

St Hilda's CofE Primary School

Tilbury Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL1 2HJ

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not sustained good teaching and outcomes for pupils. Leaders' checks on teaching do not take enough account of pupils' progress and attainment.
- Teaching is not good enough over time to enable pupils who have low starting points to catch up and reach standards expected for their age by Year 6.
- Assessment is not used precisely enough to make sure that teaching builds on pupils' prior learning effectively.
- The most able pupils are not taught in enough depth to achieve higher standards.
- Progress in writing is too slow for pupils of all abilities. Teaching does not build on pupils' phonic skills, grammar, punctuation and spelling successfully. Pupils' writing is not developed well in subjects other than English.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is hampered by their insecure grasp of number facts and place value. Their reasoning and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped.
- Children's progress in the early years is not rapid enough. Assessment is not used effectively to plan activities that take learning forward briskly.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is happy and harmonious. Pupils develop effective personal skills, feel safe and are looked after well. Their behaviour is good.
- Governors and leaders are aware of where improvement is needed and have a strong commitment to improving the school. Staff work hard and have skills they can build on to improve their practice.
- The curriculum is interesting and motivating. It broadens pupils' experiences and helps them to develop good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully. Pupils are respectful and knowledgeable about different faiths and cultures.
- There is some effective teaching. For example, teachers instil a love of reading from an early age.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. Vulnerable pupils and international new arrivals are supported effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that activities planned for pupils to complete in lessons support the intended learning outcome successfully
 - using assessment effectively to plan teaching that builds on pupils' prior learning and is pitched at the right level
 - making sure that the most able pupils are taught the knowledge and skills they need to achieve higher standards.
- Quicken pupils' progress and raise their attainment in writing by:
 - teaching phonic skills effectively in the early stages and making sure that any gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge are filled in later years
 - ensuring that grammar, punctuation and spellings are taught systematically, building on pupils' prior attainment and increasingly in line with national curriculum expectations in each year group
 - developing writing across the curriculum.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that key skills in number facts and place value are mastered in line with national curriculum standards expected for pupils' age
 - developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Quicken children's progress in the early years by:
 - using assessment effectively to plan activities that build on children's prior learning and target areas of learning where their experience is most limited
 - ensuring that activities provided for children to access independently provide opportunities to further their learning.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of teaching in all subjects to take more account of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and attainment over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not been able to sustain good progress and outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Their expectations of the standards pupils can and should achieve in each year group are not high enough.
- Senior and middle leaders do not take enough account of pupils' progress and attainment over time when evaluating the quality of teaching. Their evaluations are too generous and the management of teachers' performance is consequently not effective in ensuring that teaching is consistently good.
- School development planning is focused on the right priorities but it is not specific enough about what needs to improve in teaching and how the improvements will be achieved. Leaders' analysis of how teaching contributes to pupils' progress is not sharp enough and this impedes improvement.
- Middle leaders' checks on teaching in English and mathematics ensure that the curriculum is covered and school policies for marking and feedback are followed. However, their checks do not focus sufficiently on the depth of pupils' learning or the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time.
- Recent changes to the approach to teaching writing are beginning to have an impact, for example in increasing the range of writing. It is too soon, however, to determine whether the new approach is sufficiently raising the standard of pupils' writing.
- There are strengths in leadership, providing the school with capacity to improve. The school provides a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for staff and pupils. Staff are committed, work hard and are keen to improve their practice. They feel well supported by leaders and enjoy working at the school. Pupils feel included and happy in school.
- Since 2015 leaders have managed a 25% increase in the number of pupils on roll following expansion of the school. Some in-year arrivals were international new arrivals and consequently had no previous experience of school. Leaders and staff managed their induction successfully, welcoming them into the harmonious and supportive atmosphere.
- Middle leaders are developing their skills through training in school and external courses. They are increasingly leading training for other staff in school. Staff value the professional development they receive.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Additional funding provided to the school for SEN is used effectively. The experienced leader provides good-quality training for teaching assistants and pupils make good progress in small groups.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting for pupils. It is wide-ranging and covers all subjects of the national curriculum within the school's topic-based approach. This approach is successful in enthusing staff and pupils and broadens pupils' experiences. Pupils' learning within topics is enriched with visits, themed weeks and memorable experiences. Reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught discretely but are not reinforced as effectively as they could be across all subjects.

