

Little Heaton Church of England Primary School

Boardman Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 4PU

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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 school that requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour and achievement began to drop after the last inspection. Governors and leaders were slow to react to early signs of decline. However, over recent terms, a new leadership team has begun to address the underlying issues that led to the deterioration of the school.
- Over time, the standards pupils have reached as they leave this school have not been good enough. There was a marked improvement for pupils who left in July 2018.
- Pupils currently in the school are catching up with their basic knowledge and skills. While current pupils read well and have a good understanding of mathematics, their skills in writing have not caught up as quickly.
- The rising expectations that teachers have for the standards they expect in English and mathematics are not being reflected in other parts of the curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged do not progress as well as other pupils in the school.
- There is a variation in the quality of teaching across the school which affects the progress of pupils in different classes.
- Leaders, new to the school, have brought a fresh approach to improving teaching and the quality of leadership at all levels. Teachers are working together to plan a curriculum that helps pupils progress from year to year. Teachers are also sharing the good practice that exists in the school. However, leaders of subjects and teachers lack the skills required to accurately evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning.
- Too many pupils quickly lose concentration in class. Behaviour in the playground can become boisterous and unsettling to the large majority of pupils who behave well.

The school has the following strengths

- The resolve to improve the school of the current governing body, recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher is already having a considerable impact on the quality of education.
- Children have received good-quality education in the Reception class for many years.
- The school's caring ethos has also been a long-standing and high-quality feature. Pupils are well looked after, happy and feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Governors and other senior leaders should ensure that:
 - middle leaders and teachers accurately evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning and education
 - pupils' achievement continues to improve throughout the school, and most particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - the quality of teaching is consistently strong throughout year groups and subjects, paying particular attention to the teaching of writing
 - a larger proportion of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The early signs of decline which appeared after the last inspection were not acknowledged by governors and senior leaders quickly enough. Too few governors and senior leaders asked challenging questions about why standards were declining and pupils' behaviour deteriorating. In addition, the school was slow to adapt to significant changes in the curriculum. By July 2017, there had been three consecutive years of poor progress in writing and mathematics made by pupils leaving key stage 2. Recently appointed senior leaders have worked quickly and effectively to improve the standards attained by pupils. In 2018, pupils leaving key stage 2 attained well in mathematics, while maintaining the strong standards in reading that had existed in the school for some time. Although there was an improvement in the standards reached in writing, these were still below the standards seen nationally.
- Improvements have been achieved through current leaders raising the expectations of what teachers should achieve and the extensive use of additional teaching for some Year 6 pupils, focusing on their basic knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Generally, the attention paid to these subjects has distracted teachers from ensuring that pupils received a broad education through a well-taught and balanced curriculum.
- Some parents and carers have expressed concerns about the impact the use of supply teachers was having on their children's education. This year, the monitoring of the work of all teachers has become more systematic and rigorous. Leaders have already taken steps to ensure that they tackle weak teaching and they have shown flexibility in reorganising teachers with classes, minimising the impact of teachers' absence on pupils' learning.
- The funding the school receives to help disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has, indeed, been spent on them but these funds are not generally having the effect of quickly improving their achievement. Additional funding to enhance physical education and sport is spent to good effect, broadening the range of healthy activities enjoyed by all pupils.
- Governors and the senior leadership team can evaluate accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are skilled in establishing what is important to improve and in setting clear criteria which will enable them to evaluate the progress they are making in achieving their goals. Leaders of subjects, other middle leaders and teachers are not as well skilled in judging their contributions. Their evaluations are often based on opinion and lack the rigour of referring to evidence of how well pupils are learning and behaving.
- In January 2018, governors and the very recently appointed headteacher became aware of a very large projected budget deficit. These senior leaders took decisive action to reduce the deficit, which included a reduction in staff numbers and the restructuring of responsibilities. The current deficit is now small compared to the projection made 10 months ago. The last two terms were a challenging time for all staff and it is to their credit that reducing the budget deficit so significantly was achieved while improving the quality of education across the school.
- The management of teaching is improving. Teachers feel much more involved in

improving the school because they now work collaboratively, developing the curriculum and improving their skills. Teachers are quickly developing an understanding about what is required to be taught in other years. This enables teachers to plan learning based on what pupils will have covered in previous years. Teachers' expectations of what they and their pupils should achieve are rising quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants are participating in high-quality professional development. This often takes the form of working together on specific initiatives to improve an aspect of teaching and learning. Currently, teachers are improving the way in which they teach pupils to read, and, although pupils have read well in the past, their reading skills are continuing to improve.

