

# St Agnes CE (VA) Primary School

Knolls Lane, Lees, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 5RU

## Inspection dates

30 June–1 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for every pupil at the school. She is effectively supported by the assistant headteacher and the governing body in further improving teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and they provide a clear direction for further development. They have worked together to secure improvements following a dip in standards. They have the drive and expertise to ensure the school continues to improve.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. Pupils' understanding of British values prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Attendance is above average and pupils say they feel very safe. They like their teachers and enjoy learning.
- Teaching is effective because it is well led and managed. Teachers create lessons which motivate and engage pupils.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics because they are taught well.
- Leadership in the early years is focused and purposeful. This, together with good quality teaching ensures that all children develop enthusiasm for learning and make good progress. Reception children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not outstanding because teachers do not always make it entirely clear to pupils what they are expected to do.
- Work provided does not always effectively challenge the most-able pupils. There are also occasions when teachers do not adjust activities soon enough to enable pupils to build upon what they already know and can do.
- Targets set in the school's development plan are not effectively linked to pupils' progress nor sufficiently measurable to enable school leaders to quickly and accurately assess the impact of their actions to improve standards.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities led by teaching assistants. A walk around the school to observe learning also took place.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, observed and spoke with pupils during lessons, play times and at lunchtime. Pupils also read to the inspector.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation also took place with an external consultant who provides support to the school.
- A range of documents were considered by the inspector, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- The inspector took account of 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and to summaries of the responses to parental, pupils' and staff questionnaires recently distributed by the school.

## Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. There are currently no pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, so that an increased proportion of pupils make more than expected progress, by making sure that:
  - teachers always provide activities and work that is hard enough to fully challenge the most able
  - teachers' explanations and demonstrations in lessons are clear so that pupils know exactly what they should be doing
  - there are timely adjustments to teaching and learning activities to drive learning forward at a faster pace.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that targets set in the school improvement plan are:
  - focused on what pupils need to do to improve
  - have clear ways of measuring success, so that school leaders can accurately check on the impact of agreed actions.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has successfully maintained a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. There is high staff morale in school and all staff share the vision for further improvement.
- The school has an accurate view of how well it is doing. However, targets set within the school development plan are not appropriately linked to pupils' progress nor measurable enough to help school leaders evaluate the impact of their actions and raise standards even more quickly.
- Leaders and staff record evidence of pupils' attainment and their progress. There are regular meetings to check on how well pupils are doing. Any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and appropriate support put into place to help them to catch up.
- Senior and middle leaders identify the appropriate areas for development in their respective areas of responsibility and plan actions to ensure that these improve. Middle leaders are involved in checking upon the quality of learning and teaching. Nevertheless, leaders do not always make sure that teachers adjust learning activities when necessary and explain new learning effectively to pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those who are disabled, and those who have special educational needs receive effective support, when necessary. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well. This confirms the school's commitment to tackle any discrimination and make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. It also demonstrates the pupil premium funding is used well to support eligible pupils.
- Primary sports funding is wisely spent. It is used to employ specialist staff to work alongside teachers and pupils. In addition, pupils have an opportunity to experience a range of different sports, which they might not otherwise access. These include table tennis and cheerleading. Pupils' health and well-being are benefiting as a result.
- The curriculum on offer generally meets pupils' learning needs well but the most-able pupils are not always given work that is hard enough to challenge them fully. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is successfully developed and helps to foster good relations. Pupils gain a good understanding about different cultures through activities such as geography week, when each class researches and learns about a different country.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because values, such as respect and ambition, are rooted in the school's ethos. Pupils learn about other British values such as democracy through electing house captains.
- The local authority provides effective light-touch support. Advisers check with leaders on how well the school is doing and respond appropriately to requests for support.
- Pupils are cared for well and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school has effective systems in place to ensure pupils are kept safe and regular checks are made on these.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. Governors know the school well because they visit school regularly and receive detailed information from school leaders and staff. Governors are supportive of the school and they question leaders on the information they are given if there is something that they do not understand. They closely analyse national performance data in order to challenge school leaders even more effectively regarding pupils' progress.
  - Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. They are fully involved in setting targets for the headteacher.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well mannered and show respect for each other and the adults around them. They are very keen to tell visitors about all of the happy experiences that they enjoy at their school.
- Pupils are eager to learn and speak enthusiastically about the way their teachers help them and make learning fun. There is very rarely any disruption to lessons because most pupils try their best and know that their hard work is valued.
- Pupils know that a high standard of behaviour is expected. They feel that the 'great expectations rainbow'

of school rules, which is attractively displayed around school and in each classroom, helps them to remember to be on their best behaviour.