- Additional provision for pupils before school, at lunchtime and after school is wide-ranging and motivating. Pupils develop their creative, sporting and technical skills in additional activities in art, music, engineering, computing and sports clubs. The homework and debating clubs are well attended and support pupils' learning effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully through the curriculum and the ethos of the school. Pupils have a mature understanding of different cultures, faiths and appreciate the various religions represented in their school. They learn from each other about Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths and show great respect for faiths different to their own. They are increasingly aware of global issues and moral dilemmas and discuss them sensitively.
- Pupils' social skills are developed effectively in lessons, through the school's emphasis on collaborative learning. British values are taught explicitly and are also practised in the work of the school. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to promote healthy lifestyles and broaden pupils' participation in physical activity. Pupils enjoy PE lessons and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately to provide support for eligible pupils. Leaders provide additional support to help minimise the effect of the barriers to pupils' learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils typically make similar or better progress than other pupils in school. However, their progress and attainment were below those of other pupils nationally in all subjects at key stage 2 in 2017.
- Leaders work effectively to engage parents in their children's learning. The school holds many workshops for parents to help them understand what pupils are learning in school and support them in reinforcing their learning at home. Parents are welcomed into lessons to learn alongside their children.
- Leaders have visited other schools but have no formal partnership arrangements. The local authority provides minimal support as governors buy in school improvement support from a consultant. Where local authority advisers have provided reviews, they have been useful in advising leaders on where improvements are needed.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware of where improvement is needed and have a strong commitment to improving the school. They are welcoming of advice and analysis provided by external professionals. They have recently completed reviews of pupil premium and governance to support their next steps.
- Governors have a grasp of the school's performance based on their understanding of data. However, they have not taken account of the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' progress over time when challenging leaders.
- Governors are aware of how decisions are made about teachers' salary and manage the performance of the headteacher appropriately, with advice from an external consultant. They ensure that additional funding is used appropriately, following analysis of the barriers to pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils feel safe and well looked after in the calm environment.
- Records are fit for purpose and staff are vigilant in identifying safeguarding issues and ensuring that the school's policies are followed. They have undertaken training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. Training is supplemented with frequent updates, so staff are alert to various risks to pupils' safety and those associated with extremism.
- Vulnerable pupils and their families are supported extremely well. There are good procedures in place to support children who are looked after or who have a protection plan. Leaders liaise with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils who join the school in-year, including those who are international new arrivals, are supported to settle in with the minimum stress. Liaison with social care agencies is thorough and effective. Pupils who leave the school are also tracked carefully to make sure that they are safe.
- Leaders work closely with parents to build positive relationships and ensure that they are well informed of risks and of the school's work. Parents who made their views known are confident that their children are happy and safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers work hard and go to great lengths to link learning across the curriculum and take account of pupils' interests. However, teaching does not build on pupils' knowledge and skills systematically over time. Consequently, while lessons are often fun and interactive, pupils' progress is too slow over time to enable them to catch up and achieve at the standards expected in each year group.
- A sizeable proportion of older pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills in mathematics and writing, because learning at earlier stages was not secure. This is the case for pupils who have been at the school since early years and key stage 1, as well as a small number who joined the school later.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are not based on secure assessments of pupils' prior learning. Sometimes, pupils are given low-level activities that do not further their learning or they repeat work done previously. At other times, some pupils struggle because they do not have a secure command of the knowledge and skills they need to complete the given task.
- Recent changes to the school's policy on teaching writing are securing better teaching. Pupils write more frequently in English lessons and develop sound knowledge of the features of different types of text. However, pupils do not develop fluency in their writing because grammar, punctuation and spelling are not taught systematically and errors in pupils' extended writing are repeated. Older pupils do not have a good grasp of spelling patterns and word types.
- Pupils do not do much extended writing in subjects other than English. They do not practise or apply their writing skills in a range of different contexts. Key subject-specific vocabulary is not well developed.

