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16 June 2025

Paul Sanchez  
Headteacher  
St Thomas' Church of England Primary School Stockport  
Marriott Street  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
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Dear Mr Sanchez,

**Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School Stockport**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 30 April 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents and carers any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other leaders, governors, the local authority, and the diocese the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with staff, looked at curriculum documentation and pupils' workbooks and spoke with parents. I also reviewed the single central record and the school improvement plan. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the timeliness and intended impact of the school's actions are clearer so that the school can assure itself of its progress in improving the quality of education that pupils receive
- ensure that pupils have the writing knowledge they need for the next stage of their education.

## **Main findings**

The school has experienced significant barriers to school improvement since its previous graded inspection. For an extended period of time, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 had to be transported daily to an alternative school site to continue face-to-face learning while Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) found at the school site was addressed. During this time, the school prioritised the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and ensured the impact of this disruption was minimised as much as possible.

There have also been several new members of staff appointed at the school since the previous inspection. Some of these appointments have been temporary in nature. Furthermore, a new chair of the governing body has recently been appointed to the governing body.

Since the previous graded inspection, the school has taken appropriate action to address the areas identified for improvement. For example, it has improved the support that teachers receive for delivering the phonics programme. The school has ensured that assessment information is used more carefully to inform catch up sessions for those pupils who struggle to read. The books that pupils read now closely match the sounds that they have learned. These improvements are helping to improve pupils' fluency and confidence in reading.

In 2024, pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was significantly below the national average. The school has identified the reasons for this outcome and has made a number of improvements. For example, it has ensured that staff are supported to adapt teaching to support pupils to develop security in key mathematical knowledge and skills, including arithmetic. Teachers are now using recaps of key mathematical learning in lessons that are helping pupils to learn and remember the curriculum better than they did previously

Pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation, and spelling attainment at the end of key stage 2 was also significantly below the national average in 2024. The school has recently implemented strategies to address the gaps in pupils' writing knowledge. These include a focus on letter formation, spelling and the accurate use of punctuation and grammar. However, errors in spelling, punctuation and handwriting often go unchecked, leading to repeated mistakes over time.

The school has developed its curriculum offer beyond English and mathematics to ensure that the curriculum matches the scope and ambition of the national curriculum. Several

new subject curriculums have been introduced in key stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has ensured that subject curriculums are ordered and outline the important knowledge that pupils should learn and revisit. This means that teachers know what should be taught and when this should happen. Increasingly, teachers are following the curriculum as intended and, in turn, they are designing learning that supports pupils to build their knowledge more securely than they did in the past. However, the impact of this work is varied. At times, there are inconsistencies in how effectively pupils are supported to secure their learning in lessons.

The school's work to develop assessment strategies in subjects beyond English and mathematics is at an earlier stage. Due to weaknesses in teaching and learning and weaker previous curriculums, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Not enough thought has gone into identifying missing knowledge or helping pupils to overcome their knowledge gaps, so that they have the grounding for more difficult concepts as they move through the curriculum. Consequently, these pupils are sometimes moved on to new concepts before their earlier learning is embedded.

The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. Since the previous inspection, the school has recruited new members to the governing body, who have relevant experience and expertise. This is helping governors to be increasingly confident in holding the school to account. The school has a detailed improvement plan, which outlines the actions to be taken to further improve the quality of education pupils receive at the school. This plan is regularly reviewed and evaluated to check whether the intended actions have been completed. However, the timeliness and intended impact of these actions are not clear. This makes it challenging for the school to easily demonstrate the difference that improvement actions are making over time. It also limits the school's ability to measure the impact and timeliness of these improvements.

The school is managing change well so that staff are not faced with an unbearable workload. Staff are on board and determined to further improve the school. Subject leaders have benefited from professional development in their roles. They now have better oversight of their subjects. They carry out their roles with increasing confidence.

The school places a high priority on supporting pupils' levels of attendance. It has identified the reasons for the low attendance rates of some pupils and takes swift and effective action to overcome these barriers. It works closely with parents and, where appropriate, external agencies, to support these pupils to attend school more regularly. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance are improving.

The school is making the most of the support available from the local authority, diocese, and the schools that it networks with. It works closely with a local authority adviser, who visits the school regularly. The school is using the available support and challenge well to help it move forward on its improvement journey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Chester, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Stockport local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Jewitt  
**His Majesty's Inspector**