

Holy Cross and All Saints RC Primary School

Trafford Road, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0JA

Inspection dates 20–21 November 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good and improving. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is higher than in most schools.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From their individual starting points, all groups of pupils make similarly good progress. This shows the school's strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Teaching across the school is mostly good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are polite and courteous in lessons and around school. Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well supported by all staff.
- The school is well led by the headteacher. She has been relentless in her drive to improve the quality of teaching, which is having a direct impact on the rapidly improving achievement for pupils.
- Leaders at all levels have a shared ambition for raising standards and a clear view of what the school does well and the areas they need to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers do not always challenge the most-able pupils enough.
- Marking, particularly in writing, does not always make it clear how to improve.
- Actions planned to improve school performance are not always precise enough to ensure pupils' achievement becomes outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher, and observed teaching assistants leading small groups and within the classroom.
- Inspectors heard pupils from different year groups read, observed their playtimes and lunchtimes and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with a range of pupils, parents, senior and subject leaders, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Information from 23 staff questionnaires was also considered as part of the inspection.
- A range of other evidence was also scrutinised by inspectors, including the school's view of its own performance, improvement planning, policies and performance management objectives for teachers and data about the achievement of pupils in all year groups, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with full time nursery class provision.
- Most pupils are from White British heritage, with an increasing proportion coming from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of support through pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2011.
- The school meets the government floor standards which set out the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons in order to raise pupils' achievement further across the school by:
 - ensuring that all lessons build on prior learning with precision, so pupils, especially the most able, extend their learning more rapidly
 - checking that pupils' individual targets are always high enough to accelerate their progress
 - making sure that all teaching assistants provide timely interventions that provide a balance between support and encouraging independence lessons
 - ensuring that marking, particularly in writing, consistently provides clear guidance that helps pupils improve their work and that pupils are routinely given opportunities to respond.

- Enhance the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all actions to boost the school's performance can be measured with precision and clearly identify how they will move achievement from good to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. In some areas, particularly speech and language and number skills, a significant minority have skills well below those typical for their age. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage there are good opportunities for children to initiate their own learning and they benefit from a stimulating place to learn. As a result, children make good progress and by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage most have skills in line with, or close to, national expectations.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good and attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results of national tests in 2013 showed a marked improvement. Overall progress is good with an increase in the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress.
- Progress throughout the school is accelerating in response to increasing opportunities for active learning. Pupils are enjoying being more involved in their learning, most notably in Year 2.
- Outcomes in recent phonic (letters and the sounds they make) screening checks were slightly below those seen nationally. The school has already addressed this by offering small group support to those pupils who just missed the standard. The teaching of phonic sessions across the school is now more effective and pupils apply their phonic skills well to tackle new words.
- Reading is a strength of the school and pupils talk excitedly about it. They discuss characters and form opinions. Teachers ensure that guided reading sessions are productive and check that pupils read with understanding.
- Attainment in writing is above average but not as high as in other subjects. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, and across other subjects, and this is supporting the improvements seen in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are not always skilful when editing their work to make improvements to their writing. This is because teachers are not always precise enough in identifying the next steps of learning when marking pupils' work. In addition, opportunities for pupils to respond to marking are not consistently provided. Recent changes to the policy for handwriting are having a positive impact to the quality of presentation in books.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good, but is not yet outstanding because teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and explore problems that have more than one outcome.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified promptly and appropriate support is put in place.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall but this is inconsistent between classes. Just occasionally, teaching fails to be sufficiently challenging and this slows their progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals make the same progress as other pupils. Their attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6. There are no significant gaps between their performance and that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress.
- Good levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills prepare pupils well for secondary education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good, with some that is outstanding. This is an improving picture and enables pupils to make good progress.
- In the best lessons, pupils are highly engaged, because of creative use of resources, particularly

information and communication technology. In a Year 2 lesson the interactive whiteboard was used well to create a moving image of the Big Bad Wolf to help stimulate pupils' questions.