- Phonics teaching has improved in the last year so more children in the early years and Year 1 are now able to make reasonable attempts at writing words. However, gaps in the phonic knowledge of older pupils are not addressed.
- Teachers make learning in mathematics fun and pupils enjoy lessons. However, some pupils struggle to work at the standards expected for their age because their knowledge of number facts and place value is not secure. Teaching is not precise enough to enable them to catch up in the early stages and increasingly work at the standards expected for their age.
- Teaching in subjects such as history, geography and art, for example, lacks depth and some of the worksheets pupils are given do not develop their knowledge and skills in that subject.
- Work provided for the most able pupils is not at a sufficiently demanding level to enable them to achieve higher standards in some classes.
- There are strengths in teaching that provide the school with capacity to share best practice and secure improvements. Some teachers are skilled at planning activities and questioning pupils to deepen their learning.
- Teachers establish positive relationships with pupils, helping pupils to grow in confidence and develop good attitudes to learning. They make learning fun and manage their classes competently. Pupils are very positive about lessons and especially enjoy collaborative learning.
- Teachers instil a love of reading from an early stage. Pupils talk enthusiastically about different authors and the books they read in class and at home.
- Homework is popular with pupils because they say it is 'fun and interesting'. They are proud of the 'learning logs' which they complete at home or in the school's homework club.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers. They are deployed to make the best use of their skills and provide good support in classes and small groups. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well, because teaching in the small groups is much more focused on their specific learning needs.
- International new arrivals who are at early stages of speaking English are supported well and make good gains in their communication, language and reading skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are a high priority for all staff. They encourage and support pupils to grow in confidence and engage in learning.
- Pupils' personal skills, such as resilience, collaboration, cooperation and self-reliance, are developed successfully through the broad curriculum and the many enrichment activities. Pupils say, 'The best thing about the school is that we work together and help each other.' This was seen in lessons and in shared areas of the school throughout the inspection.

- Pupils say that they feel entirely safe in school. They are taught about risks and threats to their safety and develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a range of situations. They are aware of risks when online and know what to do if they ever feel threatened. Pupils also learn about risks to their safety outside, for example on roads and railways, and know how to look after their health.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that bullying hardly ever happens in their school. Name-calling based on race, sexuality, disability or gender is not tolerated and pupils show respect for each other. On the rare occasions when bullying has happened in the past, pupils say that it was dealt with well. School records show that there have been no recent incidents of bullying.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and are justifiably proud of the good contribution they make to the running of the school, for example as computing, healthy living, eco, mindfulness or sports ambassadors. Members of the pupil parliament are enthusiastic about their achievements in school.
- Older pupils take good care of younger pupils. 'Play-time buddies' make sure that all pupils are safe and happy at breaktimes and pupils also enjoy helping them in class.
- Parents who made their views known are extremely positive about behaviour and safety at the school. They say, for example, 'My children always look forward to going to school...I can always feel the happiness and positivity every time I attend for any school event. Children have a really "can-do" positive attitude.' The inspection confirms these views.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Occasional inattention or overexcited behaviour is dealt with quickly by teachers, so there is minimal disruption.
- Conduct around the school is good. Pupils treat staff and each other with respect. Over lunch, pupils are well mannered and keen to help each other in serving food at the table. At breaktimes they socialise and play happily together. They are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils have a full understanding of the behaviour code and do their best to uphold the school's 'golden promise'. They are proud of the awards they receive for good behaviour.
- Records of incidents that fall short of staff's high expectations for behaviour are detailed. Any unacceptable behaviour is followed up with appropriate support or sanctions. Pupils say that, while there is occasional poor behaviour, incidents are rare and staff deal with it fairly.
- Attendance by the majority of pupils is above average. For a small minority of families, persistent absenteeism is high, and this brings overall attendance down. In 2016 to 2017, attendance dipped due to families taking extended holidays. The appointment of a key worker to check and follow up absence and support families in getting their children to school every day is having a positive impact.
- Fixed-term exclusion increased in the last year but was used appropriately to ensure

the safety of all pupils. Pupils are supported well to minimise the risk of repeat exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in the early years and across the school to catch up from their low starting points when they join Nursery. Pupils' progress in writing at key stage 2 has been below that of pupils with the same starting points nationally for several years. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has been more variable and was in line with other pupils nationally in 2016 and 2017, albeit from very low attainment at key stage 1. These trends are continuing for pupils currently at school.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and writing is patchy across the school. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of the standards expected for pupils in Years 1, 3, 4, and 5. Alongside this, assessment is not used precisely enough to ensure that teaching builds on pupils' prior learning effectively. The work that is set for pupils is not matched well enough to their learning needs so it does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check has historically been below average. 2017 saw some improvement and this is continuing for pupils in the current Year 1 class. However, older pupils still have gaps in their phonic knowledge and this has a negative impact on their progress in writing.
- Pupils' progress in writing is starting to improve with the school's revised approach to teaching. Handwriting is better, pupils develop a wide vocabulary and they are aware of the features of different types of writing. However, pupils' writing is not fluent because their grammar, punctuation and spelling are not secure.
- In mathematics, some pupils have gaps in their understanding of place value and do not have a fluent command of number facts. They do not make consistently good progress because these skills are not assessed fully and built on systematically.
- Pupils' attainment in the standardised assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage has been below average for several years. The further dip in attainment at key stage 2 in 2017 was partly due to the influx of pupils in 2015, who joined the school when the number on roll increased by 25%. Some of these pupils did not have prior attainment data and some were international new arrivals.
- Pupils' attainment at key stage 1 shows some improvement and the difference between pupils in school and pupils' attainment nationally is diminishing.
- Almost all pupils in the school are dual-language speakers; most speak Bengali as well as English. Most pupils have a good command of English and speak, read and write in English at home as well as in school. Pupils who are at early stages of language acquisition are supported effectively and make good progress in learning English.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well in class and small groups. Their needs are assessed in detail and teaching is more precisely matched to their needs in small groups than it is for other pupils, so they make better progress than other pupils in school.

