

St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Redhouse Lane, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 1BX

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress pupils make is beginning to accelerate in some areas of the school, for example in Years 5 and 6. However, it is not yet fast enough across all year groups and in a range of subjects.
- Across the school, the most able disadvantaged pupils do not make strong progress in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve, including for writing and spelling and in the presentation of their work.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Where teaching is less effective, pupils' work is not always matched to pupils' ability.
- Leaders have successfully developed a caring and welcoming school. However, leaders have not created a culture of high achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Over the last two years, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check has been below average.
- Leaders' views of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning over time are not always accurate. Leaders check teaching and pupils' work books, but have not focused well enough on the difference that teaching is making to pupils' progress from their starting points.

The school has the following strengths

- Led by the headteacher, all staff work extremely well as a team. They form strong relationships with pupils.
- The school has a caring and welcoming ethos. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- Children in the early years make good progress in their learning and development.
- Close attention is paid to pupils' social, moral and personal development, and this enables them to become more confident learners.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to make good progress.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and speak enthusiastically about how well they get along with each other. They demonstrate qualities of empathy with, and respect for, others' needs and points of view.
- Strengths in teaching in upper key stage 2 mean older pupils make progress that is more rapid than in Years 3 and 4. In 2016, pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average across subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing, spelling and the presentation of their work
 - teachers provide pupils with work that is challenging in all subjects, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - teachers' teaching and feedback help pupils to know what they are doing well and enable pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve their work
 - the teaching of phonics is strengthened so that a higher number of pupils reach the standards expected of them.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on teaching and on pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are raised
 - using the good practice seen in some areas as a model to enable all teachers to improve more rapidly
 - establishing accurate systems to check regularly on pupils' progress, including variances in the achievement of different groups of pupils, so that underachievement is swiftly identified and acted upon and pupils catch up quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders routinely monitor important aspects of the school's work, for example by observing lessons and checking teachers' assessments. Crucially, however, they do not use this information well enough to ensure that they have an accurate or fully rounded view of the school's strengths and the areas needing further work.
- Senior leaders judge the quality of teaching to be good, despite the slow progress of some groups of pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the low targets that are set for pupils to achieve are measured as a success when they are reached. Leaders do not use the full range of evidence available, such as the quality of work produced over time in pupils' books and in a range of subjects, to check that expectations are high and teaching is good enough.
- The school's own tracking information shows that pupils' attainment by the end of each year is below that which most pupils should achieve. Leaders have identified those pupils who are at risk of not meeting expectations, but actions taken to make improvements are not ensuring that progress is fast enough.
- Leaders do not track the progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, as a group. As a result, they do not know if these pupils are being challenged sufficiently to achieve their best.
- Leaders have made effective use of the pupil premium funding to provide support for pupils whose attendance is not good enough. As a result, this area of the school's work is improving. Leaders track the progress of those pupils who are disadvantaged, although the difference between their achievement and that of others nationally has not yet diminished quickly enough.
- Not all aspects of the school's website were up to date at the start of the inspection. However, leaders were able to show that the information needed was in the school, and they updated the website by the end of the inspection.
- Staff morale is high. The headteacher has created a committed leadership team and has ensured that leaders are well supported in developing their skills to monitor important areas of the school's work. This is having a positive impact in a number of areas of the school, including the improvement in behaviour and rates of attendance.
- Middle leaders have received appropriate support to develop their leadership skills. They are now confident about monitoring the impact of their work and recognise that progress across the school is not good enough. They know what they want pupils to achieve and that more needs to be done to accomplish this.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Through the work of effective teaching assistants and well-structured interventions, most of them make good progress. The school is developing innovative ideas to support pupils with challenging behaviours, but these are very new and it is too soon to see the difference that these may make.

