

Greenfield St Mary's CofE School

Manchester Road, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancashire OL3 7DW

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have very successfully addressed a worrying dip in pupils' outcomes. Their excellent leadership has ensured that weaknesses have been robustly and effectively addressed and the school is now back on track and moving forward strongly.
- Current pupils are making strong progress in reading and mathematics. This is especially true for pupils who are currently working within key stage 2.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' writing has had a significant, positive impact. Pupils typically spell and punctuate their work accurately and many are now writing with a good degree of flair, choosing ambitious vocabulary for effect well.
- Governance is a major strength of the school. Governors provide a wealth of knowledge and experience and very effectively hold school leaders to account.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Outstanding teaching and leadership have ensured that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above average.
- First-rate phonics teaching has ensured that a high proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It is very well enhanced by a broad programme of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Pupils' work in science and art is particularly strong.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and attitudes to learning are first class. Pupils' excellent attendance rates illustrate how much they enjoy coming to school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The school works very well with other local schools, and teachers value the chances they have for professional development.
- Teaching across the school is of a consistently good standard, and some is highly effective. Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and use questions effectively to advance pupils' learning.
- Over time, teaching in key stage 1 has not consistently made the most of the excellent start that children make in the early years.
- Not all teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is not as strong and fewer pupils reach the higher standards of attainment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes, particularly for the most able pupils and pupils in key stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, and provide the most able pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging so that more achieve the highest standards of attainment
 - making sure that pupils in key stage 1 build more fully on the excellent start that they make in the early years
 - ensuring that the highly effective practice seen in many classes is more consistently replicated across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Instability in staffing and leadership, budgetary constraints and changes to curriculum and assessment all contributed to a marked decline in pupils' outcomes in 2016 and 2017. From that low point, leaders' response has been highly effective. The headteacher and governors have quickly and accurately identified particular areas of concern and have acted to address them. Clear improvements have been made, pupils' outcomes are improving strongly and the school is now firmly back on track.
- Senior leaders know the school extremely well. Their self-evaluation is extremely thorough, highlighting the many strengths that the school has, while honestly and accurately recognising those areas that need strengthening further. Plans for school improvement are very well thought out and have helped to drive the improvements that have taken place in the last five terms.
- The impact of this excellent leadership on pupils' outcomes is most clearly illustrated in the significant improvements in pupils' writing. In 2017, pupils' attainment and progress in writing were both below average at the end of key stage 2. Leaders planned a clear path to secure substantial improvement. They firstly concentrated on the basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation, which improved massively in the space of 12 months. The focus has now broadened to developing pupils' skills in writing creatively and accurately in a range of genres. Pupils' work confirms that significant progress has also been made in this area and many pupils, particularly within key stage 2, are now producing work of a very high standard.
- Leaders have made excellent use of continuing professional development to improve standards of teaching and learning overall, and to ensure that there is great consistency in the teaching of English and mathematics. This helps to maximise the progress that pupils make because no time is lost unnecessarily covering old ground. Staff appreciate the support they have been given, and morale is high.
- Leaders have put in place a curriculum that is varied and interesting for pupils. At its heart is the excellent development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Leaders have gone to great lengths to ensure that pupils have chances to mix with their counterparts from schools serving different local communities. Pupils have consequently developed a mature appreciation of, and respect for, different cultures and religions.
- The curriculum is very well enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities such as netball and drama clubs, ju-jitsu and choir. Pupils also told inspectors how much they enjoyed going on school trips, and how hands-on activities had helped them to learn more about the topics they were covering in school. For example, a trip to see Roman artefacts and to dress up as a legionary had made a big impression on some pupils, while others spoke excitedly about taking part in a major singing event.
- Leaders make very effective use of the relatively small amount of additional funding. There are only a handful of disadvantaged pupils in the school but leaders are still careful to ensure that pupil premium funding is used fairly. The additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport is well used, providing pupils with expert coaching in

games such as lacrosse. This also helps to develop teachers' knowledge of how to teach a wider range of PE activities.

