

St Edward's RC School

Rowland Way, Lees, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 3LQ

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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, senior leaders and governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that the school has successfully addressed all areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection. As a result of this, all aspects of the school, including teaching and learning and early years provision, have improved.
- Governors know the school's strengths, and exactly what it needs to do to further improve. They hold senior leaders and teachers fully to account for the performance of pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a good curriculum which engages them and helps to develop their interest in learning.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and always feel safe. Their behaviour is good in all aspects, including in class, and they have a good understanding of how to improve their work.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well trained, know pupils well, and have high expectations of what they can achieve.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is good.
- Pupils' overall attainment by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was significantly above average, and the best that it has been since before 2009. Their attainment in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was outstanding, and it was good in writing.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the highest possible Level 6 in writing and mathematics in 2014 was well-above average.
- The progress of most pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils is good because of the good quality support that they receive from well trained staff.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, and are appreciative of the many opportunities that they have to come into school to discuss their children's learning. The overwhelming majority of parents are of the opinion that the school is well led and managed.
- All aspects of the early years, including leadership, teaching, provision, achievement and work with parents, are good and improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, are not always fully challenged by activities that are well enough matched to their various skills and abilities.
- The good quality writing in pupils' 'super writing' books is not always evident in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority, and a telephone conversation took place with the school's education consultant. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 34 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting was held with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A range of documents was examined. These included: records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching; data on pupils' progress; records of pupils' attendance; external evaluations of the school's work behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Docking	Additional Inspector
Faheem Chishti	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average; few speak English as an additional language.
- Nursery provision is full-and part-time. Reception provision is full-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection several members of staff have been appointed, including three teachers and a family liaison worker.
- Pre-school and after school services operate from the site; these are subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding and in so doing raise levels of achievement, especially in Key stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are always fully challenged by activities that are well matched to their various skills and abilities
 - ensuring that the good quality writing in pupils' 'super writing' books in English is replicated in other subjects whenever possible.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are highly effective and have improved since the previous inspection. Together with staff and governors, senior leaders have worked tirelessly to effectively address issues and recommendations identified in the previous inspection report. These actions, coupled with the decisive action taken by senior leaders to eradicate all teaching that was not good enough, have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning and are supporting the school on its journey to becoming outstanding.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, play a central role in driving forward school improvements. They do this through their regular observations of teaching and the mentoring support that they offer teachers at risk of missing their targets. Middle leaders are well trained and have learned from outstanding practice that they have seen in other schools. As one teacher noted, 'This is a different school. Staff are expected to know the data (on pupils' performance) inside-out. They are accountable for each pupil, and answerable to governors and senior leaders.'
- The school is well on its way to fully implementing its new curriculum, plans for which it regularly shares with parents and pupils. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their reading and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Senior leaders are working to ensure that these opportunities are consistently available in writing.
- The school's work to enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development is good. Pupils have a sound understanding of life in modern Britain and learn about people from other cultures through visits, their link with a school in India and topic work. Pupils' study of the major world faiths of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism gives them a good understanding that all beliefs should be well respected. They enjoy their residential activities in Year 6 and the many opportunities they have to visit theatres, art galleries and play various string and percussion instruments.
- After-school clubs are very popular; these include dance, cheer-leading, drama and chess. Senior leaders and governors ensure that the primary school sports premium is well spent. For example, specialist coaches have helped staff to improve their teaching of physical education and sporting activities, and activities such as football, netball and swimming have helped to improve the health and well-being of pupils.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching through observations of teachers' practice. Detailed records for each teacher identify strengths and any areas that need to be improved. The wide programme of professional development and training on offer to teachers has helped to improve the quality of teaching over time. All teachers have challenging targets that are regularly reviewed. These have to be met before they can be considered for promotion, or pay awards.
- The school has a highly effective relationship with the local authority which has supported it in a number of areas including in developing the role of middle leaders, and in developing approaches to ensuring good behaviour. The school works closely with an educational consultant whose work to improve the quality of teaching, and the marking of pupils' work has contributed to overall school improvements.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity well and ensure that there is no discrimination in any of the school's work. This helps to ensure that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well and that any gaps between the performances of different groups of pupils are constantly narrowing.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding its pupils and children in the early years. All statutory requirements in this respect are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They are very effective, and have a much better understanding of their roles and responsibilities than at the time of the last inspection. They scrutinise the reports that the headteacher provides for them and interrogate school data, asking pertinent questions in relation to pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. They know exactly where the school's strengths lie and have made it their priority to ensure that pupils' performance improves at Key Stage 1, and that writing improves across the school.
 - Governors have benefitted from training from the local authority and diocese. This has added to their effectiveness and enabled them to hold senior leaders to account more effectively. Governors know that the quality of teaching is good because of the regular reports that they receive, and because they spend time in school working with teachers and discussing learning with pupils. Governors know that underperformance needs to be addressed. They only grant pay awards in recognition of good or better teaching.
 - Governors know that pupil premium funding is well spent and that extra staffing, including teachers and