- The most able pupils in school rarely attain at greater depth in any subjects at key stage 1 or in reading and writing at key stage 2. More of them attain higher standards in mathematics at key stage 2, although the proportion is still below average.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment are typically in line with those of other pupils in school but below those of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. The recent review of pupil premium spending is ensuring that additional funding is spent appropriately.
- The improvement in achievement in the early years and at key stage 1 provides stronger foundations for pupils to build on their skills as they move to the next key stage. However, pupils are not prepared as well as they need to be when they move to secondary school, especially with regard to their skills in writing across the curriculum.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children start the Nursery class with knowledge and skills below those that are typical for their age. Experiences of language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly limited for some children.
- For several years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception class has been below average. Progress has started to quicken and children's outcomes in 2017 were the best achieved by the school to date. The proportion achieving a good level of development was still below average, but recent changes to provision are having a positive impact.
- The progress of children currently in the Nursery and Reception classes is quickening but is not yet as rapid as it needs to be to prepare children fully for the Year 1 curriculum. This is because assessment is not used effectively to plan teaching and activities that will take children's learning forward rapidly. Some activities are at too low a level to help children build on their existing knowledge or skills. The most able children are not provided with enough challenge.
- Assessment is not used effectively to identify where children need extra support to develop balanced knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Consequently, some children make uneven progress because they lack experience in some areas.
- Although assessment is not used as well as it could be to target learning precisely, children are provided with a range of activities across all areas of the curriculum that engage their interest. The newly developed outdoor area is being used well to support learning in all areas. For example, children enjoyed digging for words in the mud kitchen and searching for letter 'jewels' during a phonics session.
- Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developed well. Adults are encouraging and supportive, so children settle in happily and grow in confidence. Bengali-speaking teachers and teaching assistants make sure that children's knowledge and needs are assessed in the language that is most familiar to them.
- Children's behaviour is consistently good in all classes. They feel and are safe in the well-organised and calm environment. All statutory welfare requirements are met and there are thorough safeguarding procedures that are followed by all staff. The children are well supervised by well-qualified staff.

- Additional funding is used appropriately to provide disadvantaged children with support to raise their achievement. They achieve as well as other children in the early years.
- Early years staff build positive relationships with parents. They welcome parents in to work alongside their children and provide many workshops to help parents support their children's learning at home. Staff work effectively with a range of agencies to ensure that support is provided where needed. Families who are new to the country are supported extremely well.
- Leaders are clear about what needs to improve and have appropriate plans to secure further improvement. Good-quality training for staff is helping to secure improvements. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is getting closer to average. Children's positive behaviours for learning provide a good foundation for further learning, but too few are fully prepared for the age-appropriate curriculum when they move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	105702
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10037770

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	Elizabeth Scoltock
Headteacher	Gillian Pursey
Telephone number	0161 624 3592
Website	www.sthildas.oldham.sch.uk
Email address	info@sthildas.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school had an increase in the number on roll by 25% in September 2015. Pupils joined the school at various times throughout the year and in every year group. Some pupils were international new arrivals and others joined the school from other schools in the locality.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- Virtually all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and are believed to speak English as an additional language. Most pupils speak both Bengali and English. A minority are at early stages of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported for SEN is above average. The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school met government floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum standards for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They looked at pupils' work during observations and carried out an in-depth scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work from each key stage 1 and 2 class.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. They met with groups of pupils and gained their views about safety and bullying, teaching and learning.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, the vice-chair of the governing body, the consultant supporting the school and a local authority representative.
- They looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and records of monitoring, management of performance and training. Safeguarding policies and procedures were examined.
- Inspectors took account of three responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, one response to the online pupil survey and 34 responses from staff.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Shackleton	Ofsted Inspector

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