

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

Colville Drive, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 2DX

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Standards have risen over the last two years to average in Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Pupils' progress is regularly checked and any pupil at risk of falling behind is given additional support.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants supports pupils sensitively and effectively. This helps pupils with disabilities and special educational needs to do well.
- Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding make good progress and their achievement is good.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are excellent. Pupils have an advanced understanding of how they can keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Changes made to the way subjects are taught have improved achievement and made learning more enjoyable for pupils.
- Good links with parents make sure they are partners in their children's education.
- The headteacher manages teachers very well to secure constant improvement in pupils' achievement.
- The governors hold the headteacher accountable for improving the school by asking challenging questions and visiting regularly to check how well it is performing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to use their speaking skills to improve their writing. There is limited scope for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to solve mathematical problems across the curriculum.
- Marking is not consistent in providing pupils with their next steps in learning. Not enough time is planned for pupils to reflect on their achievement and establish their targets for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team, a representative from the local authority and three groups of pupils.
- Evaluations of a range of school documentation contributed to the inspection judgements. This included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The views of parents were secured by analysing 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and meeting a cross-section of parents.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

John Elwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Stephen's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The percentage of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is above the national average. (The pupil premium grant is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been three changes in teaching staff and single-age classes have been re-established. During the inspection, one newly qualified teacher was in post.
- There is a before- and after-school club; it is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching throughout the school by:
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback so that it is consistent in providing pupils with realistic but challenging ways of improving their work
 - enabling pupils to regularly check and reflect on their own achievement and deepen their understanding of how to improve their work.
- Secure the pupils' improved progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - building on the good work in lessons that promotes speaking and listening in providing more regular opportunities for pupils to use these skills in their writing
 - establishing a clear policy that enables and encourages pupils to apply their good basic skills in mathematics to solve problems in new contexts.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. A high proportion of children start school with much less well-developed skills than expected for their age, especially in speech and language. Good teaching leads to good progress but despite this, by the end of Reception, standards are just below average overall.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 are now average. The results of the national screening check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 pupils improved notably in 2013.
- In Key Stage 2, standards were average in 2012. In 2013, robust data held by the school, and substantiated by the local authority, indicate that pupils in Year 6 reached standards that exceeded expectations. A high proportion gained high National Curriculum levels in mathematics.
- The rate of progress is accelerating rapidly. The improvement is due to the decisions to adopt new approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and to the better use of assessment information.
- In Key Stage 2, the proportion exceeding the expected rate of progress in 2012 was above the national average. Progress in writing and mathematics is accelerating quickly and the gap with reading is closing rapidly. Standards in reading are a strength of the school and are better than average overall.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of well-planned support and regular checks on how well they are doing. The needs of more-able pupils have been targeted since the previous inspection; as a result, their achievement has risen and is now good.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) is slightly below that of non-FSM pupils but the gap is narrowing. Pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium do well and reach standards that are better than those of similar pupils nationally. This is because the money has been spent on learning programmes that are tailored to their specific needs. Extra adults have enabled the return to single-age classes and improved individual teaching for these pupils.
- There is comprehensive participation of all pupils in physical education and sport. Considerable success has been gained in inter-school competitions, for example in cricket and football. This aspect of the school's work has a very good effect on promoting healthy lifestyles and good physical well-being. Most pupils reach the performance levels of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching is good

- There are many strengths to teaching. Teachers regularly check on the standards reached and the progress made by every pupil. This process ensures that any who could do better is identified and supported to accelerate their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very good role models for pupils. They form excellent relationships with them and encourage highly positive attitudes to learning, as well as warm and meaningful friendships with classmates.
- In the very best lessons, teachers fire the pupils' love for learning. They ask searching questions and plan exciting activities.
- For example, the imaginations of Year 1 pupils were stimulated when they were 'transported to the classroom beach'. Pupils explored seaweed, paddled in water and felt the sand with the sounds of seagulls in the background. A wide range of new vocabulary was introduced and pupils developed a better knowledge of adjectives.
- The teaching of phonics is good. A well-planned approach is followed consistently by all staff. Pupils of all ages show an enjoyment for reading that is evident in the way they talk about their

books. There are occasions, though, when discussions go on for too long, missing opportunities for developing pupils' writing skills.