- Leaders' promotion of pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour is a strength of the school. Persistent absence rates are still too high, but leaders work very hard to try to improve this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a range of areas.
- The primary sport premium is used effectively to increase the number of opportunities pupils have to attend sporting competitions. It is also used to provide specialist support to teach physical education and help improve pupils' fitness at lunchtimes.
- The local authority has provided valued support to the headteacher and governors. This has helped the school to develop the skills of middle leaders to monitor and evaluate progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of interesting topics from which to learn. This provides many opportunities, so that pupils' interests and talents are well catered for. The curriculum teaches pupils to understand right and wrong, to get along with other people and to understand the similarities and differences of life in different cultures. Pupils learn about democracy through the election process for the school council as well as through the curriculum. This helps prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the school.
- Governors work closely with leaders and visit the school regularly. They know that a key strength of the school is the care and support that it provides.
- Governors have a good understanding of the priorities for the school and ensure that resources are focused on the right areas. For example, the pupil premium funding is used to employ a parent support mentor and a behaviour support mentor to target pupils' social and emotional well-being and improve attendance.
- Governors are deeply committed and work hard to make improvements in the school. The chair of the governing body leads the team with passion and ensures that it has the skills and training to provide the right balance of support and challenge for school leaders.
- Governors use the support of the local authority to help inform judgements about progress. However, they are not always clear about how this compares to performance in other schools.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know all of the pupils and their families well and manage their welfare and care robustly.
- The school has a rigorous system for referring pupils who cause concern to which all staff contribute. Referrals alert the safeguarding team to any issues or concerns. These are routinely followed up and rigorously monitored. A series of well-thought-out steps result in issues being escalated when necessary. The very careful monitoring of the outcomes of every referral ensures that loopholes are closed, prompt action is taken and careful records are maintained. Staff show great concern for the welfare of each child.

- High numbers of pupils are referred for local authority additional support. The school is relentless in following up any concerns for individual pupils and their families.
- Staff make every attempt to remove barriers in order to help pupils and their parents feel safe and secure in school. Parents demonstrate confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe.
- Pupils say that adults in school take care of them and that school is a safe place to learn and play.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching varies in quality across different year groups. Work seen in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books, and in the school's records of teaching and learning, confirms this. As a result, the improvement recommended by the previous inspection has only partly been achieved.
- Some improvements are beginning to be seen, especially in the progress that older pupils make in English and mathematics. However, in other parts of the school, too few pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing, mathematics and science. At times, work lacks challenge and teachers do not consistently use assessment information to match work to the needs of pupils.
- New approaches to teaching are not sufficiently embedded across the school. For example, new strategies introduced to help improve writing are not being implemented consistently.
- Pupils' books, especially in subjects other than English, show that they do not always take pride in the presentation of their work. Standards of handwriting and spelling are poor where expectations of what pupils can achieve are low.
- Some teachers do not consistently use approaches that engage all pupils and encourage them to produce lively and interesting writing. As a result, pupils can sometimes be uninterested and lose concentration. When this happens, the content of their work suffers.
- Although the teaching of phonics is organised well, the standards that pupils reach are too low. Pupils' ability to translate the sounds into writing is weak, and the progress they make is slowed.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. This means that most lessons run smoothly. Teaching assistants make positive contributions to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm keeps pupils interested. Pupils are inspired by the work set and make good progress in their learning and skills as a result.
- In some classes, particularly of the youngest and the oldest pupils, effective teaching is contributing to strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of the work produced in these classes is sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy reading and persevere when given a difficult or challenging text. Many pupils read fluently and with interest and understanding. The school has been

successful in encouraging most pupils to read at home frequently. The well-resourced library provides a good range of books and is helping pupils to develop a love of reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They work hard and are keen to do well.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and most parents agree. Staff work relentlessly to ensure that they provide a safe and caring environment for the pupils. Visitors, such as the NSPCC, theatre groups, local fire officers and police, complement the work of teachers in developing safety awareness.
- The school's curriculum supports pupils to understand the skills that will help them learn best. For example, in lessons pupils are taught how to be more 'resourceful' or 'resilient' so that they can learn independently.
- Carefully planned activities throughout the school ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of risks and how to manage them. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils are taught about road safety, fire safety and helped to develop an awareness of the dangers of drugs. They also learn about risks from social media, including when using the internet. An understanding of online safety is supported through assemblies and work involving the use of computers in classes.
- Most parents who spoke to inspectors were very supportive of the school and two thirds of those who completed the survey would recommend it to others.
- Pupils value the extra responsibilities they are given, for example as school councillors. Older pupils help others to sort out problems during playtimes and lunchtimes. This helps them to develop maturity and confidence. Pupils are proud to know that they make a positive difference and feel valued.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They recognise that they have responsibilities as well as rights and are able to explain the consequences of wrong actions. They speak very perceptively about how they value, accept and respect pupils' differing views and qualities. They report occasional incidents of poor behaviour but say things get sorted out very quickly because adults are always on hand.
- Pupils say bullying is rare because they are taught to manage and express their feelings in a sensible way.
- The school's religious denomination is used to develop a sense of spiritual awareness. Prayers in assembly help pupils think about friendship and peace. Pupils are encouraged to think about how teachings from The Bible can be used to interpret modern life.
- Pupils are taught about the rights of all to freedom and justice. They are helped to develop an understanding of fairness through discussions about actions taken by individuals like Malala Yousafzei and Rosa Parks, who have spoken out about their beliefs.

