

St James' Church of England Primary School

Crossfield Road, Wardle, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 9JW

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across key stages 1 and 2 and too few pupils make accelerated progress. As a result, a significant number of pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- As a result of inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching, pupils' progress varies across different year groups in key stages 1 and 2 and is too slow in some.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not consistently move them on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- The feedback that teachers give to pupils during lessons and through marking in books does not clearly and consistently address pupils' mistakes and misconceptions. As a result, pupils sometimes repeat errors and this slows their progress.
- Leaders have introduced a range of curriculum changes, including in mathematics and English, which are intended to raise standards. The impact of these changes has not yet been measured or evaluated in detail in order to identify which are making a positive difference to pupils' learning.
- Leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching across key stages 1 and 2 has not fully eradicated inconsistencies.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, through his energetic leadership, has secured an ambitious vision for the school that is shared by both parents and staff. All are determined to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of the school's position and are tackling weaknesses with determination and vigour. A corner has been turned and clear improvements are being made.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say that they are happy and feel safe in school. Attendance rates are consistently good.
- The school provides effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children get off to a good start at St James' because effective teaching in the early years helps them to make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and so raise standards throughout key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, are capable of achieving
 - consistently move pupils on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready, so as not to waste valuable learning time
 - ensure that written feedback in pupils' books and verbal feedback in lessons quickly and accurately address pupils' mistakes and misconceptions in order to help them to understand how they can improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - eliminate inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment across key stages 1 and 2 so that pupils make good progress in all year groups
 - accurately evaluate the impact that curriculum changes have on pupils' learning so that the school's work is clearly focused on those activities that make a positive difference to pupils' progress and attainment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's energetic and determined leadership has begun to bring about the improvements to the school's performance that were urgently needed. A number of parents commented on this, typically saying, 'The school feels more organised, more up to date and more focused on learning' and 'St James' is a great school that has seen many improvements over the last two years'.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They recognised the need for substantial reform in the way the school's curriculum, including mathematics and English, was delivered and have put strategies in place designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Results in the key stage 1 and 2 assessments in 2016 show that leaders' efforts are having a positive impact and improvements have been made in some areas, but that there is still work to be done to secure good outcomes overall. Work in pupils' books and the school's own detailed and accurate assessments show that the standards being achieved by pupils are continuing to improve.
- Leaders responsible for early years and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities provide effective leadership in their areas and, as a result, provision for those children and pupils is good. The work of subject leaders, including those responsible for English, mathematics and the wider curriculum, has helped to implement significant changes. Indications are that these changes are having a positive impact but leaders have yet to fully assess the impact of individual strategies.
- Good arrangements are in place to manage teachers' performance and leaders have set up a well-planned strategy that links school improvement and staff development needs to coaching and training opportunities. Some of the weaknesses in teaching that were identified in the previous inspection, such as in the deployment of teaching assistants, have been eliminated but there is still more for leaders to do to ensure that teaching is consistently effective across all classes in key stages 1 and 2.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to overcome specific barriers to learning experienced by the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. It is also well used to enhance their learning experiences, for example by ensuring that they have access to trips and music lessons. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are typically good and the differences between their performance and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing overall.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils say that they enjoy practical activities in particular and some of the older pupils described their excitement at dissecting a heart as part of their learning in science. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of additional opportunities, including clubs, trips to places of interest and longer residential visits. Pupils also enjoy the enrichment challenges that they get for homework.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is effectively used to ensure that

pupils have access to a wide range of sporting activities both in school and through extra-curricular clubs. Pupils say that they enjoy taking part in different sports such as football, rounders and lacrosse, and also spoke enthusiastically about a visit to the school by members of the Rochdale Hornets rugby league team.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong because leaders ensure that the school's mission, 'living the fruit of the Spirit,' underpins the work of the school. The curriculum encourages pupils to think about other people, develop an understanding of British values and to appreciate the role that many different people play in modern society. Pupils, parents and staff all talked about the strong sense of community within the school.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. Support for leadership has been arranged through links with two successful local schools, while the local authority adviser has been able to support leaders' checks on the school's performance. Staff and governors appreciate the access that they have had locally to a wide range of training opportunities. The local authority has great confidence in the leadership and governance and shares the inspectors' view that the school has a strong capacity to improve further.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors conducted an audit of their skills and then proactively recruited new governors with different, complementary skills. Governors rearranged the structure of their committees so as to ensure that there was a clearer focus on school effectiveness and outcomes for pupils. Governing-body minutes confirm that governors are now more rigorous and effective in holding school leaders to account.
- Governors have a clear picture of the quality and effectiveness of teaching across the school. They make sure that school leaders administer performance management of staff effectively so that decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to their performance against meaningful targets.
- Governors ensure that spending decisions are appropriately focused on the school's priorities for improvement, such as when purchasing new teaching materials for mathematics. They also ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium and primary school sports funding, is targeted in the right places. However, governors' knowledge of the impact of this funding on outcomes could be sharper.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority in school. Staff and governors all receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Staff have a clear understanding of what to do if they are worried about a child's well-being, and records show that any such concerns are rigorously followed up by members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding. This thorough approach has also ensured that good partnerships have been established with external agencies. Thorough checks are made on staff, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable people to