- Mathematics is well taught and pupils develop a good understanding of the basic skills. The application of such skills to solve problems in different contexts is not available often enough to secure the best possible progress for all pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very effectively supported. Well-briefed, talented teaching assistants work with pupils in a sensitive and unobtrusive way. They often work with groups who need extra support, and they encourage independence so that pupils do not rely too much on their help.
- Although marking is kept up to date, pupils are not consistently given clear guidance about their next steps in learning. Too little time is given for pupils to reflect on comments made by teachers in their marking in order to correct mistakes and improve their work. This holds back progress for some pupils.
- Homework is set regularly and most parents are very enthusiastic about it. They say the homework is usually linked to the work in class and helps learning at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times, in and around school. They develop highly positive attitudes to learning and this contributes to the pupils' good academic progress.
- Pupils and parents are adamant that bullying is virtually non-existent. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying means, and the different forms it can take.
- Pupils say that they trust all staff to give them help if they need it in any way. They can raise any concerns and they know that all adults will take them seriously and do what they can to address them. This helps them feel safe and valued in school. A highly skilled teaching assistant supports pupils with behavioural and emotional needs extremely well and contributes significantly to settling pupils into school.
- Pupils take on an array of responsibilities which prepare them very well for becoming good citizens of the future. 'Play leaders and councillors' are very evident at lunchtime. They currently support lunchtime supervision and help to lead games on the playground. The school council members have described what they mean by outstanding learning and teaching, and their definitions are posted in classrooms as models to aspire to.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the event of an emergency in school. They understand about the risks of using the internet and are aware of the features of road safety, first aid and the importance of keeping their bodies fit and healthy.
- The way all pupils, including some with considerable additional needs, are totally integrated in all that the school offers is a credit to the pupils and to the school, and to its commitment to ensuring all have an equal opportunity. Pupils show a mature sensitivity and patience so that everyone feels they belong and are valued.
- The school's leaders and managers have worked closely with parents and pupils to improve attendance. Pupils are proud to get one of the many rewards for attending school regularly and classes strive to gain the coveted trophy for best attendance each week. Attendance has improved steadily in recent years and is currently average with a good reduction in absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's drive and ambition are evident in its success in raising achievement. Decisive actions improve the school where necessary. The adoption, for example, of a whole-school approach to teaching literacy and mathematics has resulted in rising standards and in good and accelerating progress for pupils.
- The headteacher has created a strong team of senior leaders who regularly and thoroughly check data on pupils' performance and observe lessons to see how well they are taught. The

information gathered is used to improve teaching. It is linked to annual procedures for reviewing the teachers' performance linked to promotion up the pay scale.

- All staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and set out pertinent targets for its improvement. Strong measures for promoting the professional development of staff keep everyone up to date and aware of approaches for improving achievement further.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It has strengths in music and sport and secures good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Excellent leadership of what is provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs secures their good achievement.
- There are strong links with parents and the local community. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school. They are well informed about all aspects of school life and receive good information about their children's academic progress and personal development.
- Good partnerships with two local churches enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Productive links with local schools mean that staff have the opportunity to share good practice and gather new ideas. Close working with the adjacent children's centre eases the transition to Nursery of children and their families.
- The local authority has supported the school extremely well. It initiates links with other schools, provides a highly detailed analysis of school assessment data and offers reviews of the school's achievement and its quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They have good systems for checking how well the school is doing. They understand what progress data show about pupils' performance and how it compares to that in similar schools nationally. Governors visit regularly to see for themselves and their findings are then reported to the rest of the governing body. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher; they are keen to ensure that her checking of the quality of teaching is accurate and linked to pay rises that reflect good performance. Governors manage the budget well. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and what difference this makes to pupils' achievement. They are very aware of the grant to promote physical education and sport, and are keeping an eye on its effect on pupils' health and well-being. All governors are trained in safeguarding and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet the nationally required standard.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	130327
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	424604

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Martin
Headteacher	Julia Rowlands
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
Telephone number	0161 7641132
Fax number	0161 7646417
Email address	sstephens@bury.gov.uk

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



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.ofsted.gov.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

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

© Crown copyright 2013