the school's family support worker, has helped to ensure that eligible pupils achieve well and fully participate in all aspects of school life.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and say that the changes that have taken place since the last inspection have made it a better place to learn. They are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time, and say that any minor fall-outs are soon resolved, sometimes through the 'mindfulness' group which, they feel, makes people change for the better.
- Pupils attend school regularly and enjoy learning and playing with their friends. They behave sensibly while moving around the school and during lunch and break times. They are courteous and keen to talk to visitors about their work.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, including as prefects and playtime 'buddies.' They regularly participate in lunchtime learning activities. They know how their new behaviour system works and enjoy acquiring the 'always' badge for good behaviour.
- Pupils like to come together to celebrate each other's successes. This was the case in an outstanding assembly where Year 6 pupils demonstrated their fluent language skills as they delivered the *Le Navet Enorm* (*The Enormous Turnip*) story entirely in French. This was much to the delight of their classmates and parents. After the story pupils erupted in cheers for the 'star of the week', and other achievements, and the class with the best attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of dangers and risks. They understand the dangers associated with water, fire and fireworks, and the importance of community and road safety.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying rarely, if ever, takes place and say that 'there are no bullies in this school'. They know that unacceptable behaviour has serious consequences and are very confident in talking to any adult about worries or concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents and all teachers are of the opinion that bullying is infrequent. A scrutiny of the school's behaviour logs shows that behaviour is typically good over time, and that bullying is exceptionally rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of prejudice and racial discrimination, which they say never happens in school.
- Older pupils have gained a thorough knowledge of internet safety through e-safety week. They know that cyber-bullying is 'when you write something mean about someone' and that this can take place in e-mails and texts. They know never to join social networking sites, or go onto a computer without permission, and to always speak to an adult if they are unsure about the safety of a website.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, and has improved since the school's most recent inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants know that they are accountable for the performance of pupils, which is assessed twice-termly through pupil progress meetings. Teachers' good training and support has enabled pupils to meet challenging targets, and has ensured that most pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Most pupils know what to do to improve their learning. This is because of the good quality verbal and written advice that they are given by their teachers. When marking pupils' work, teachers clearly identify how pupils can take the next steps in their learning, and check to see that they improve their work as a result of their suggestions.
- Teachers are very clear about how they expect pupils to behave in class; this contributes towards their good learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and effective questioning skills; they take every opportunity to challenge pupils to think hard about their learning, and practise their reading skills. This was exemplified in an English class where pupils were asked to read extracts from political speeches, wedding vows, and an awards ceremony presentation, and analyse and define the different styles of language used.
- Mathematics teaching across the school is good. Teachers are highly-skilled at developing pupils'

understanding of the importance of working together to solve problems. This was the case in a class with younger pupils where they were learning about fractions. Pupils were worked co-operatively with their partners to move in either quarter, half, three-quarter or a whole turns. The most able pupils, effectively supported by a teaching assistant, made good progress because they were presented with additional challenges to consolidate their mathematical understanding and vocabulary.

