

St Chad's CofE Primary School

Gladstone Street, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 4AT

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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 good school

- Leaders and governors have instilled a sense of ambition that is strongly based on the school's Christian values.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved through leaders' focus on high-quality staff development.
- Leaders' thoughtful promotion of pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils exhibit resilience and perseverance in all aspects of their work.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good. This is evident in pupils' books and in their ability to solve problems using their reasoning skills.
- Pupils' phonic skills provide them with a good grounding for their reading. There has been an improving trend in outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Although pupils make good progress in their writing, some of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils are not fully challenged to achieve the highest standards.
- Governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask probing questions about pupils' outcomes. However, they do not question the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils well enough to evaluate the impact it has on pupils' progress.
- Teachers plan engaging lessons based on clear and accurate assessments of pupils' prior learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of the excellent nurture that they receive. They are supported in class by highly effective teaching assistants.
- Middle leadership is improving because of the effective training and support that these leaders receive from senior leaders.
- Pupils behave well in school. Older pupils make significant contributions to the school community by leading playtime activities and acting as buddies to younger children.
- Children in the early years make good progress. However, some children are too dependent upon adult support when they should be finding things out for themselves.
- Attendance, although improving, is below the national average.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 require improvement. Despite the current good progress of pupils, there are still gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is due to a legacy of weak teaching.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - the school focuses more effectively on addressing gaps in learning to improve outcomes at the end of key stage 2
 - there is greater challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they achieve the highest standards in writing
 - pupils make more rapid progress in writing by addressing common spelling and grammatical errors.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early years by:
 - ensuring that the quality of learning tasks in the early years are further improved to make sure that children are challenged and engaged by these activities.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - ensuring that governors focus on evaluating the impact that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has on their progress.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - ensuring that more pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have worked together to ensure that this school has risen from the ashes of its previous underperformance. They have set a culture of ambition that is grounded in the school's Christian values. Pupils have higher aspirations for both their work and their future. Consequently, they make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress that pupils make does not allow some pupils to make up for the lost ground and gaps in pupils' learning persist.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge informs clear plans for improvement. They rightly identify the positive relationships within the school community as being very strong, particularly relationships between staff and pupils.
- Leaders have invested heavily in staff development to turn around the school's fortunes. Staff appreciate the guidance that they receive to improve their teaching skills and leadership roles. Leaders have established an effective system of peer support so that teachers can develop their practice by learning from others. The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in coaching other staff alongside external training opportunities. The result of this is the emergence of effective teaching, particularly in mathematics, and strong middle leadership of subjects. Staff trust leaders' accurate monitoring. As a result, staff value working as part of a team where everyone is pulling in the same direction.
- Senior leaders have empowered teachers to bring the curriculum to life by planning learning around imaginative and engaging topics that directly address the requirements of the national curriculum. Middle leaders effectively monitor the implementation of the curriculum which is backed up by a programme of extra-curricular activities. Leaders carefully choose these clubs to complement the school's values, such as taekwondo, which promotes pupils' self-discipline and respect for others.
- Senior leaders' and governors' use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils successfully enables them to make good progress in their learning from their starting points. However, the focus of the funding does not challenge some of the most able learners to achieve the highest standards.
- Leaders have effectively targeted the use of their sports funding to provide extra swimming in all year groups. This was in response to an audit that told them that many pupils could not swim sufficiently well despite there being areas of open water in the locality and is another example of how leaders put a great deal of thought into all aspects of the curriculum. In addition to this, the school buys into the local sports partnership, which provides pupils with opportunities to compete in a range of sporting events. This has helped pupils raise their aspirations and to work as part of a team.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been built from the ground up. The school's family support worker and inclusion leader work seamlessly to provide support for pupils and their families. Leaders use any additional funding to provide a bespoke plan of academic and nurture support for

pupils from highly effective staff who receive specific training for their roles. The progress that these pupils make in all aspects of their learning is good.

- The local authority and Diocese of Chester have invested heavily in this school. Their support has been vital in ensuring that the school receives regular feedback on their performance from a national leader of education. The impact of these partnerships has assisted senior leaders in bringing about effective change at the school.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain because of the strong emphasis that leaders place on pupils' understanding of equalities and British values. Pupils do not only articulate their understanding and respect for others but show it in their actions and their points of view. This is due to the outstanding provision the school provides for their personal development.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been a driving force in setting the vision for school improvement. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that aspirations across the school have been raised.
- Governors have a clear understanding of school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask probing questions to challenge the headteacher. This approach has been used to good effect to hold senior leaders to account. They have a good understanding of how the school makes decisions about teachers' performance and make good use of the advice from external support when managing the performance of the headteacher.
- However, governors have not addressed the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and its impact with the same rigour as other aspects of the school's development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding practices are a strength of the school. Leaders, including governors, are highly committed to ensuring that all of the pupils in their care are safe from harm. Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained regularly in spotting the signs and symptoms of abuse and that they remain vigilant at all times.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the lessons they receive that teach them how to keep themselves safe. They have regular visitors to the school to reinforce these messages. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. As part of the school's proactive approach, older pupils act as e-safety cadets to support other pupils' learning about online safety.
- Plans for pupils who are looked after by the local authority provide clear targets for pupils' achievement and well-being. Pupils' own views are effectively woven into the plans so that the support they receive is targeted effectively to meet their needs. The family support worker and inclusion leader provide a range of support for parents who speak highly about the work of the school and the impact that this has had on outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils feel that they can trust staff with any concerns that they have. Relationships between staff and pupils in the school are very strong. Of the parents responding to

Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, all agreed that their child felt safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching is now consistently good across the school. This is impacting upon pupils' progress which is visible in their work books and in the classrooms. Pupils are engaged and are eager to learn. They demonstrate very good characteristics for learning. They are resilient to failure and are persistent when solving problems. Staff are ambitious for pupils to be successful learners. Teachers develop pupils' confidence, self-esteem and desire to learn through lessons that are interesting and well matched to pupils' abilities. As one pupil stated: 'Our lessons are fun now, but we have to work hard!'
- Teachers know their pupils extremely well. They use this knowledge to plan teaching based on what individual pupils have previously learned and what they understand. Teachers' clear and accurate assessments of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding means that the identification of pupils who need additional support is effective. Teachers clearly communicate their expectations of what pupils are expected to learn and ensure that pupils know what they have to do to be successful in their work. Pupils say they value the support that they receive.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they experience the same broad range of opportunities as other pupils. Those in receipt of additional funding are given sensitive support in their classes and are integrated well. Members of staff provide a calm environment so that these pupils are confident and clear about what is expected from them. Consequently, they make good progress.
- Leaders carefully match the skills of teaching assistants to the identified needs of individuals and groups. Disadvantaged pupils who receive additional funding benefit from this focused, high-quality support. These pupils make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects including English and mathematics. However, there is little emphasis on challenging some of the most able pupils to achieve the highest standards.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils are now making greater progress in mathematics and learning characteristics are excellent. They see making mistakes as another opportunity to learn. Teachers focus on developing pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics which also brings out the best in pupils' communication skills. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use questioning skills well to make pupils think hard and move forward in their learning. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating across the school.
- Reading is taught well. There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching the sounds that letters make and this has enabled the vast majority of pupils to read fluently. Younger pupils use their phonics skills to successfully read unfamiliar words. More able, older readers read texts that are suited to their ability but they do not always question new vocabulary and so do not fully understand some of the words that they read. However, pupils enjoy their reading and display good overall comprehension of texts that are matched well to their abilities.

- Teachers ask probing questions which explore pupils' understanding and provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across a range of subjects. However, expectations are not always high enough in writing and, at times, work does not provide sufficient challenge for some of the most able pupils. Where this is the case, some pupils briefly switch off from their learning.
- Although pupils make good progress from their starting points in their written work, few make accelerated progress from their starting points. The precision in teaching is sometimes lacking as pupils' books contain spelling and grammatical errors that persist over time.
- The promotion of writing in pupils' topic work is very strong. Engaging topics capture pupils' attention and there is strong evidence of cross-curricular writing, which is often of the same standard as in their writing books. The presentation of pupils' work in these books shows that they value their learning. Teachers' clear sequencing of tasks enables pupils to gain self-confidence by succeeding in their learning and developing a range of skills across all aspects of the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is grounded in the school's strong Christian values. Leaders sometimes find it hard to articulate the impact of their work because it has become an embedded daily part of school life. However, the exceptional way in which pupils reflect on their own learning and respect the contributions of others shines through in their learning. Their excellent attitudes to learning have been central to turning the school round.
- Pupils' topic books evidence the debates that they have in class. These often touch upon current affairs or moral issues such as a Year 4 debate on deforestation. Pupils respect each other's views, which enables them to work well with others in class.
- Pupils approach their school life with positive attitudes. They have been actively engaged in determining curriculum topics and the redesigning of the school playground. This active participation has raised pupils' expectations and aspirations.
- Leaders' approach to inclusion is inspirational. The programme of support that is in place for all pupils is further enhanced by a highly effective offer of support and early help that is responsive to the needs of pupils and their families. Pupils are taught their own self-worth through celebrating effort as success and pupils demonstrate excellent learning skills.
- Pupils thrive in a nurturing environment. The school's open culture enables pupils to debate current affairs which have included how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism by discussing the recent bombing in Manchester. Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values.
- Pupils study different faiths as part of their lessons and reflection features heavily within the school. Pupils have a strong voice through their ethos group, who regularly evaluate and contribute to acts of collective worship. Pupils' cultural awareness is

evident in the excellent artwork that hangs in corridors, each display representing a colourful study of different artists. The annual residential trip to London for Year 6 helps pupils to understand British culture further and is the jewel in a well thought out curriculum that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

