

# St Stephen's RC Primary School

Chappell Road, Droylsden, Manchester M43 7NA

## Inspection dates

12–13 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not responded speedily enough to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress has not been good.
- Until recently, governors have not had an accurate view of standards across the school. Consequently, they have not promoted improvement effectively.
- School leaders have insufficiently recognised the underachievement of pupils. Therefore, leaders' views of the school's effectiveness have been over generous.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good, particularly in mathematics. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, particularly for those who learn more quickly.
- Until recently, leaders have not measured rigorously enough the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, leaders and governors have not had a clear picture of the achievement of these pupils.
- Teachers do not provide consistent challenge for pupils, in particular for the most able. As a result, not enough pupils gain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Targets in the school's improvement plan are not always measurable. Leaders and governors are not easily able to assess the impact of their work.
- Although there have been recent improvements in pupils' attendance, it is still below than the national average.
- Teachers do not have opportunities to observe best practice in the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress. Teaching is good and children settle quickly and happily to their learning.
- Leaders' actions have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes during this academic year.
- Pupils behave well. They are happy, feel safe and enjoy very good care and support.
- The school curriculum is broad and balanced and successfully promotes the school's own and wider British values.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - plans for improvement are more sharply focused so that progress towards targets can be evaluated more easily, thereby giving the leaders a more accurate overview of the school's effectiveness
  - outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continue to improve so these pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally
  - the effective practice that exists in the school is shared more widely
  - governors continue to enhance their effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve by ensuring that:
  - teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able
  - the work set for pupils provides appropriate challenge, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' absence is monitored more rigorously to ensure that those pupils who are absent more frequently attend school more regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements in the progress current pupils make, the effectiveness of leaders has not been good. Leaders took too long to respond to declining standards. Over time, pupils' attainment has dipped and their progress has not been good.
- For much of the time since the last inspection, the headteacher has been working without a full complement of senior leaders. This had a negative effect on the quality of education and the accuracy of leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Recent appointments to the leadership team, including a new deputy headteacher, have had a positive impact on all areas of the school's provision.
- The school's improvement plans lack rigour, clarity and focus. They do not help leaders and governors to measure accurately the impact of their work to improve the school.
- Leaders' plans for the use of pupil premium funding are not specific enough. The impact of funding has not been sufficiently analysed over time. The lack of clarity for the use of this funding has resulted in disadvantaged pupils not making the progress of which they are capable. Leaders have commissioned a recent review into the impact of the pupil premium funding to help accelerate pupils' learning.
- Leaders have successfully developed a broad and balanced curriculum. However, it is only recently that pupils' core skills have improved and there has been less improvement in pupils' mathematical skills.
- Recently appointed middle leaders are having a positive impact on the quality of education. They are passionate, committed and have an increasingly accurate understanding of what they need to do to improve provision. They appreciate the support and opportunities they receive from senior leaders. In addition, recent staff training is being more effectively targeted on the school's key priorities. For example, recent whole-school training to develop writing is improving the rate of progress current pupils make.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make consistently good progress. Their progress and the strategies used to support them have not been monitored closely enough. However, recent improvements in the management of the provision for this group of pupils are having a positive impact on these pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' systems to measure the performance of staff have improved. However, leaders have not consistently ensured that the process has improved pupils' progress, including that of the most able pupils.
- There are no opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from each other.
- This a happy school where everyone receives a warm and sincere welcome. Pupils are nurtured well in a kind and caring environment. The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are key strengths. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. This is the result of the strong Christian values that underpin their understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.
- Pupils show respect for each other and for other cultures and faiths. This is because all

staff provide a range of strategies to help pupils to grow into valued citizens. For example, vulnerable pupils are identified and provided with very well-thought-out support. This includes visiting the school's allotments and peace garden in small groups, educational visits or receiving individual music lessons. Activities such as these have a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and well-being.

- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport funding effectively. The use of sports coaches develops the expertise of teachers, offers additional sport and encourages pupils to develop healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders have brought about improvement over this academic year in pupils' overall progress, in their writing skills and in the teaching of phonics. In addition to maintaining pupils' good personal development, welfare and behaviour and the early years provision, this indicates leaders' secure capacity to improve the school further.

### **Governance of the school**

- For too long, governors did not have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They recognise they were too accepting of information given to them by school leaders. They now receive accurate information about the school's effectiveness more regularly. This enables them to hold school leaders more closely to account.
- Governors are caring, committed, honest and reflective. They want the best for the school. They accept they did not respond quickly enough to challenge pupils' falling standards, including of those who are disadvantaged. More recently, they have instigated an external review of how the pupil premium funding is spent. Governors now challenge leaders well to ensure that the additional funding helps disadvantaged pupils to achieve stronger outcomes.
- Governors now have a much better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They also undertake their safeguarding responsibilities diligently.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are well cared for and their safety is a key priority. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies.
- Where pupils are at risk from harm, leaders act swiftly to ensure that pupils remain safe. The school's pastoral team ensures that vulnerable pupils and families are supported well.
- Staff are trained and updated regularly with regard to safeguarding. Staff are vigilant and committed, so there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are confident to approach staff with their concerns. Parents and carers also speak favourably about the care and support their children receive to ensure that they are kept safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. There is too much variation between classes. Over time, expectations have not been high enough for all pupils and the level of challenge provided has not been sufficient.
- Until recently, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning have not been sufficiently helpful to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, teachers were not always clear how to improve pupils' learning.
- Some teachers do not deal effectively with pupils' misconceptions, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils are sometimes unclear on how to improve their work. Other teachers are more effective. For example, in Year 4 a teacher used questioning very effectively to check on and deepen pupils' understanding of a particular text.
- In some classes, lower-ability pupils do not catch up quickly enough, particularly in mathematics. They are too reliant on adult support, and expectations for pupils are too low.
- In mathematics, pupils do not develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. They do not make the progress of which they are capable. There are some examples, however, where teachers are more effective in providing pupils with opportunities to develop their reasoning. A strong example in Year 4 showed pupils confidently using and applying their reasoning when working on factors.
- The level of challenge for the most able is inconsistent. Expectations for this group of pupils are not high enough and their progress is not as strong as it should be
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Well-structured sessions allow pupils to tackle familiar and unfamiliar words well.
- Teachers successfully develop pupils' writing skills, particularly in the wider curriculum. Pupils' work in current topic books shows strong evidence that they are interested and better challenged in the wider curriculum. Key stage 2 topic books show pupils develop their writing skills, as well as displaying deeper subject-specific knowledge in science, history and geography.
- There are very strong relationships between teachers and pupils. A positive climate is evident in all classrooms, and pupils often help each other with their learning and collaborate well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in school. Teachers and other adults ensure that pupils know how to stay safe and secure online and in the community. Leaders are quick to respond to any emerging concerns.
- Pupils are respectful of each other's views. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning when teaching engages them.
- Pupils are safe and behaviour is good. Leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour are

