

# St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130327
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	341024
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr H Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Rowlands
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Colville Drive Bury Lancashire BL8 2DX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, involving nine teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessments and records of pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning, monitoring records and school improvement plans. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 49 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' learning and progress, particularly in mathematics and science
- the extent to which teachers use assessment to set targets and provide challenging activities for all groups of pupils
- children's attainment on entry and their achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation systems in identifying and remedying areas for improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Although the very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, an increasing number are of Pakistani, Asian or mixed heritage. A small number of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for children aged three to five in the Nursery and Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Childcare involving a breakfast and after-school club are privately organised and subject to a separate inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

St Stephen's is a good school. The school's outstanding care, guidance and support are highly valued by parents who say, that 'teachers care for their children as though they were their own'. These factors have a significant impact on outcomes, such as pupils' behaviour and sense of responsibility, together with their understanding of safety and healthy lifestyles, all of which are good.

Pupils achieve well. Many children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment is average and improving. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.

Pupils' successful learning in lessons is attributable to good teaching based on an effective curriculum. Lessons are interesting and purposeful, and assessment is being used increasingly well to ensure that the activities provided are well matched to pupils' different learning needs. However, there are occasions when not enough is expected of more able pupils, for example, when they unnecessarily have to work through easier examples before moving on to more demanding work, or when they are not encouraged to plan their own scientific investigations. This is why some of them do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

Children benefit from the good provision made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception class. However, their learning is sometimes restricted when adults do not work closely enough alongside them outdoors or too much time is spent organising breaks and snack times.

Good monitoring and evaluation ensure that school leaders have an accurate picture of the work of the school. Ambitious leadership and the determination to move the school forward have resulted in stronger teaching, quicker progress and higher attainment since the previous inspection. These factors give the school its good capacity for improvement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By 2011, improve the progress of more able pupils, by:
  - ensuring that their needs are specifically addressed in lesson planning
  - providing them with sufficient challenge throughout lessons
  - encouraging pupils' initiative and independence, particularly when they are engaged in scientific investigations.

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- By 2011, enhance children's learning experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
  - limiting the time for snacks and breaks in Nursery
  - ensuring regular outdoor learning support for children in the Reception class.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning are good. In lessons, pupils listen attentively, answer questions enthusiastically and work with good concentration. They show maturity in solving problems together, such as designing adverts in Year 4 and testing materials to make sunscreens in Year 3. Pupils are highly motivated to learn for themselves, for example, by researching information, using computers, to answer questions on fruits and seeds in Year 5. Progress in reading and writing has been good over recent years and better than in mathematics. However, strategies implemented to improve pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills have boosted progress in mathematics to good levels. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas develop securely across the school. Younger pupils, particularly in Year 1, develop good investigation skills but this is not built upon as well as it could be beyond Year 3, for example, by challenging more able pupils to work independently in planning their own investigations. Pupils who require learning and language support make good progress and achieve their targets. In the past, boys have outperformed girls but the gap has now been closed.

The school is a happy and harmonious community in which pupils behave well and show respect and courtesy towards other faiths and cultures. Their enjoyment in learning is reflected in improving attendance which has risen to above average this year. Pupils show good social and moral awareness and disapprove of bullying and racism. Good spiritual development is evident in their imaginative art work and capacity for reflection. The conscientious way in which they carry out their responsibilities, for example, as councillors, play leaders and school advocates, illustrates their good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to avoid dangers such as traffic, water and fire and know that a good diet and plenty of exercise are essential to leading healthy lifestyles. They have secure and improving literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and understand how to improve their own learning. These factors are helping to secure their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Lessons are thoroughly prepared, well organised and effectively managed. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and reflect on their achievements at the end of each lesson. Very effective use is made of interactive whiteboards, real objects and equipment, to help pupils to visualise and understand complex ideas, such as life-cycles of plants in Year 5. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and agree on answers and solutions. This approach significantly improves their reasoning and language skills. The use of assessment has improved since the previous inspection. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not plan too far ahead to ensure that lessons can be adjusted in relation to pupils' understanding. Pupils' work is marked constructively and targets are set to help them to know what they need to do to improve. The use of assessment to provide activities closely matched to pupils' different levels of understanding is also improving. However, there is still more to do to ensure that the needs of more able pupils are fully considered when lessons are planned.

The curriculum provides a good balance of academic, creative and social learning opportunities. An effective personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. Enjoyment in learning is evident in the colourful displays of pupils' work and photographs of interesting topics, including visits and visitors. Teachers seize upon opportunities to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were excitedly solving mathematical problems related to the 'World Cup'. A good range of out-of-school activities, including sport, drama and music, enriches pupils' experiences and nurtures their interests. Well managed 'catch up' classes ensure that pupils do not fall behind. On

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the whole, the curriculum matches most pupils' needs well, although those of more able pupils are not fully met on every occasion.