- Pupils take good care of each other. For example, Year 5 pupils act as 'buddies' to Reception children, regularly sitting with them in the lunch hall and helping younger friends to settle well into school life. The school council arrange fund raising events to help buy playground equipment for school. Pupil councillors know how special and important books are; they organised a collection of books at the school and donated them to a local children's hospital.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they know the adults care for them well. They are confident that there is always a member of staff who will listen to them and that any concerns will be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils know about different types of discrimination and bullying. Pupils say that there is no bullying at their school and agree that this is because they are all friends and look after each other. School records confirm that bullying is rare.
- Staff make sure pupils have a good understanding of risk, including those associated with using the internet.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector and the vast majority of those parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agree their children are safe and happy at this school.
- Pupils arrive at school on time and attendance is above the national average. This reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books, information regarding pupils' progress and other inspection evidence confirms that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good over time.
- Reading is taught effectively across the school. Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well to younger pupils. Small group-reading sessions for older pupils now focus on how well pupils understand the messages that authors want to convey. This is helping pupils to develop their reading skills still further.
- Writing is taught well. Pupils have opportunities to practise writing skills across a range of subjects. In addition, teachers provide interesting topics for pupils to write about. For example, pupils in Class 2 were highly motivated when writing to Lees Council to complain about litter in the town centre.
- Recently, there has been an increased emphasis on making sure that pupils are confident in using basic mathematical skills. Teachers have adjusted well to the new approach to teaching mathematics. They make sure that pupils have opportunities to practise and develop basic skills by regularly solving real-life problems during mathematics and other lessons.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, they do not always use this knowledge to clearly explain or demonstrate new activities to pupils. Teachers plan activities that usually challenge, interest and engage pupils. However, work is not always set at a high enough level to challenge the most-able pupils fully. Although teachers skilfully question pupils to assess their learning throughout the lesson, they do not always adjust their teaching soon enough to meet the learning needs of pupils, particularly the most able, and so the pace of learning slows for some. A good range of prompts to support learning are displayed around the classrooms. Opportunities for pupils to share ideas and learn from each other are also regularly provided.
- Work is marked regularly. Teachers praise pupils for work which is well done and provide advice on how it could be further improved. Most staff check that pupils do their corrections and so learn from their mistakes.
- Effective team work between teachers and teaching assistants results in good quality support for pupils who have additional needs.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils currently in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Due to the small numbers of pupils in each year group, attainment figures in the national tests for pupils

at the end of Year 2 vary year-on-year. This year, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

- At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is usually above the national average, although in 2014 it dipped to slightly below average. This is because, although pupils were supported to make good progress in Years 5 and 6, there remained gaps in their learning as a result of previously weaker teaching in the earlier years in Key Stage 2. This has now been eradicated. Work in pupils' books and the school's own records of pupils' progress confirm that pupils' attainment has improved this year.
- The outcomes of the 2014 Year 6 national tests show that most pupils made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, but few did better than this. Careful tracking of pupils' progress indicates that the proportion of pupils achieving more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, is now similar to the national average.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reach the required standard in the national screening check for phonics is above the national average. Older pupils read well and enjoy the range of books available at school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants. Their additional needs are identified early, effective strategies are put into place and their progress is closely checked. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to make any meaningful comparisons of their attainment and progress with other pupils in the school or other pupils nationally. However, the school has received an award for successfully narrowing gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school. School records show that the majority of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they are given effective extra help when it is needed.
- In the 2014 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Tasks in lessons are not always hard enough for the most-able pupils. Although they make good progress, they do not always achieve as well as they could. Inspection evidence confirms improvement in the achievement of the most able, with almost half the current Year 6 pupils working at the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics.

### Early years provision

is good

- Children transfer to the early years from up to 15 different nursery settings. They enter with a range of skills and knowledge that vary between broadly typical and below those typical for their age. Progress is good for most Reception children and for some it is excellent. An above average proportion of children now reach a good level of development and most are ready for the move into Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Adults skilfully question children to encourage them to think carefully and share their ideas. For example, children had to imagine what type of magical land lay beyond a sharp bend in the road. They eagerly discussed ideas with each other and could hardly wait to share with other members of the class. The teacher sensitively reminded children of the need to listen to each other and take turns in speaking. The strong emphasis on activities to promote social and communication skills supports children to make good progress from their starting points in all of the areas of learning.
- Leadership is effective. The classroom is organised well and the outdoor area provides children with many opportunities to investigate and explore within the limitations of the space available. Opportunities for children to develop number and letter skills outdoors are limited but there is a determination by the leader of the early years to tackle this.
- Children enjoy working with their friends and their behaviour is good. The caring staff make sure children are kept safe. Assessment is secure and the work collected in children's learning journeys is used successfully to identify progress. This helps build a comprehensive picture of each individual's development, enabling staff to identify children with any additional needs quickly.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents are highly involved in the early education of their children. This is achieved through sharing information about their children's progress and their achievements, at home and at school. Staff give talks and provide information about how to support children's learning in specific subjects, so that parents can help their children to achieve well both at home and in school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105700
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	461741

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Cartwright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kirsten Swift
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 770 5970
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