other pupils in the school and two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This showed that the gap was narrowing over a three-year period. Currently, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are making similar progress as their classmates in reading, and better progress in writing and mathematics. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their peers in some classes and less progress in others.
- Similarly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar or better progress than other pupils in the class in mathematics, reading and writing. This is due to teachers and teaching assistants using well-chosen activities to support and stretch learning for this group.
- Historically, too few pupils have gained the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In 2014, more pupils gained the higher levels at the end of these key stages. Older pupils are proud that they have been entered for the Level 6 tests. In several classes, the most-able pupils are challenged very well and make the progress of which they are capable, but this is not the case in all classes.

Early years provision

is good

- Children do well in the Reception class because they receive well-planned learning opportunities which excite them and stir their fascination. Teaching is precise. Adults work closely together to provide a wide range of activities to motivate learning. Inspectors observed children captivated as they joined in with adults to sing a counting rhyme while watching animation on the screen. All enjoyed success as they kept up with the words and the actions.
- Good partnerships with parents and the pre-school mean that children feel welcome into school and know the routines expected of them. Parents are confident that their children will be well looked after and several commented on the attention to their children's particular needs. Children are kept safe within this caring environment.
- Relationships are positive and children behave very well; they work cooperatively together and with adults. Adults know when to intervene in children's play in order to extend learning. In this setting, children thrive and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The atmosphere inside and outside is calm and supportive. Inside, good quality resources are organised so that children have chances to use their reading, writing and number skills in all the planned tasks. This is reflected outside as staff have capitalised on opportunities to encourage children to count, sound out words and practice their writing while playing outside. For example, children are invited to write a sentence on large sheets of paper stuck on the wall.
- Strong leadership makes sure that children's learning is accurately checked and this is used for planning the next steps in learning. This has not always been the case. For example, the children in the current Reception joined the school with a weak knowledge and understanding of the world, so staff planned

learning to rectify this so that this would not act as a barrier to future learning.

- Overall, children join Reception with skills in communication and language, reading and writing and mathematics, which are below those typical for children of their age. Adults pay attention to teaching children new words and model how to speak clearly in sentences. They take care to make sure children regularly count so that children have the tools to learn successfully. Attainment was significantly better in 2014 than 2013, with the proportion meeting expected levels reaching almost the national level. Attainment is set to rise further this year with disadvantaged children doing as well as their peers, and the historic gap between boys and girls closing.

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	111262
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	456468

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Armstrong
Headteacher	Natalie Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2014
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