work with children. An electronic system is used to keep a clear record of people entering and leaving the school and pupils know that the badges worn by visitors show that they are allowed in the building.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently ensure that the most able pupils in their classes reach the higher standards of which they are capable. In some classes, teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils should be achieving are too low. Teachers do not consistently move the most able pupils on to more challenging activities quickly enough and, as a consequence, they waste valuable learning time completing tasks that are too easy for them.
- In mathematics, calculation skills are taught well and, as a result, pupils quickly gain confidence working on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tasks at a level that is appropriate for their age. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of strategies, from using practical apparatus to more formal written methods, to help them to consolidate their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to use these mathematical skills to tackle practical problems and encourage them to explain how they came to their answers. However, some teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils and there are also times when teachers' written or verbal feedback does not pick up quickly enough on pupils' misconceptions.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of writing since the last inspection and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their written skills in other parts of the curriculum, such as in writing accounts in history or reports in geography and science. Early signs are that a more focused approach to developing pupils' skills in grammar and punctuation is also beginning to have a positive impact. However, the teaching of spelling is not as effective because pupils do not consistently use their phonics knowledge accurately and they make mistakes when correcting spellings that teachers do not then challenge.
- Leaders have acted swiftly to improve the effectiveness of teaching in reading, having realised that pupils' comprehension skills were not as well developed as their phonics skills. In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics has been a key strength of the school for some time and pupils confidently use phonics to help them to tackle unfamiliar words. In key stage 2, teachers are now dedicating more time to teaching specific reading skills and are promoting reading through basing a lot of their English work on high-quality, engaging texts. Early indications are that this approach is beginning to have a positive effect. The older, most able readers are able to discuss different aspects of the books they are reading and can identify favourite texts and authors such as JK Rowling.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who need help to catch up are well catered for. School leaders and teachers are becoming increasingly adept at identifying those pupils who would benefit from additional support. Teaching assistants then ensure that this focused support is put in place, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and confidence are addressed. Further support is provided through additional sessions run before school, helping to increase pupils' chances of success.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and every parent who spoke to inspectors or responded to the 'Parent View' survey shared this view. One parent's comment was typical of many of the views expressed by parents: 'It's a lovely small school with a family feel which makes for a safe and secure atmosphere for my children to learn in.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using social media, and know that the school has firewall protection in place to make the internet safer for them to use.
- Pupils are aware that there are different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying and cyber bullying. They know that all bullying is unacceptable, and say that bullying in their school is very rare. Where there have been occasional incidents, such as name-calling, pupils say that teachers have dealt with them quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Their conduct around school is good and they play well together at breaktimes. Leaders have ensured that the very small number of pupils who need additional support to help them to manage their own behaviour are well catered for.
- Attendance rates are typically above the national average and no group's learning is adversely affected by regular absences from school. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- In class, pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They listen well and are keen to answer questions and offer ideas. They settle to work quickly and sensibly and try hard to make sure that their work is presented neatly. Occasionally, if they find the learning less engaging, pupils allow their minds to wander and drift off-task. When this happens, the pace of learning slows.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From their individual starting points, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been too slow across key stages 1 and 2. This has been particularly the case for the most able pupils in the school, including the small number of most-able disadvantaged pupils, who have typically fallen short of reaching the higher standards of which they have been capable. The notable exception has been in phonics, where pupils' attainment has been consistently above the national average.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected

standards in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national average. However, fewer pupils than were seen nationally achieved 'greater depth' in their learning, indicating that the most able pupils in key stage 1 were still not performing as well as might be expected.

- School leaders were disappointed with some of the results in the tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, particularly in reading, where the proportions of pupils reaching and exceeding the age-related expectations were below the national average. Analysis of these results led to leaders making changes to the teaching of reading in key stage 2, putting a greater emphasis on teaching reading skills and comprehension. In mathematics, the performance in 2016 followed the pattern of previous years, with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in line with national figures, but with fewer pupils achieving the higher level. The most positive picture was for writing, where the proportions reaching and exceeding the expected standard were broadly in line with those of other schools nationally.
- Evidence in pupils' books and in the school's own assessment data indicates that outcomes are improving for pupils currently in key stages 1 and 2, although there are still some inconsistencies in the speed of progress between the different classes.
- There are very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in some cohorts. Because of this, it is difficult to report on their levels of achievement without identifying them. Evidence indicates that, across the school, leaders use additional government funding effectively to overcome barriers to learning. As a result, overall, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in their learning from their starting points when compared with other pupils in the school and nationally, although too few of the most able disadvantaged pupils reach the very highest levels.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. Well-planned and effective support provided by teaching assistants and teachers ensures that they make good progress from their different starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, although many children have less prior experience in reading, writing and number than in other areas of learning. Effective links with home and with other local early years settings help to ensure that children settle into life in the Reception class quickly.
- In early years, teachers plan learning which is engaging and well thought out and, as a result, children make good progress in the Reception class. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their time in early years is typically higher than is found nationally.
- Staff make effective use of both the indoor and outdoor environments, providing children with a good mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In one session, the teacher developed children's number and counting skills through skilful questioning while the children enjoyed hunting for numbers around the outdoor area and playing with them in the water.
- Children make a particularly good start in developing their reading skills while they are

in the Reception class. This is because phonics is taught very effectively and children are encouraged to develop a love of books and stories.

- Behaviour in the early years is good. Relationships between adults and children are warm and positive and children play well with each other. Staff give children's safety and well-being a high priority and make sure that all statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader ensures that children's learning and progress are tracked carefully and uses this assessment information well when identifying different children's learning needs. Currently the assessment information used is heavily weighted towards teacher-led activities but the headteacher and early years leader are keen to further develop the use of observational assessments.

School details

Unique reference number	105848
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10026820

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Castledine
Headteacher	Robert Andrew
Telephone number	01706 378 268
Website	www.st-james.rochdale.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-james.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2015

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets 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.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have joined the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons, year groups and subjects. They also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked informally with pupils around the school and in the playground.
- Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and also talked briefly with some parents before the start of the school day.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for mathematics and English, curriculum development, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children in the early years.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching and development plans. Inspectors also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathy Nichol

Ofsted Inspector

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