- The collaborative and systematic approach to curricular development has led to a rapid improvement in the teaching of mathematics across the school. Mathematics was a significant area for development identified at the last inspection. Teachers are much more confident in teaching mathematics because they support each other and discuss successful strategies for teaching mathematics. They are much clearer about how pupils' knowledge builds year on year. The proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2018 with at least the standards expected of them was about double that of 2017.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well established, of high quality and central to the school's ethos. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and most live up to very high expectations. Leaders have ensured that there is a wide range of very beneficial activities that enrich pupils' experiences and promote their personal development. In this Christian school, pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and the fact that people may have no allegiance to any religion.
- Once the local authority became aware of declining standards within the school, they stepped up their support for and involvement in the school. They have provided useful reviews on the quality of education and financial guidance and brokered support for the school from The Arch Alliance. This group has given very good support for leaders and teachers, principally to improve the quality of reading, and, more recently, with writing across the school. The local Middleton Collaborative of Schools has also provided high-quality support to the school's leadership team, and to teachers, on improving the curriculum and quality of teaching.

Governance of the school

- All but two governors currently in post have been appointed in the last 12 months, including the chair of the governing body. The current board of governors provides a wealth of very valuable experience from a diverse range backgrounds and professions. The chair has joined this governing body from a neighbouring school, which improved from needing special measures to becoming outstanding.
- Records of governance over recent years demonstrate that, until recently, governors did not ask school leaders sufficiently searching questions about the quality of education in the school. Nor did governors discuss in depth the achievement of pupils and how that matched what could be reasonably expected of them.
- The current governing body has made a major contribution to the school's recent improvement by stabilising the school's financial situation, and improving evaluation and planning. Governors know how to get the balance of challenge and support just

right.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a deep-seated culture of pastoral care throughout the school, which encourages pupils to talk about their worries and staff to listen. There is also a strong, professional culture which ensures that all staff are very well trained in safeguarding and know how they should respond to concerns.
- The designated member of staff for leading safeguarding manages procedures and processes very well. Record-keeping is detailed and informative. There are good systems in place to ensure actions, including those undertaken by other agencies, are completed effectively and on time.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across classes and across different subjects. Despite the quality of teaching improving, many pupils are currently undergoing additional support to help them catch up with learning that they had previously missed through weak teaching.
- The teaching of reading has been good for many years. However, teachers are reviewing how well they teach all subjects and are currently developing the teaching of reading. Changes include teachers using a different approach to teaching phonics and teaching key stage 2 pupils how to analyse text in more detail.
- Currently, pupils who are weak writers have mostly effective additional support to help them improve. This is compensating for weakness in classroom teaching, particularly throughout key stage 2. The headteacher has engaged external support to help teachers improve the teaching of writing across the school. It is too early for leaders to measure the impact of this initiative.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved considerably recently. Teachers have worked together to develop a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics. They have adopted a systematic approach to ensuring that pupils cover the mathematics curriculum. Pupils steadily build their skills because teachers now have a secure understanding of what pupils already know and what they now need to learn. In line with the school's policy, teachers are also using consistent methods and approaches across year groups. Pupils more frequently and adeptly solve mathematical problems to consolidate their understanding and skills.
- A significant contribution to pupils achieving well in science is the good leadership of this subject. Teachers are clear about how to teach science and even the youngest pupils are taught how to enquire into the way the world, and beyond, works. However, other subjects are not taught as well as English, mathematics, science and religious education. Teachers have lower expectations of what pupils can achieve in these other subjects. They do not ensure that pupils develop deep understanding across the curriculum and accept work of a variable standard.
- The quality of teaching is variable from class to class. The current headteacher is

taking effective action to improve teaching across year groups and subjects. There is strong practice in the school. Where pupils' achievement is at its best, teachers plan well, based on their in-depth knowledge of the curriculum, what pupils already know and what motivates them. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are clear about these. They ask pupils searching questions and set them engaging, high-quality learning activities.

- Where teaching is not as strong, pupils' standards are evidently lower than they could be, and pupils do not show pride in their achievements. A few pupils disrupt learning, at a low but distracting level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take on roles and responsibilities which promote well their personal development. This is considered to be a very important aspect of pupils' experience in Little Heaton. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities. Some represent the views of other pupils. Some run the fruit shop, while others participate in the eco-club. Activities and visitors also make a major contribution to pupils' personal development. Some participate in the Duke of York Young Leaders award. There are many sports clubs. There is a very active and popular school choir, and most pupils successfully learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils are actively involved in charity work, including supporting the local food bank.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe when out and about in their local communities and when using social media. A national children's charity works with the school, giving advice to pupils on how to stay safe. Pupils say they feel safe when in the school and that there is hardly any prejudicial behaviour or name-calling. They say bullying rarely exists and when it does, teachers deal with it very well.
- All staff take active steps to promote pupils' physical and mental health. Staff know the needs of pupils in detail and will ensure that those who need to let off steam take part in physical activities. Similarly, they know which children need reassurance or guidance and, of course, give them opportunities to talk.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Despite the school effectively promoting pupils' personal development, the attitudes some pupils have to their learning are not good enough. Too often these pupils, mainly boys, let their attention drift in lessons. They become detached from their learning and this can lead to low-level disruption to the learning of those around them. Some take too long to settle when asked to do so by a teacher, showing disrespect. This disengagement of a small, but significant, minority of pupils is reflected in the quality of the work they produce.
- Pupils move around the school calmly; they hold doors open and are happy to engage

in conversations with others younger or older themselves. Times when pupils sit down to eat are orderly and social. Most pupils play happily and harmoniously in the playground. However, the behaviour of a few can become boisterous and intimidating to others.

