

St Theresa's RC Primary School

Whetstone Hill Road, Derker, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL1 4NA

Inspection dates

14–15 November 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The focused and effective leadership of the new executive headteacher and the new head of school has led to improvements across the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Adults provide stimulating activities that engage and interest children. As a result, children make good progress across all areas of learning.
- Phonics is taught well. Younger pupils read, pronounce and write new sounds with confidence.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful towards each other. They have very positive attitudes to learning and say that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance has improved. The vast majority of pupils are motivated to come to school.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes have declined. Standards by the end of Year 6 in recent years have been below average. Pupils have not made good progress. Pupils are now making better progress. Standards are rising, especially in English. However, pupils are still making up for previous lost ground.
- Teaching has improved considerably and is now good. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are identified and activities are planned accordingly. However, sometimes these activities do not sufficiently challenge the most able.
- Most middle leaders are relatively new to their posts. They are driving improvements in their areas of responsibility and this is raising standards across subjects.
- Pupils are given numerous opportunities to develop their English skills in subjects across the curriculum. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills are less common, and teachers also give pupils too few chances to develop their mathematical reasoning.
- New appointments to the governing body have strengthened governors' ability to support and challenge senior leaders. Governors' oversight and knowledge about the quality of teaching and of pupils' outcomes have improved.
- The vast majority of parents speak positively about the improvements made by the leadership team.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics
 - ensuring that tasks provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils to reach the highest possible standards.
- Further develop the quality of leadership and management by monitoring more closely the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and head of school, ably supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher, are ambitious for the school and its community. Staff and governors share this ambition, as do pupils. Older pupils told inspectors that they know that learning is at the heart of making their dreams a reality. Pupils aspire to work in a range of professions including the health service, law and education.
- With the strong support of the leaders and teachers from an outstanding school, the executive headteacher and head of school have brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff, including those at the early stages of their career, say they feel well supported by senior leaders. Staff get ample opportunity to discuss aspects of their teaching and learning and to share ideas. This, together with the sharing of outstanding practice, has empowered teachers to improve their own practice.
- Middle leaders have successfully implemented whole-school changes using new schemes for the planning of teaching and learning in their subjects. Middle leaders work with teachers to monitor the progress of pupils and plan individualised support when pupils need additional help. The impact is evident in, for example, the rapid improvements in pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics during the year.
- Senior and middle leaders check the effectiveness of teaching and learning through rigorous systems that are in place across the school. Leaders routinely observe lessons and check pupils' workbooks. Leaders carefully measure how well pupils are progressing in their learning. When areas to improve are identified, leaders ensure that well-planned training and support are put in place.
- Arrangements for performance management are effective. Leaders and governors challenge underperformance and have eradicated ineffective teaching.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to benefit disadvantaged pupils. There are specific interventions to support learning and to enable this group of pupils to participate in a broad range of opportunities such as a programme to develop pupils' social and emotional resilience. During the last academic year, the progress of disadvantaged pupils across most year groups was similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now used well. Teachers and teaching assistants provide bespoke support to meet the specific needs of pupils as they make progress with their tailored education plans. Leaders source external professional support from a wide range of agencies when needed and staff work well with these organisations. For the very small minority of pupils who find attending school a real challenge, bespoke timetables are in place to help them to reintegrate into their class when they are ready for full-time learning.
- Leaders use the specialist funding for physical education and sport to build pupils' confidence and teamwork. For example, there are coaching sessions from sports specialists who work with pupils and also develop the skills of staff.
- As a result of effective leadership, progress is now rapidly improving across different

subjects. This is evident in pupils' books. Pupils have more opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills through a range of different topics planned by teachers and that pupils clearly find engaging. However, opportunities to develop mathematical skills in other subjects across the curriculum are not as well developed.

- Leaders have planned and embedded a broad curriculum for pupils which includes religious education and personal, social and health education. Leaders ensure that all pupils have training in martial arts, which is very effectively used as a vehicle to learn about other cultures, tolerance and British values. A varied range of experiences, including out-of-school activities and trips, further enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences.
- Although a very small minority of parents expressed concerns around some decisions made by senior leaders, the overwhelming majority believe this to be 'an excellent school with fantastic staff' and feel that if they do have any concerns they are 'dealt with very well'.

