

# Inspection of St Thomas CofE Primary School

St Thomas Street, Werneth, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 1SE

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Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

St Thomas is a safe, happy school. Pupils enjoy their learning and feel valued. All the children that we met told us that they do not worry about bullying. They trust staff to act quickly if there are any problems.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent because staff have high expectations. Pupils are respectful, polite and friendly. There is a real emphasis on developing their character so that they make good choices about how they get on with other people and their work.

The school helps pupils to grow up as responsible citizens. There are many roles for pupils to undertake in school. These include becoming school councillors or youth leaders who organise games at playtime. Leaders give pupils opportunities to think about their own and others' mental health. Pupils are tolerant of all faiths and say that everyone is made welcome in their school.

The school is ambitious for everyone. Staff work hard to encourage, inspire and support all pupils, whatever their background or ability. Pupils do well in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. They concentrate and work hard.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Many pupils arrive at the school speaking little or no English. They settle quickly and flourish. Pupils do well academically and personally in this school. Published data for Year 6 shows that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics put them in the top 20% of all schools in 2019. A well-planned curriculum, plus pupils' excellent behaviour and positive approach to learning, underpin pupils' success. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the extra help they need in their learning. Disadvantaged pupils catch up quickly.

Leaders make sure that the teaching of reading is strong so that all pupils learn to read well and communicate successfully. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. They order pupils' learning in a way that enables them to build on what they know. They follow a sensible structure when they are teaching phonics. The number of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is improving but it is still below the national average.

Subject leaders are highly skilled. They make sure that pupils learn what they need in almost all subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about how to build up learning step by step. This means that pupils gain a deep body of knowledge by the time they leave Year 6. They are well prepared for their move on to secondary school. Teachers use resources that help pupils to learn effectively. For example, they provide key information about a subject so that pupils understand what needs to be learned. In most subjects, they check pupils' understanding well and make sure that pupils have grasped important ideas. However, these strategies are not as well developed in geography in key stage 1, music or physical education (PE).

Leaders in the early years have a carefully planned curriculum that includes suitable activities with the two-year-old children. Leaders focus closely on developing pupils' language and communication. Staff make sure that there are plenty of resources that help children to build up their vocabulary. They regularly check how well children are learning and give them support to fill in any gaps in their knowledge. Children get off to a good start. Each year the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception is increasing.

The curriculum goes well beyond academic learning. Leaders ensure that pupils have an awareness of the wider world to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teachers plan many visits and invite speakers to talk about their experiences.

Teachers help pupils to recognise the difference between right and wrong. They learn about such issues as apartheid, social injustice, democracy and diversity. There are many opportunities to take part in sports and out-of-school clubs.

The school supports all children and the wider community very effectively. Leaders are as ambitious for parents and carers as for their children. For example, they provide support and advice for parents on getting help with matters such as housing problems. Leaders try to make sure that all families have access to safe homes and education. Leaders make sure that every child and every family is very well supported.

Highly effective leadership at all levels, including governance, has resulted in a thriving school community where pupils benefit from a good and improving quality of education. Staff feel valued and trusted. They are proud to work at this school. Parents feel welcome. They have nothing but praise for this 'amazing school'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone in school knows that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. All staff are well trained to notice any signs of problems. Any concerns are quickly noted and followed up swiftly. The school has very good links with other agencies. Leaders are aware of any risks specific to the local area and take extra steps when necessary to keep pupils and their families safe.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum has been implemented effectively in almost all subjects. This is not the case for a small number of subjects, such as music and PE. Leaders need to ensure that the content of the planned curriculum is delivered equally well

across all subject areas.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

|                                            |                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 105698                                                                                 |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Oldham                                                                                 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110884                                                                               |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 2 to 11                                                                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 481                                                                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                                     |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Revd. Nick Andrewes                                                                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mrs Angela Knowles                                                                     |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stthomaswernethprimary.co.uk">www.stthomaswernethprimary.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 6 June and 27–28 June 2017                                                             |

## Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2019.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met the senior leadership team, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinators, the lead for the early years foundation stage, the extended services manager and other members of staff. Inspectors also met the chair of governors and three other governors and a representative of the local authority.
- We looked in depth at reading, mathematics, science and history. This involved talking to the subject leaders, visiting lessons, discussing these subjects with class teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at their books with them.
- We scrutinised the school's record of checks on members of staff. We also looked at the school's safeguarding, child protection and e-safety policies. Talks were held with the designated safeguarding leads. We spoke to pupils about their understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

- We looked at pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- We considered the views of the 17 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the outcome of the school's most recent parental survey, which had 97 responses.

### **Inspection team**

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Judith Straw, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Amanda Dodd                  | Ofsted Inspector |
| Christine Howard             | Ofsted Inspector |

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