- Pupils have a well developed sense of moral responsibility. This was demonstrated well in a class where pupils were writing a prayer for their friends. They demonstrated a good understanding of the English language, and good punctuation and spelling skills, as they skilfully worked key words into their prayers such as 'compassionate', which they defined as 'when you really care about someone', and 'consideration', which they identified as 'putting someone else's feelings before your own'. At the end of the session the most able pupils made good progress and produced well written and well thought out prayers. However, pupils do not always have such opportunities, and the good writing in pupils' 'super writing' books in English is not always evident in other subjects.
- Teachers know pupils well and usually use information about their performance to plan challenging activities. They bring the new curriculum to life through visits to museums, exploring local history, and inviting visitors to the school to further enhance learning. However at times, particularly in Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is not as good as it should be because they are not fully challenged by activities that are well matched to their various skills and abilities.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Almost all pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in all subjects by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment at the end of KS1 in 2013 was below average, and not as good as in previous years. However, their performance in all subjects improved in 2014. Though broadly average, this represents good progress from their starting points on entry to Key Stage 1. By the time pupils left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014 their attainment in reading, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mathematics was significantly above average, and good in writing. This meant that they were very well prepared for their learning at secondary school.
- Most children enter Nursery with weak levels of skills and knowledge in a number of areas of learning. Good teaching and the good care and support that children receive from adults helps to ensure that most make good progress. However, in 2014 just over half entered Year 1 with well developed skills in most areas of learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in all subjects throughout the school, though until recently this has been inconsistent, particularly in writing and in Key Stage 1. Progress is not as good as it could be when pupils are not fully challenged by work that is hard enough to enable them to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Pupils benefit from good quality phonics teaching. The proportion secure at the national phonics screening check in 2014 was well-above average, and much higher than in 2013. Those who read for inspectors enjoyed books from a wide range of authors and genres. Less able readers used their phonic skills well to sound-out and read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' progress in writing varies between year groups, but is usually good. This is reflected mostly in their 'super writing' books. However, pupils' do not always have the opportunity to develop their ideas, or extend their writing, in subjects other than English. The school's data, charting progress so far this academic year, show that a greater percentage of Year 2 pupils are on track to attain the higher levels in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015.
- Good teaching and good subject knowledge has helped to ensure that pupils' attainment in mathematics has been significantly above average at the end Key Stage 2 for the last two years. The school's own data show that, in 2014, pupils made good and sometimes outstanding progress in this subject across most year groups, and that they continue to do so this year.
- Regular pupil progress meetings help teachers to track the progress of all groups of pupils, including its growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those with English as an additional language. School data shows that these pupils progress at least as well as their classmates.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was less than one term behind that of their classmates in each subject except grammar, punctuation and spelling, where they were equal. They were two terms ahead of pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, one term ahead in writing, and three terms ahead in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are very well cared for by highly effective and well trained staff. Good partnerships with parents and specialists helps to ensure that their progress in reading,

writing and mathematics is good across all year groups and at least matches that of their peers.

- The most able pupils are usually challenged in class. In Year 6, they benefit from higher level mathematics teaching at a local high school. In 2014 the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 was well- above average in all subjects, and a much higher-than-average proportion attained the highest possible Level 6 in mathematics. The school is currently exploring how it can further support its most able pupils across the school, especially with their writing.

The early years provision

is good

- All aspects of early years provision are good. Provision is well-led and managed by an experienced teacher who, together with staff, has ensured that both indoor and outdoor learning and play areas are stimulating and exciting, and much improved since the school's most recent inspection. The early years manager has a clear plan of action to develop early years provision even further through, for example, improving systems for assessing children's progress, and working even more closely with parents.
- When children start Nursery, most have weak skills and abilities in a number of areas of learning, including language, communication and physical development. Good teaching and effective guidance and support delivered by caring and skilled staff help to ensure that children make good progress through Nursery and Reception. Most enter Year 1 with the good skills that they need for the next phase of their education.
- Children's communication skills develop quickly as they learn to share their ideas and take turns to use resources and play equipment. Adults are careful to focus on developing children's skills at all times. This includes counting how many are in attendance during registration, and describing their thoughts and feelings during story time.
- Children quickly learn daily routines, such as putting on hats and coats to play outdoors. Their sensible behaviour when moving around Nursery and Reception makes a good contribution to their safety, as do the clear and consistent expectations that adults have of them.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their learning. This was exemplified in the excitement generated when in Reception the teacher took a telephone call from the Gruffalo who informed her of a forthcoming party. On hearing this children were eager to write out their invitations, and make their 'Gruffalo crumble.' Similarly, children in Nursery enjoyed counting the body parts of a stick man before ordering his family by size, and singing along to the stick man song played by their teacher on a harp.
- All groups of children, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, are exceptionally well cared for. Well trained adults ensure that they fully participate in classroom activities, and make good progress in their learning.
- Parents are very happy with their children's progress and safety, and say that they enjoy coming into Reception on a Friday morning to listen to them read, and talk to staff.
- Adults are careful to continually assess and document how well children are developing in their learning. This information is shared with parents through, for example, 'learning journeys' which chart children's work and progress.

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	105720
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	453552

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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eugene Dolan
Headteacher	Peter Moore
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2013
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