- In some classes, and in some subjects, pupils do not make sure that their work is well presented.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour incidents are meticulously recorded and any concerns tackled through carefully managed support.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and helpful to visitors. They show respect and good manners during discussions and at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- In the playground, pupils play together well. They know the school rules and act within their limits.
- Where challenging behaviours arise, the school has put into place robust systems to support pupils and minimise disruption. Governors have directed resources to support pupils whose behaviour can prevent them and others from learning. An alternative teaching space called 'The Base' enables pupils who are having a difficult day to have extra support, helping them to manage their feelings before rejoining their learning activities.
- Although the behaviour policy is out of date, leaders are able to articulate the many initiatives they have in place that have brought about the improvements.
- When teaching is interesting, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning, good levels of concentration and a keenness to learn. However, where teaching is weaker and work is not always matched to pupils' ability, some pupils lose interest and become restless.
- Staff support pupils to learn how to manage their feelings and responses. The school teaches pupils special words to help them understand different emotions and also to help pupils explain how they feel.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress that pupils make is not improving quickly enough in some subjects and classes. This is due to the variability in the quality of teaching and low expectations for some pupils.
- Children often start school with levels of ability well below other pupils of a similar age. They begin to make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the Nursery and Reception Years. However, after this, pupils' good progress starts to slow down and does not pick up again until pupils are in upper key stage 2. This means that differences in pupils' learning are not being closed quickly enough to enable pupils to achieve what is expected of them.
- The standards that pupils reach in phonics by the end of Year 1 are not high enough. Recent actions taken to accelerate progress are not sufficiently embedded.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is below that of all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards improve and pupils are almost reaching what is expected for this age group in reading and are just below for

writing and mathematics. This is due to the good-quality teaching that older pupils receive, enabling them to start to catch up quickly.

- Pupils' books show the variations in progress over time between some classes and groups. This reflects the inconsistencies seen in teaching. Pupils' work shows that the standards of writing are not as good as they should be.
- Disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up receive extra help to support them. This is having a positive impact on behaviour and attendance. However, pupils do not always make progress rapidly enough in their learning and outcomes are variable over time. Gaps are beginning to close at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. At the end of key stage 1, only a few disadvantaged pupils reach the standards that they should in reading and writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional help and support. This helps them to make good progress from their different starting points, especially in their reading and mathematics.
- Pupils develop the positive attitudes and personal skills they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils are beginning to acquire and develop the confidence and skills to stay healthy and keep safe.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. The leader is having a positive impact on improving the progress that pupils make. Staff are well supported with good-quality supervision and performance management from leaders. Their self-reflective approach means that standards of teaching are continuously improving.
- Most children start school in the Nursery with skills that are well below those typical for their age. The school's assessment information shows that by the time they leave, children in the Reception Year have made good progress in most areas of learning. Actions taken are helping children to prepare for Year 1 and the next steps in their development.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are picked up quickly and activities planned to provide appropriate support from an early stage.
- Teaching is good. Relationships between children and staff in the early years are strong. Children are keen to try their best and they respond well to the careful instructions and guidance from staff. A wide range of well-planned, stimulating activities and experiences encourage children's enjoyment and curiosity.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported. This is demonstrated in the rapid progress that children make when they first join the Nursery. Some children who have only been in school for a very short time very quickly adjust to the expectations and routine.
- Work to involve parents in their children's learning has been successful. Parents talk positively about how much their children enjoy school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Adults ensure that the environment is secure and the children are confident in using the resources and the space to help them learn. Rigorous systems are in place to keep children safe. The early years leader

understands all the requirements and procedures for safeguarding and staff are fully up to date with all the necessary training and induction processes.

School details

Unique reference number	106104
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10024091

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr Sean Powell
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Whitehead
Telephone number	0161 430 3418
Website	www.st-marks.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-marks.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets, by the end of the inspection, requirements on the publication of information about the phonics and reading scheme used on its website.
- The school is larger than average, but the number of pupils on roll has fallen because of the expansion of other schools in the area.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is similar to other schools nationally.
- Just over a third of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is higher than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school met the floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations of

pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics set out by the government.

- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.
- The early years comprises a mixed-aged Nursery class and Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. During the second day of the inspection, observations were conducted jointly by the lead inspector and the deputy headteacher and headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior, phase and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes.
- The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with inspectors.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning.
- Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via 19 responses made to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- The 13 views expressed by parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Parents' comments communicated via free-text and in face-to-face discussions during the inspection were examined.

Inspection team

Cathy Parkinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Ann Gill	Ofsted Inspector

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