- The school's thoughtful promotion of equalities is evident in displays and summed up perfectly by one pupil who stated that, 'the school values help us think about how we are all different. It doesn't matter about your gender, who you love or the colour of your skin, you are all accepted.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Older pupils help to support younger pupils with their behaviour by leading play activities at lunchtimes and acting as buddies for younger pupils.
- The school has instilled confidence in pupils whose learning characteristics are very strong. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well because of the positive relationships within the school. Staff act as positive role models for pupils.
- Occasionally, a small minority of pupils switch off from their learning because of a lack of opportunities to participate in lessons. However, these children do not disturb the learning of others. Otherwise, pupils' conduct is excellent. They are friendly, welcoming and polite. They extend this to each other and represent the school's Christian views well.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than national average. Although this is improving, pupils who are eligible for free school meals do not attend school regularly enough.
- Parents have no concerns regarding behaviour or bullying in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Despite the current good progress of pupils, outcomes by the end of key stage 2 are still not good due to a legacy of weak teaching.
- Pupils' progress is significantly lower than the national average at the end of key stage 2. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is also low. Poor outcomes in published data are due to the long shadow cast by weaker teaching in the past and overgenerous assessments of pupils' skills and knowledge when they left Year 2 in 2013. Despite the marked improvements in teaching, the 2016 Year 6 cohort just had too much ground to cover to make up for the gaps in their learning.
- The current picture in school is very different to the bleak 2016 results. Leaders have turned the school round to ensure that the pupils who currently attend St Chad's make good progress from their starting points. This is improving and is evident in pupils' books in every year group.
- Many interventions support pupils to secure good progress in their reading and writing work. The most vulnerable pupils are targeted for additional support. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, because the school's focus is on plugging the gaps in pupils' learning by the end of key stage 2,

some of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged fully to make the accelerated progress of which they would otherwise be capable in their written work.

- Pupils make strong progress in their mathematics work. Teachers' effective promotion of pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills have added depth to their learning, particularly the most able pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of the additional support that they receive, both academically and pastorally.
- As testament to the steady improvements at the school, results at the end of key stage 1 are close to national averages in reading and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the expectations for their age in writing was lower than other pupils nationally in 2016.
- Results in 2016 for the Year 1 phonics screening check show a strong three-year trend of improvement.
- Pupils make good progress in science and in their topic work. Pupils' skills are developed well through a series of well-planned, progressive activities which follow engaging themes.
- All pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, demonstrate self-confidence and resilience in their learning. The result is that all pupils are happy to come to school, a view supported by the vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Pupils enjoy their learning and have higher aspirations both for their work and their future prospects. Although some gaps in pupils' learning persist, leaders' effective development of pupils' learning characteristics and their emotional and personal development have ensured that they are equipped to face the challenges of the next stage in their education.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's early years provision. There is an ambitious and sensible action plan in place for the early years which will see the school extending its age range to include nursery provision from September 2017. This demonstrates leaders' proactive and forward-thinking approach.
- Children typically enter their Reception Year with skills that are broadly average for their age, although there is consistently a small minority of children who enter with skills that are well below this. Children make good progress. Over the last three years, there has been a steady trend of improvement in the proportions of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year. Children are well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- Leaders have ensured that the funding for disadvantaged children has been targeted at developing the speech and language needs of this group in the early years. As a result of this intervention, the attainment of the early learning goals for communication and language continues to improve.

- The deployment and development of staff has ensured that children in Reception are well supported by knowledgeable and highly competent staff. The standard of teaching and learning is good, as evidenced by the progress made by the children.
- Teachers plan activities based on the accurate assessment of children's knowledge and skills. The curriculum is broad and offers a range of activities, but these are not always well defined. Children are sometimes too dependent on adults to make progress when they should be exploring learning activities for themselves.
- Children are active and inquisitive learners. They are motivated to learn. The way that they conduct themselves clearly shows that they feel safe and secure. They are well supervised and conduct themselves with confidence around the classroom. Their behaviour is never less than good and they learn well together in a busy and bustling classroom.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. All statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Parents are kept well informed through regular contact with teachers and through parents' meetings. The class teacher engages parents in their child's education and where necessary the inclusion manager and family worker support parents if there is a need to do so as part of the school's early help work. The result is that parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work done by the school.

School details

Unique reference number	111262
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10032181

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Armstrong
Headteacher	Natalie Tomlinson
Telephone number	01606 288040
Website	www.stchadsce.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@stchadsce.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has received formal support from the Diocese of Chester as well as support brokered through the local authority from a national leader of education.
- This is a smaller than averaged-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English are low in comparison to the national averages.

- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school's deprivation indicator is higher than the national average figure.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class, which included joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum as well as the results of teachers assessments of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, both individually and during class activities.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and took account of the views of 23 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with teachers about a range of issues, including safeguarding and their professional development.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority, the Diocese of Chester and a national leader of education who have been providing support for the school.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Hunter

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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