

St Annes on Sea St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

St Thomas' Road, St Anne's, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, FY8 1JN

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership by the associate headteacher and the governing body has brought about a rapid improvement in the achievement of pupils.
- The school is well placed to improve further because of the recent rapid improvements. Teaching is good and teachers plan activities which enthuse and motivate pupils to achieve well.
- Reading is taught and promoted well across the school. Pupils show a real love for books and enjoy reading.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerating so the gap in attainment between these pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils is now closing.
- Provision in the early years is good. From typical starting points, children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of stimulating experiences which pupils clearly enjoy. Pupils benefit from a number of well-planned educational visits and visitors to the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It contributes to pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning. Their conduct around the school is exemplary.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of all types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They have given the associate headteacher strong support through a period of significant turbulence and as a result, the school is now improving rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The work provided sometimes lacks challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- The main subject leaders have not yet fully developed the skills to make thorough checks on the work of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a number of lessons. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and reviewed pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with the associate headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Information from a range of school documentation was reviewed, including the school development plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, details relating to safeguarding and information held about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) along with nine responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Elisabeth Fenwick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- Full-time early years provision is provided in the Reception class.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent through illness and an associate headteacher had been in post since October 2014. There has been considerable turbulence in staffing recently.
- The school shares its site with St Thomas' Day Nursery.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement further, particularly for the most able pupils in mathematics, by making sure that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high and the work is sufficiently challenging to build on what pupils can already do
 - teachers' marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work.
- Develop and strengthen the roles of key subject leaders by increasing the opportunities they have to monitor and evaluate how well things are going in their individual areas of responsibility, so that they can regularly and consistently check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The associate headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors, has worked hard to reverse the recent decline in standards and improve the quality of teaching. As a result, following the blip in performance in 2014, there has been a rapid improvement in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Leaders at all levels are determined to improve the quality of education for pupils. There is greater rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. However, key subject leaders do not monitor and evaluate what is happening in their individual areas of responsibility to the depth needed to bring about outstanding teaching and learning.
- The associate headteacher and senior staff have successfully tackled the widening gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally. These pupils are now catching up rapidly with others.
- Staff monitor pupils' progress very carefully and any potential underachievement is identified rapidly so that pupils can be helped to catch up quickly.
- The school makes sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and develop well. On occasion there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics, which means that they do not always make as much progress as they could. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the progress of eligible pupils through additional one-to-one support or a number of small group sessions, such as 'talk boost' and the nurture group. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early and supported through activities that are closely matched to their learning needs.
- The school has a well-structured system for the management of staff performance which is linked to training, teachers' pay and pupils' performance. Targets are set for all staff and are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet the changing needs of the school. The governors have made arrangements to review the performance management of the associate headteacher.
- The curriculum is lively and interesting with a focus on ensuring that the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught across all subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about, and reflect on their feelings about, the world around them through themes such as 'Terrific Turtles' and 'Rare Rhinos'. Many examples of pupils' writing are displayed around the school showing their maturity and depth of thought when exploring environmental and other issues. This was particularly noticeable in their very moving pieces of poetry about the plight of rhinos being poached. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by fostering good relationships and tackling all forms of discrimination.
- The school makes very good use of the primary school sports funding. Many new opportunities have been created for pupils to take up new sports such as tag rugby and indoor athletics. The school is proud of its team sports, such as football, and gives pupils the opportunity to play competitively with other schools. Teachers have had the opportunity to work alongside specialist coaches and are now more confident in teaching physical education and sport.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- The school's drive to improve attendance and punctuality has resulted in pupils' above-average attendance. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time for school and lessons start promptly.
- The local authority has provided very effective support to the school through the recent period of considerable turbulence caused by staff absences and turnover of staff. The school has worked well with the local authority to bring about the necessary improvements and as a result, the school has restored its usual good performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective and carries out all its statutory duties, including those for safeguarding. Governors know the school very well and have a good understanding about the reasons for the dip in performance in 2014. They have worked closely with the associate headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff to address the decline in achievement last year and make overall improvements to the quality of teaching. Checks made by the governing body are thorough and governors make it their business to find out what is happening in the school.
 - The school finances are well managed. Governors have a very good knowledge about how the school uses its pupil premium funding and the primary sport funding to support pupils' learning. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and teachers' performance management. They have systems in place to ensure this is linked to pay progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is sensible and safe. They show respect for one another and adults. Their good attitudes to learning ensure that they make good progress in lessons and are now achieving well. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently high attendance.
- Pupils say that behaviour is usually good but they do say that occasionally they fall out with each other when they are playing, mainly at lunchtimes. They are confident that staff sort out these incidents quickly.
- Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They talked about 'Gospel values' and how important they are in their lives. They are very respectful of others' beliefs and faiths.
- Pupils take on different responsibilities around the school. Some are very active on the school council, within which they debate issues such as reviewing the rewards system.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and when they are near roads or railways. Visitors such as the police, fire officers and road safety officers give them timely reminders of how to be safe outside school.
- Incidents of bullying are rare, but when they do occur they are recorded and dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take. They are confident that any concerns are listened to and action taken.
- The school is very diligent in keeping pupils safe in school. Visitors are checked carefully to make sure pupils are not put at risk.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is effective and leads to most pupils currently in the school making good progress. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and give clear explanations, with the result that that pupils know what they are expected to learn.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely both in school and at home. In Year 6, pupils bring in books from home to share with other pupils. Reading is highly valued in every classroom and a wide variety of books are available to pupils at all times.
- A focus on the teaching of writing has been successful. Pupils are rapidly becoming confident writers from an early age. Displays of writing and writing in books, in all subjects, show a growing maturity with writing which captures the imagination of the reader.
- The school has recently reviewed its approach to the teaching of mathematics in order to improve pupils' achievement. This is now rapidly improving: work in pupils' books shows that learning in mathematics is accelerating and more pupils are making better than expected progress. However, the most able pupils are not always given enough challenge in their work, which means they do not consistently achieve as well as they could.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide a range of valuable support for pupils of different abilities, both in lessons and in small support groups. They show a good understanding of different pupils' needs and how to help them make good progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and assess their understanding. Teachers' marking, however, does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, there were considerable dips in pupils' attainment and their progress at the end of Year 6 so the school did not meet the government's current floor standards. Attainment and progress in Year 6 was below average and significantly so in mathematics. This untypical dip in performance came about because of considerable turbulence in staffing caused through staff absences and turnover. An immediate review was carried out by senior leaders and the governing body and a recovery plan put in place, supported by the local authority.

