

Ince St Mary's CE Primary School

Derby Street, Spring View, Wigan, Lancashire, WN3 4TJ

Inspection dates 12–13 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.

- The headteacher shows excellent leadership qualities. Supported by her enthusiastic leadership team and a determined and increasingly knowledgeable governing body, she is improving pupils' progress at a rapid rate.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are both good and improving. Standards rose in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 1 to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A good proportion of pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age and a larger proportion than in previous years are working at a higher level.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously. Good systems are used to track pupils' progress. This ensures that teaching is good and no pupil falls behind.
- Children in the early years do well. Effective leadership and teaching ensure they make good progress.
- The school's internal tracking data and pupils' work show that pupils' progress throughout the school is good and accelerating rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in the school are happy and well looked after. Pastoral work is a strength of the school. Consequently, pupils feel safe, behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning in lessons.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs benefit from good levels of support and make good progress in their learning.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships are strong. Pupils are encouraged to have values such as honesty, respect and tolerance for others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Though pupils' progress has improved, standards are not yet as high as they could be.
- Opportunities for children in the early years to learn outdoors are not as good as those available inside.
- Some topics in the new curriculum do not fully engage some of the pupils, for example: some pupils in Key Stage 1 found Rosa Parks' protest against apartheid difficult to understand.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in two walks round different classes and in 16 lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- They reviewed pupils' work in a range of subjects, and held discussions with groups of pupils; some pupils read to inspectors.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, representatives of the governing body and a school development officer from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was checked, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, school improvement plans, safeguarding information, details of the management of teachers' performance and information about the progress of pupils.
- There were not enough responses to show on the online questionnaire, Parent View, so account was taken of the parents' responses to school's two most recent questionnaires.
- Nineteen questionnaires returned by staff gave inspectors a view of their opinions.

Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Howard	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. However, the number of pupils per year group is increasing. There is currently more than one class per year group in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- The school offers full-time early years provision in its Reception unit.
- The school is preparing to move to a new, bigger building at the end of this term.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- 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.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of staff changes and, currently, a senior leader is taking maternity leave.
- The school participates in the local authority's school support system. The headteacher provides support to deputy headteachers in the scheme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise standards further in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - adapting the new curriculum so that all topics are motivational for the pupils, providing new resources and training as necessary
 - encouraging a wider range of outdoor opportunities for learning in the early years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders understand how effective their school is, as well as what to do in order to reach their aim of being outstanding. The headteacher provides an excellent example of drive and ambition for St Mary's, creating an ethos in which good teaching and good behaviour flourish. Pupils, parents and staff welcome her 'no nonsense' approach to meticulous and rigorous checking of the work of the school. She has already organised logical packing-up procedures so that learning is not adversely affected by the school's move to its new site at the end of term.
- In Key Stage 2, writing attainment has risen steadily for the last three years. Following a dip in results in reading and mathematics in the national tests in 2014, the headteacher and senior staff planned detailed improvements. These are now accelerating pupils' progress across the school.
- The school has prepared well for the new curriculum, which is well underway and generally meeting the needs of pupils. The purchased schemes are structured well but not all of the topics interest pupils to the extent that they are enthusiastic learners.
- Staffing changes over the last two years have brought new energies into teaching. Good coaching, staff training and new policies are bringing about positive improvements and a greater consistency to pupils' learning. Middle leaders play their part well in helping to improve particular aspects of the school.
- Leaders and governors are committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination successfully. All pupils are given equal opportunities to learn well. Support staff are successfully used to assist those who need extra help with their learning. Relationships in school and with families and the wider community are strong.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding benefit from additional support, according to their individual needs, both pastorally and educationally. For example, they receive some assistance for educational visits and events that help them to make good progress with their learning and development.
- Staff forge strong partnerships with parents and these help to improve the attendance and punctuality of the pupils. The pastoral team work extremely well to support pupils and their families. The vast majority of parents support the work of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very important to the school. British values of honesty, respect and tolerance are strongly promoted. The pupils' work on justice and democracy is carefully displayed. The school sees the nurture of its pupils as extremely important and considers emotional well-being crucial to raising standards and developing young people who are active, caring citizens.
- The local authority's school-to-school support system has assisted school improvement over the last two years. At first, the school received much support with joint observations and some visits to other schools. Now the headteacher coaches deputy headteachers from other schools in the authority in preparation for headship.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to boost the experiences and physical skills of pupils in a variety of sports in lessons and after-school activities. The abilities of teaching staff have been extended. Now many more pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 are engaged in, and clearly enjoy, a range of sports.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has recently reduced in number owing to reconstitution. It is well informed and increasingly effective. It uses the headteacher's reports and governor dashboard to compare the school's performance with that of other schools nationally. Because of good communication with staff and visits to the school, governors have a good insight into the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. They challenge and support the headteacher appropriately when they receive data on the school's performance. Governors have an understanding of the new national curriculum requirements, including the rigour needed for assessment processes. Governors oversee the management of finances and resources well. They discuss with the headteacher what is done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They have contributed to the work of the headteacher in liaising with the local authority to achieve a new building for the school.
 - Systems to keep pupils safe and free from harm are effective and regularly revised. Safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils across the school display very good and sometimes excellent behaviour in class. Lessons run smoothly because of their positive attitudes.
- Pupils show respect and kindness to each other and to adults in school. Many act maturely and are socially adept and at ease when talking with adults. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and also take great pride in how they present their work.
- They develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities, such as monitoring behaviour on the corridors and at lunchtimes. Older pupils are proud to be a play leader or a member of the active school council. The vast majority of pupils behave exceptionally well, but occasionally, on the playground and in corridors, behaviour slips to below the usual high level.
- Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life, which was obvious in discussions with them. Last year their attendance improved to be in line with national average. This year, so far, it is almost in line after a sickness bug caused much absence in the autumn term.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good knowledge about how to live healthily and how to keep themselves safe. Specialists in physical education in school and anti-bullying week activities, which explore different forms of bullying, provide good teaching in these areas. Similarly, visits to school from the local police, fire service and railway safety team help keep pupils safe. Pupils told inspectors that there were no bullies at their school.
- Pupils know about keeping safe online; they told inspectors that the first unit they study in their new computing curriculum is about e-safety. They are also aware of the dangers of drugs and tobacco.
- Pupils are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and anxieties and that staff will sort out any problems quickly.
- Procedures for training staff and governors are up-to-date. Sensible actions are taken to keep the site and the school safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' progress is good across all year groups this year, and especially so in reading, writing and mathematics, as a result of the decisive actions for improvement and new policies.
- Good, and some outstanding, teaching provides activities that are well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils. Staff are very knowledgeable about their pupils and this helps them to challenge the pupils at the most suitable levels.
- In a mathematics lesson for example, some pupils were highly engaged in creating problems involving fractions independently. The knowledgeable teacher confidently gave input where appropriate and her questioning of the pupils helped to consolidate and extend their understanding.
- Helpful, regular marking ensures that the pupils make the next steps in their learning by acting on the advice of their teachers and by correcting their mistakes. A new marking policy has recently been introduced and this is ensuring consistency across the school.
- Pupils' books show a good range of work across all subjects in the curriculum. Some topics are very exciting, such as when aliens landed on the school field, but a large group of Key Stage 1 pupils lost interest when learning about discrimination.
- Different groups of pupils, such as those who are disabled or have special educational needs, those supported by pupil premium funding and the most able pupils, are carefully targeted in lessons. Pupils continue to make good progress when provided with specific help.
- Assessment information is used well to target additional support for those not making as much progress as they should. Those who are starting to fall behind are quickly identified for extra help by the use of the carefully monitored tracking system.
- In the early years and Key Stage 1, pupils learn to link letters to sounds to make words and to blend sounds to help them read. Their teachers make reading and writing fun and interesting so that there is enthusiasm for literacy work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The attainment of pupils across the school is rising and their progress is accelerating. A large majority of pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age and a good proportion are working at a higher level.
- A high proportion of children enter early years with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made good progress. The results of the Year 1 national screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are close to the national average.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has continued to improve over time and, in 2014, was at the national average. In 2013, pupils in Year 6 attained the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. There had been a focus on improving writing and this had been successful. In 2014, school data showed that pupils were on track to achieve similar results in the national tests for that year. However, there was a dip in standards in reading and mathematics, which was partly due to unforeseen circumstances. The leadership acted quickly and staff training, the new curriculum and new resources have improved the rate of pupils' progress so that current pupils in Year 6 are working at, or above, the expected level for their age.
- The school employs extra support staff with its additional funding for disadvantaged pupils so that, throughout the school, their progress is now good. In 2014 the dip in attainment at the end of Year 6 showed that their progress was slower in comparison to other pupils nationally. They achieved standards that were about four terms behind others nationally in mathematics, and one term behind in reading and writing. In comparison to their classmates they were about three terms behind in all subjects. This gap is narrowing and those in the current Year 6 have made good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from effective support and guidance so that they make good progress.
- The most able pupils are posed high levels of challenge, according to their abilities, so that they too can make good progress. The most able pupils in Year 6 are currently taking part in a specialist online programme to support their high aspirations to achieve Level 6. Previously, a much lower-than-average proportion of the most able pupils achieved Level 5.
- School leaders have encouraged a strong culture for promoting reading and this is successfully supporting pupils' achievement. Pupils were keen to read to inspectors and discuss their books.

The early years provision

is good

- The vast majority of children start in the early years from a range of many different settings with skills that are below those typical for their age. A few children who have special educational needs start with skills which are well below. Adults are skilled in supporting and developing children so that all make good progress from their starting points.
- Children were delighted to recite the story of Rosie's Walk, using a story map with their teacher to sequence events in preparation for writing. Outdoor learning is enjoyed by the children, who go outside in almost all weathers. However, opportunities for them to become more independent and to continue to learn outdoors are more limited than those offered indoors.
- By the end of Reception, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is below the national average, but rising year on year. Currently, a good proportion of children are working at the level needed to reach a good level of development by the end of the summer term and so are well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Teaching of the basic skills, including letters and the sounds they make, is good and children respond well. Their reading skills are developed well from the start of their time in school. They are many good opportunities for them to learn to count and use mathematical language.
- Children settle well into school routines; they are well behaved, happy and eager to learn as a result of the strong relationships, which are quickly established. Parents are well informed about their children's learning through newsletters, meetings, daily communication at the school door and the school's website. The leadership of early years is good, there are clear systems in place to ensure the children are cared for and kept safe and secure.

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	106447
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	456160

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Thornton
Headteacher	Gillian Talbot
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2011
Telephone number	01942 866416
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