high. Any behavioural incidents are investigated and tackled systematically and thoroughly. Pupils say bullying incidents are rare and are dealt with well. A typical comment was, 'Everyone is cared for at our school'.

- The personal development and well-being of pupils, particularly those identified as vulnerable, are key strengths. A huge amount of time and resource is put into supporting these pupils to develop their self-esteem and well-being.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a very positive impact on the ethos of the school. For example, during assemblies pupils are encouraged to be reflective, to understand the needs of others and to be aware of how their actions affect others. This is a good example of how the school helps pupils to make a positive contribution to the community.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils model the school's Christian values. This is evident in the way they play together, as well as how they conduct themselves in school.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They reflect the positive role modelling and high expectations of all adults.
- The majority of parents commented positively on behaviour and the work undertaken to support their children. A typical parental comment was that the school provides 'excellent pastoral care and facilitates a warm and caring community'.
- Although pupils' overall attendance is improving, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school's analysis of some pupils' poor attendance lacks rigour.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been below average. For example, in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and greater depth in their learning was lower than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress through key stage 2 has also been lower than average for the last three years, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, actions taken by leaders show current pupils are making stronger progress. Current pupils' assessment records and work in pupils' books show better gains in learning. Leaders have worked closely with specialist teachers in English and mathematics, and the improvements to teaching are evident in pupils' better progress. For example, current pupils have made stronger progress in their writing skills since the start of this academic year.
- Although improving, the progress that current pupils across the school are making in mathematics is not as strong as it is in writing.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and pupils have made impressive gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Work in current pupils' topic books shows they are making stronger progress in a wide range of subjects, including history, geography and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well they are capable of, because their

progress has not been sufficiently monitored. The use of the pupil premium funding has had insufficient impact on pupils' progress. However, the difference in progress between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is now beginning to diminish in reading and writing, and to a lesser extent in mathematics.

- Too little attention has been given to the needs of the most able pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher standards is below that in other schools nationally. Until recently, this group of pupils has not been targeted or challenged effectively enough.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 is increasing and is now broadly in line with the national average.
- Over time, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been far from good. Following recent changes introduced by the coordinator of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, this group of pupils is now making better progress.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The leadership and management of the early years are strong. Teachers and other adults know the children well. They evaluate the effectiveness of the provision accurately. The early years leader has appropriate plans to improve further the quality of the provision and outcomes for children.
- Children settle in to Nursery and Reception classes quickly. This is a result of the effective transition arrangements that are tailored to the needs of each child.
- Children are well supervised and cared for in a safe and vibrant environment. This contributes to their good behaviour. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the early years. All statutory requirements for the welfare of children are met.
- The assessment of children's knowledge and skills is frequent and detailed. This ensures that activities are pitched at the correct level to meet children's needs. Next steps for children are clearly identified. Staff use questioning well to help accelerate children's understanding.
- Leaders are particularly effective in developing children's independent skills. For example, four children worked very effectively as a group predicting the outcome of a science investigation. This was the result of effective preparation by staff and well-established routines.
- Overall, children are well prepared for Year 1. Children make good progress in their learning from starting points which are below those typical for their age. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of children exceeding a good level of development is increasing towards the national average.
- Parents value the work the school does to support their children. They speak very positively about the provision in the early years and the strong partnership with the school.
- Staff work well with children who have SEN and/or disabilities. Their skilful and knowledgeable management ensures that these children are fully integrated into all

activities, work well and make good progress.

## School details

Unique reference number	106253
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10042468

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernadette Mattison
Headteacher	Brendan Marley
Telephone number	01613702071
Website	<a href="http://www.st-stephens-droylsden.tameside.sch.uk">www.st-stephens-droylsden.tameside.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-stephens-droylsden.tameside.sch.uk">admin@st-stephens-droylsden.tameside.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

## Information about this school

- St Stephen's is larger than the averaged-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years receive part-time education in the Nursery and full-time education in Reception classes.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6. The school meets the Department for Education definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic results in 2015–2017.

- A breakfast and after-school club operates on the school premises.
- The school has been awarded the RHS School Gardening Award.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects. The headteacher observed learning alongside the lead inspector in one classroom. The deputy headteacher observed one lesson alongside an inspector on the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime as well as during breakfast club.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, coordinator of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, early years leader and subject leaders.
- An inspector met with two members of the governing body – the chair and vice-chair. Inspectors also met the local authority school improvement advisor.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils on the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 28 parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, and also the response from parents dropping pupils off at school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, information on pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Gary Bevin, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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