Governance of the school

- Governors are uncompromising in their desire to reverse the decline in standards and ensure that outcomes return to their previously good levels.
- As several members of the governing body are relatively new to their roles, a review of skills was recently undertaken. This information was used to ensure that governors are best placed on a range of committees to support and challenge leaders. Furthermore, the executive headteacher has made use of external expertise to provide training and support to develop the skills of governors. All governors take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Governors work closely with leaders to ensure that all areas of the school are closely monitored, evaluated and improved. For example, they make careful checks on the use of external funding for sport and the use of the pupil premium grant.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks completed on the suitability of staff to work with children are in place. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular and appropriate training that reflects recent developments in making sure that pupils are kept safe. Staff are trained to identify any signs of abuse.
- Staff are vigilant in referring any concerns about pupils' safety to the school's designated and deputy designated safeguarding leaders. These are dealt with swiftly and, where necessary, specialist support is sought from professional agencies. Designated safeguarding leaders keep accurate records of concerns and actions taken.
- Staff work closely with pupils, their families and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Teachers ensure that pupils develop an understanding of how to keep safe beyond the school

environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders ensure that there is a high level of consistency in how lessons are taught, which means that pupils are confident with routines and expectations and respond well. Teachers are working exceptionally hard to overcome the legacy of underachievement in recent years.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes well to pupils' progress and learning. Teachers use tracking information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and to plan activities accordingly. They plan a range of stimulating and cohesive lessons, which engage pupils' interests and help to ensure that pupils' progress is rapidly improving.
- Staff received comprehensive training so that they all have a strong understanding of how to teach phonics consistently and effectively. As a result, phonics teaching has improved. Teachers use a range of strategies that maintain pupils' interest. Adults' pronunciation is clear and concise. This leads to pupils making phonic sounds accurately themselves.
- Teachers have improved pupils' reading skills across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils are taught to read with fluency and expression. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught well in English lessons and these are reinforced across a range of other subjects.
- Senior leaders are positive role models for those teachers in the earlier stages in their careers, supporting them to extend their skills and to improve their practice.
- Staff training in the school's new approach to the teaching of writing is working well. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and the quality of work has significantly improved during the last academic year. Pupils practise their writing skills across topics such as the rainforest and Second World War and improvements in pupils' handwriting is evident.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved and this is having a highly positive impact on the progress being made in mathematics by current pupils. However, although pupils in some year groups are encouraged to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics, this is not the case for all pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. Leaders work with teachers, parents, pupils and external agencies to monitor the impact of plans and adapt them accordingly.
- Teaching assistants work well in classes, supporting individual pupils and small groups of pupils. They work closely with teachers and adopt a similar, positive approach in their interactions with pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff make it a priority to nurture pupils' well-being and to help pupils feel positive about themselves. Senior leaders have introduced martial arts sessions to raise pupils' self-awareness and respect for others. These sessions are an example of how British values, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and personal, social and health education are promoted throughout the school.
- Work in books clearly shows that pupils now take real pride in their work. The school mission of 'striving to achieve our very best' is a theme which is apparent throughout the school and pupils are exceptionally proud of displays of their work.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when online or out of school. Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any concerns that pupils might have.
- Staff encourage pupils to take on additional responsibilities as members of the school council, eco-council and as play buddies for the younger children at breaktimes.
- Parents shared with inspectors how much they appreciate the support of staff in engaging with external agencies when family issues arise. There were several examples of how well the school supports not just their pupils, but also the wider family.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The new behaviour policy sets out high expectations and pupils are clear about rewards and sanctions. Pupils show respect for each other and listen well to each other's ideas in lessons.
- Good behaviour and positive manners are apparent on the playground, in the dining hall and as pupils move around the school. Pupils are polite and sensible, showing self-discipline in a range of situations.
- Attendance is now closer to the national average although there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders have introduced new attendance and punctuality policies and systems, and this is having a positive impact. The new attendance officer and senior leaders are working closely with those families whose children are persistently absent to raise awareness of how poor attendance links to poor progress and hampers pupils' life chances.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because of the impact over time of variability in the quality of teaching. The turbulence in staffing levels has affected pupils' attainment and progress so that some pupils have not achieved as well as they should in the past.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was below the provisional national average but an improvement on 2016. Progress across key stage 2 was steady rather than good. However, almost two thirds of this cohort joined the school during key stage 1 or key stage 2 and none had the benefit of the good-quality provision that is now evident in the early years. Across current year groups in key stage 2, most pupils are making good progress although they still have some catching up to do. This represents a rapidly improving picture. Similarly, standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 show an improvement on the previous year, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils in current Years 1 and 2 currently are making good progress from their low starting points.
- The school's new tracking system shows that across the school pupils' progress is accelerating. Leaders ensure that stronger outcomes at the end of the early years and in Year 1 phonics are being built upon as pupils move through the school.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was higher than the national average. This is as a result of bespoke training for teachers and teaching assistants who now deliver good-quality teaching of phonics which the pupils enjoy.
- The school has upgraded the library and has invested in a scheme to provide new reading materials at regular intervals. Pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 read to the inspectors and it was clear how well pupils use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with fluency and expression and were able to discuss aspects of what they had read. The positive impact of improvements to guided reading sessions is evident across key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils are beginning to express their ideas more fully when writing for different audiences in their English work. Leaders' scrutiny of pupils' work, alongside the tracking of pupils' progress, is showing that more pupils are now writing at the standard expected for their age across year groups, including boys and disadvantaged pupils. This is a direct result of the improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Over time, too few of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reached the standards that they should for their age and ability. However, recent changes to teaching are beginning to help these pupils make greater progress. Nonetheless, there is more to do to ensure that they gain greater depth in their learning.
- It is evident that older pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and, for example, were not secure in their reasoning skills in lessons. Leaders have successfully implemented a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants have received training to focus opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills. The use of mastery in mathematics is now addressing the needs of the most able and driving improvements in pupils' outcomes.

- Scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work in their books, listening to them read and evaluating case studies show that they are now making good progress with their learning. In Years 2, 3 and 6 disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their classmates in English. Some disadvantaged pupils also have complex needs. Leaders carefully monitor the progress of individuals and hold regular reviews of the effectiveness of interventions.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not been consistently good. As a result of training for teaching assistants who have developed their skills in supporting pupils in their learning, current pupils' progress is improving across year groups. Leaders instigate early help in conjunction with the local authority to support pupils and their families. They also work with the local authority to provide alternative provision for pupils when this becomes necessary.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter the school with skills below those typical for their age. Other than a dip in 2015, each year since the previous inspection the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved and is now closer to the national average. This demonstrates good progress being made by children.
- In 2017, over half of the Reception class joined from other nursery settings and one third of these children speak English as an additional language. A high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language reach a good level of development due to the strong support they receive in the early years. Similarly, the proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development is increasing.
- Leadership of the early years is good. There are growing links between the Nursery and Reception through the sharing of effective practice. Leaders have invested in the development of the indoor classrooms and the outdoor areas to provide a stimulating environment where children clearly enjoy learning.
- Adults ensure that assessments of children's abilities and development are quickly undertaken as they join Nursery and Reception classes. This enables the staff to introduce targeted interventions promptly, which meet each child's individual needs. This helps children to make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength in the early years. Inspectors observed how effectively teachers and teaching assistants encouraged children to recall the list of items that the bear in their story was taking on a trip to the moon. Children were able to recognise and sound out the first letter of a list of items and demonstrated their ability to blend sounds to work out unfamiliar words.
- Adults work positively and proactively together, demonstrating effective teamwork to help extend children's understanding. For example, inspired by their class story, children outdoors were using the 'mud kitchen' area to make buns to take on their trip to the moon. Teaching assistants encouraged the children to talk about how they had made their buns, which developed children's speech and language skills. Adults also asked how many buns they had made and how many would remain if a bun fell off the tray. This encouraged children effectively to develop their numeracy skills.

- A wide variety of learning opportunities are available across the indoor and, much-improved, outdoor areas. Children's enjoyment of their learning is clear.
- The behaviour of children is good. Children show respect for each other and adults. For instance, they take turns to play in different areas and help one another to fasten their aprons when working in messy areas.
- The school's partnership with parents is very positive, and parents are encouraged to engage in 'stay and play' sessions. The introduction of technology to record children's achievements is used well by staff to share with parents the progress that their children are making. Parents speak very highly of the early years staff and told the inspectors how much they appreciate receiving weekly updates on their children's progress alongside information from learning journals. Parents told inspectors that they have seen many really positive changes since the executive headteacher and head of school were appointed.

School details

Unique reference number	136825
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10032285

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Patterson
Headteacher	Chris Hanson (Executive headteacher), Helen Williamson (Headteacher)
Telephone number	0161 770 3173
Website	www.sttheresas.oldham.sch.uk
Email address	info@sttheresas.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Theresa's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils join St Theresa's other than at the usual times.

- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school were appointed in January 2017. The deputy headteacher was recently appointed.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum requirement for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several of these sessions were observed jointly with either the executive headteacher or head of school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held formal and informal discussions with pupils.
- Pupils' work in their books and also tracking records were scrutinised.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, two members of the governing body, leaders for English and mathematics, the leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and staff who have recently joined the school.
- There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to produce a report. Consideration was given to free-text responses from five parents and inspectors met with parents at the school gates to seek their views. Inspectors considered one staff questionnaire. Inspectors considered the school's recent pupil and parent survey results.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents, pupils' tracking information, subject leaders' documents, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and various records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Sandie La Porta	Ofsted Inspector

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