Pastoral care is excellent. The needs of pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are paramount and extremely well understood. Highly effective counselling anticipates, usually prevents and often eliminates pupils' social and emotional difficulties. Trusting partnerships between staff, parents, carers and outside agencies ensure that pupils are protected and barriers to learning are dismantled. Everything possible is done to sustain pupils' confidence when they begin school, move classes and transfer to secondary school. Sensitive, well-understood systems are in place to ensure good behaviour and attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher's vision, direction and sensitivity motivate staff and drive the school forward. The leadership team and subject leaders provide enthusiastic and effective support. The school's work is kept under constant review. Lessons are observed, pupils' work examined and assessments carefully analysed. This enables the school to make an accurate self-evaluation and identify weaknesses, which are converted into priorities and actions in the school improvement plan. Challenging targets have been set and exceeded. As a result, mathematics has improved substantially. Governors provide good support by sharing their personal expertise, in education, buildings and finance and their monitoring of pupils' progress, which enable them to hold the school to account. The school maintains good communications and trusting relationships with parents and carers. Strong partnerships with the local authority and health professionals have helped the school to raise attainment and keep pupils safe. Diligent safety checks of the school premises, along with clear recruitment procedures, make a strong contribution to good safeguarding. Equality is assured by challenging stereotyping, preventing discrimination and analysing the progress of different groups to close any gaps. Girls are now performing as well as boys and the school is rightly turning its attention to the needs of more able pupils. Community cohesion is effectively promoted. The school is a diverse and inclusive community that celebrates other cultures and reaches out to work with schools in different circumstances. The school's self-evaluation shows the next step is to extend its global links.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and reach the learning goals expected in all areas, except in emotional, social and writing skills. Children behave well, know how to keep safe and understand the importance of hygiene. Provision is good. Children benefit from a stimulating range of practical, first-hand experiences. Accurate observations and assessments are made of children's learning, which teachers and support staff are increasingly using to identify the next steps. Good teaching of small groups of children enable them to learn letters, sounds and numbers successfully. Although the curriculum is good, time is sometimes wasted on organising snack time in the Nursery and outdoor learning in Reception is not always supported sufficiently by adults. That said, outdoor provision is extensive, imaginative and very well structured, not least the garden area in which food crops are grown and converted into soup. Good leadership and management are reflected in the strong links with parents and carers, good transition to Key Stage 1 and in the effective use of data to track children's progress. Action plans identify the correct priorities, although they are light on detail, which makes it harder for leaders to accurately measure success.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Of the minority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires, the very large majority are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are happy with teaching, leadership and management and their children's overall school experiences. Parents and carers greatly value the way the school keeps their children safe, encourages them to have a healthy lifestyle and prepares them for the future. The very large majority feel that behaviour is well managed and are confident that the school welcomes their suggestions and helps them to support their children's education. Most parents and carers believe that their children make enough progress. Inspectors agree with these positive views but their findings indicate that more able pupils could make better progress if challenging activities were provided consistently.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	69	15	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	63	18	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	51	21	43	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	45	24	49	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	51	23	47	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	41	24	49	4	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	53	22	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	37	30	61	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	43	27	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	24	32	65	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	27	34	69	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	39	29	59	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	49	22	45	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, Bury, BL8 2DX

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome and for answering the many questions so politely. I would like to share the inspection findings with you.

Your school is good, just as you explained. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. However, sometimes in the Nursery the children spend a bit too long eating snacks and having breaks and Reception children do not always get enough support from adults when they work and play outside. By the end of Year 6 attainment is average. Your work in English has been good over recent years. Inspectors can now see improvements in mathematics. Most of you make good progress from where you started. However, some of you who find it easier to learn could reach higher levels if all your lessons were equally challenging, particularly in science.

Much of your good learning is due to good teaching. Teachers assess your learning carefully, set targets to help you to improve and mark your work helpfully. Teachers work hard to plan an interesting curriculum that includes educational visits and many after-school activities, which makes your learning enjoyable. Staff provide you with excellent care. They keep you safe and give you lots of support. You repay their kindness by behaving well, attending school regularly, acting responsibly, staying safe and trying to keep healthy. Your headteacher and other leaders do a good job. The school runs smoothly and leaders are always trying to make improvements.

To help your school to improve even further I have asked your headteacher, teachers and support assistants to:

- ensure that activities for more able pupils are always challenging
- take every opportunity to increase the learning of children in the Nursery and Reception class.

Yours sincerely

Mr Colin Smith

Lead inspector

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