- Teachers generally use assessment well when planning lessons but this varies between classes. From time to time teachers do not use assessment information precisely enough to build on previous learning and ensure pupils, particularly the most able, are set work in all parts of the lesson that demands enough of them.
- Information about pupils' progress is used successfully to set pupils' individual targets but these are not always high enough to ensure all make as much progress as possible.
- Relationships in all classes are strong with pupils confident to ask questions and offer ideas; collaborative working is encouraged and this supports the good outcomes seen in lessons.
- The strong focus placed upon spiritual, social, moral and cultural development ensures all pupils have many opportunities to be reflective and thoughtful.
- Work in books is presented neatly and marking is consistent across the school. However, not all teachers give the most effective prompts for improvement and there are not regular enough opportunities provided for pupils to respond to the teachers' advice.
- Additional adults are generally used well to provide timely support in class and catch up intervention programmes. However this is not yet consistent in all classes, where some teaching assistants provide too much support and stifle pupils' independent learning opportunities.
- Homework set is highly appropriate and there is clear guidance given to parents on how they can support at home. Learning logs offer opportunities for pupils of all abilities to work at an appropriate level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good; it is not outstanding because in a small number of less inspiring lessons pupils lose concentration and are not so engaged in their learning. However, around school and at play pupils behave well and are polite to visitors and each other.
- Pupils are happy in school. They are unreservedly positive about behaviour, have many friends and feel very safe.
- Discussions with pupils reveal they are excited about their learning. Members of the school council agreed saying, 'We learn something new every day.'
- Pupils enjoy many opportunities to be responsible around school, particularly the school council playground buddies who provide 'buddy watch' to ensure all have a friend to play with and are not left out of activities.
- Inspectors analysed school records for behaviour and found them to be detailed and well managed. They reflect good behaviour is typical in the school. Any incidents are recorded thoroughly with actions and outcomes evaluated. There have been no exclusions or incidents of bullying in two years.
- Pupils are aware of the various types of bullying, but are less confident in their understanding of cyber bullying. They say that they feel safe at school and commented that 'bullying does not happen at our school'.
- Almost all pupils arrive to school on time and leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the attendance rates of pupils, particular those families prone to persistent absenteeism. Current attendance rates are now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has been inspirational in transforming the work of the school and has set highly ambitious plans for its future development. Staff and governors support changes and the school is well placed to improve further.
- Managers monitor teaching thoroughly and this has been instrumental in securing the rapid

improvements to the quality of teaching across the school. Staff are more accountable for their practice and the progress made by the pupils in their classes.

- Assessment systems check the progress of all pupils regularly and any underachievement is addressed swiftly. Specific focused help is put in place to support any pupils who may be in danger of falling behind.
- The school evaluates its performance accurately, and improvement plans for the school identify the correct priorities. However, these do not always state precisely how they will move achievement from good to outstanding or how success will be measured.
- Subject leaders have been empowered by the headteacher to lead their subjects and drive through school improvement. They know well the strengths of their subject and the improvements they wish to see. However, action plans as in the school's improvement plan do not always set precise enough targets to measure accurately their impact on outcomes.
- Staff are provided with increased opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills through a comprehensive programme of support and training. Targets for the performance of all staff are in place, and salary awards linked to achievement of targets.
- The headteacher was instrumental in making essential changes to provision so that pupils enjoy a curriculum that inspires, motivates and provides them with memorable experiences. Opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning are positively promoted and have been a focus of recent school improvement activities that have seen better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders recognise the positive impact of external partnerships and have been actively encouraged to supplement many aspects of the school's work. The recent link made with sports coaches to deliver elements of the curriculum for physical education has enthused pupils and is having a significant impact on the health and well being of some of the youngest pupils. There is now a strong link with Sure Start partners who run 'Stay and Play' preschool group to encourage early childhood development and support new mothers.
- The local authority has supported the drive for improvement by providing training and coaching for leaders, including governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have benefited from greater involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching across the school and now receive more detailed information from leaders. They have a good awareness of the quality of teaching. They know teachers are set ambitious targets and how this links to salary increases. Governors review data and check how well the school is doing compared with other schools. They check the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding and fully understand how it benefits these pupils. The recent sports funding has been delegated wisely, although the impact of this is yet to be determined. A training programme has been accessed and enhanced governors' knowledge and skills. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

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	105952
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426228

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Morrissey
Headteacher	Annemarie Bell
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
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