- Evidence from lesson observations, work in pupils' books and the school's tracking records, shows that current pupils are making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the school has returned to its normal good performance. The school's predicted targets for 2015 indicate that standards are on course to be well-above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress through the early years and Key Stage 1 is good, and by Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In 2014, a very high proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 check on phonic skills (the sounds letters make).
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading. Older pupils read widely and often, and with confidence and fluency.
- The current achievement of the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is improving rapidly. However, in some mathematics lessons they find work too easy and they are not always provided with sufficient challenge.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are well met through the good support given by teachers and teaching assistants.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of the very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in reading was about two terms behind other pupils in the school and almost three terms behind other pupils nationally. In writing, it was approximately two terms behind other pupils in the school and just less than two terms behind other pupils nationally. In mathematics, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was five-and-a-half terms behind other pupils in the school and four-and-a-half terms behind other pupils nationally.
- However, this picture reflects the overall dip in performance in Year 6 last year and was untypical for this group. Over time and this year, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment and those of non-disadvantaged pupils both in the school and nationally have been and are steadily closing.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children start the early years with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age, although in the current Reception Year a small number of children started school with skills and understanding in communication and language significantly below those typical.
- All children in the early years make at least good progress. Those who start in the Reception class with skills below those typical for their age catch up quickly because the teaching is good. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above average. In 2014, a high proportion of children exceeded the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff regularly assess the children's skills to ensure that learning is directed to their needs. As a result, all children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, achieve well. Occasionally, the most able children are given tasks that are too easy or that they can already do and this slows down their progress.
- Children enjoy learning from the many and varied tasks they are given or choose for themselves. They develop good attitudes to learning. Good use is made of the outdoor area, particularly to develop physical and problem-solving skills. One group of children were building a tower with children already inside when they realised that there was no door to get out, so started to think about what to do next. Staff guide the children's learning with careful questioning which encourages them to work things out for themselves.
- The children are generally well behaved and play together well. Staff ensure that they are safe and well cared for, intervening quickly when needed.
- Effective leadership and management of the early years is having a positive impact on improving provision and practice. For example, the introduction of learning journeys (books recording what children can do) and home-school books are encouraging parents to become more involved with their children's learning.

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	119552
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	456175

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Boyce
Headteacher	Suzanne Clough
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2012
Telephone number	01253 722022
Fax number	01253 722886
Email address	head@st-thomas.lancs.sch.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 and 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 2014