- Staff invest heavily in ensuring that pupils maintain a good level of attendance and most pupils respond positively. The attendance of pupils is broadly average and has been for many years. Pupils are punctual to both school and to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Phonics has, for some time, been a strong aspect of pupils' learning. With a good foundation built in the Reception Year, pupils continue to develop their phonics skills well throughout Year 1. By the end of that year, an average proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. This effective provision continues throughout Year 2. By the time pupils start Year 3, they have strong skills in reading and are also confident writers. However, since the last inspection, weak teaching across key stage 2 led to poor progress in writing. Considerable additional support was given to Year 6 pupils last year. This resulted in a considerable improvement in their writing skills. A broadly average proportion of these pupils left to start secondary school with the standards expected of them in writing. This proportion was much higher than in previous years.
- Currently, pupils are making better progress in English. However, there is still more work to be done to improve teaching, so standards in English become consistently good across all classes.
- The teaching of mathematics was an area identified as in need of improvement at the last inspection. Until very recently, improvements had little impact on the progress pupils made across key stage 2. Last year, intensive support for pupils in Year 6 had a dramatic effect on doubling the number of pupils attaining well, compared to the previous year.
- The systematic and highly effective development of the teaching of mathematics is having a big impact on the mathematical achievement of pupils currently in all years of the school. Although progress is not consistently good across all years, it is much better than it was.
- Pupils achieve well in science and religious education. Teachers have a clear strategy to develop pupils' understanding year on year. However, the standards pupils attain in other subjects are not as strong.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not quite as strong as that of other pupils in the school. The discrepancy in progress between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and so others nationally, is substantial but diminishing.
- Pupils leaving this school to join their secondary schools in 2018 were generally well prepared. They were literate and numerate. However, their standards in a broad range of subjects was not as strong as it was in English and mathematics. Most knew how to behave well and had positive attitudes to learning. They attended school well.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception class has been very well led for many years. Experienced and enthusiastic leadership ensures that staff are clear about what they are expected to do, and the standards expected of them. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces are bright and stimulating.
- Staff monitor children's development closely and accurately. Staff use this information to help them plan what children need to learn next. They are skilled in providing a good range of activities and resources to stimulate children's curiosity and engage their interest.
- Most children join the Reception Year from a wide range of nursery providers, with a few children not having attended any. Staff take great care to ensure that children's transition into the Reception class is smooth, with minimal fuss. Children settle into routines and start learning very quickly. The transition children make into Year 1 is also well managed. This is done gradually, and children quickly become used to working with different staff in different environments. Staff share well important information about children, ensuring that teachers plan purposeful learning activities which meet the needs of children.
- Good leadership, teaching and support ensure that children make good progress from starting points, which are below those considered to be typical for their age. This includes those children who are considered to be disadvantaged. Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well cared for and supported. Experienced leaders do not hesitate to make accurate assessments of the specific needs of these children. Leaders ensure that all staff understand how to support these children.
- Children are happy and safe because there are very good relationships between adults and children. Children follow instructions carefully and show good levels of concentration. They happily share resources and take turns.
- Links with parents are good. Parents say they appreciate the support they receive, particularly through meetings and workshops, which help them to support their children's learning and development at home.

School details

Unique reference number	105812
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10045892

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emerson Whitworth
Headteacher	Joyce-Louise Hulme
Telephone number	0161 6720555
Website	www.littleheatonce.co.uk
Email address	office@littleheatonce.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2014

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the school's leadership. All but two governors have been appointed over the last year. A new headteacher took up her post in January of 2018. The deputy headteacher has been in post for two years.
- The school has engaged with a wide range of external support, including from the local authority, The Arch Alliance and the Middleton Collaborative of Schools.
- The school is not expecting an inspection under section 48 of the relevant education act in the near future. The purpose of the inspection will be to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school's religious character.
- The youngest children in the school join the Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders and managers. The lead inspector met with Rochdale's director of schools and the school achievement officer.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, one of whom holds the position of chair. Inspectors also scrutinised minutes of the governing body meetings of recent years.
- Inspectors talked with pupils during their break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with teachers and teaching assistants.
- School documents were scrutinised, including: safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement, and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Reports about the school made by external bodies and agencies were also considered.
- Inspectors visited classrooms, mainly with the headteacher, to speak with pupils, to look at their books and observe their learning.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders were party to many of the inspection activities.
- Inspectors received 39 comments from parents sent by text. They also spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of 38 responses parents made to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey of parents' views. Inspectors received and took account of 19 responses from staff to an inspection survey. No pupils provided responses to their inspection survey.

Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018