- The special educational needs coordinator is experienced and very knowledgeable. She has an excellent overview of the different needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She has ensured that staff have had additional, specific training to help them to meet individual pupils' needs, and this has ensured that pupils with SEND progress very well from their varied starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors, a number of whom are relatively recently appointed, provide a wealth of experience and expertise from both within and outside the world of education. They are highly ambitious for the school's future and have worked extremely well in tandem with senior leaders to reverse the decline in the school's fortunes and so ensure that the school is moving forward strongly.
- Governors know the school extremely well and play an active role in school life. They have a clear understanding of its many strengths, and also where any weaknesses remain. Governors are rigorous in challenging senior leaders and holding them to account for how well the school is performing.
- Governors have been highly effective in ensuring that the school's limited financial resources are used and managed to best effect. They have not shied away from making difficult decisions around staffing and recruitment. Their decisions, such as that to trust and build on the capacity of leaders within the school, have borne fruit and helped to ensure that the school continues to improve while remaining financially secure.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have been successful in creating a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Robust procedures are in place to keep pupils safe in the event of an emergency and the school building and grounds are attractive and impeccably well maintained.
- Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular training so that their understanding of good practice in safeguarding is up to date. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil's welfare and there are efficient and well-understood systems in place to ensure that any concerns are carefully recorded and quickly acted upon. Leaders have established effective working relationships with external agencies to ensure that help is available for potentially vulnerable pupils.
- The headteacher ensures that thorough checks are made on staff, governors and regular visitors to the school to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. The school maintains detailed records of these checks in line with statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching throughout the school is consistently good and, in some year groups, it is particularly effective. Teachers typically have good subject knowledge which allows them to provide pupils with clear explanations and to pick up on pupils' misconceptions. They also use questions successfully to check what pupils know and ensure that pupils are given time to respond to the feedback on their learning.
- Writing is given a high priority across school. Teachers have successfully developed pupils' key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and most pupils now write accurately. Teachers are now concentrating on developing pupils' ability to write in different styles and for different audiences. This work is also bearing fruit, and pupils, particularly those in Years 3, 4 and 5, are writing with increasing confidence and effect.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective, and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check every year is high. Teachers and teaching assistants have a strong knowledge of phonics, and the school's consistent approach to teaching phonics maximises progress.
- Teachers build very effectively on the strong start that pupils make in reading. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, and develop a very clear enjoyment of reading. Older pupils become fluent, expressive readers who have a good understanding of the subtleties and nuances within the books that they are reading.
- Mathematics is taught effectively across the school. Pupils learn to work confidently with numbers and develop mathematical fluency. Teachers ensure that pupils then have plenty of opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to problem-solving tasks, and are encouraged to discuss their strategies and findings with their classmates. This approach is helping to develop pupils' reasoning skills.
- There are some notable strengths in teaching across the wider curriculum. In science, pupils benefit from a good balance of practical activities, research and building up scientific knowledge. As a result, attainment in science is consistently high. Art is also well taught, as can be seen from pupils' high-quality artwork.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They work well in partnership with class teachers, show good skills in questioning pupils in order to move their learning along and regularly provide effective support for those pupils who need some additional help.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- School life at Greenfield St Mary's is underpinned by an impressive culture of mutual support and respect. Relationships between adults and pupils are exemplary. Pupils clearly value their education and appreciate the many opportunities which prepare them extremely well for life at secondary school and beyond.
- There is a very high level of care and nurture throughout the school, and pupils have great confidence that staff will help them if they have any worries or problems. Leaders

show real concern for the well-being of staff and pupils, and the school website contains useful information for parents and carers on this subject.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they know that it is important not to share personal information when using the internet, and understand that they should never arrange to meet up with somebody they have only previously 'met' online.
- Pupils enjoy having the chance to take on positions of responsibility, such as being a member of the school council and the eco-council. School councillors explained that they were elected democratically, and talked proudly about activities they have taken part in to raise money for different charities. Older pupils had an impressive understanding of current affairs, very perceptively making the link between news reports about anti-Semitism and their learning about the events of the Second World War.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They listen well, both to their teachers and to their classmates, and confidently share their own ideas and discuss what they have learned. They waste no time in getting on with their work. Classrooms are typically hives of activity. Pupils take great pride in their work, and work in books and on display is typically extremely well presented.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and on the playground is exemplary. Pupils are unfailingly well mannered, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They are also thoughtful and caring towards each other. Older pupils told inspectors about the improvements that they had seen in behaviour this year, and one described behaviour around school now as being 'superb'.
- Attendance is consistently well above the national average and hardly any pupils regularly miss school. This is a clear indication of how much pupils enjoy coming to school, and the pupils that inspectors spoke with confirmed that they felt the school was a happy and friendly place to come and learn.
- A small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying through the Parent View survey. However, inspectors gathered no evidence to substantiate these anxieties. Leaders have well-planned systems to manage the behaviour of pupils who need extra support. Pupils appreciate the clear rules and reward scheme, and staff have received excellent training to help them support pupils' behaviour. As a result, the school provides its pupils with an extremely calm and welcoming environment in which to learn and play.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the time they reach the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is typically above average. An increasingly large proportion of pupils are also reaching the higher standard in these areas by the end of Year 6. Attainment in

writing is, however, more broadly in line with that seen in other schools nationally, and markedly fewer pupils are writing at greater depth when they leave Year 6.

- Pupils' rates of progress, which had dropped to below average in 2016 and 2017, improved considerably in 2018 to be back in line with national averages. Current pupils, particularly in the lower stages of key stage 2, are now typically making strong progress. For some older pupils, there is still some catching up to do to secure learning that was not covered as successfully earlier on in the school. This is particularly the case in writing, which is why fewer pupils reach greater depth in writing than achieve the higher levels in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 is very good, and an above-average proportion are reading at greater depth by the time they leave Year 2. In recent years, attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has been broadly average, both in terms of pupils attaining the expected standard and those achieving greater depth. There are positive signs that the progress of current Year 1 pupils is more closely mirroring the very strong progress that they make in the early years.
- The teaching of phonics is a significant strength of the school, and pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check is typically well above that of other schools nationally. Pupils' confidence in using phonics has also been a factor in recent significant improvements in pupils' spelling, as seen in the above-average results of the 2018 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities in a wide variety of areas. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of topics in history, such as the Anglo-Saxons and the Second World War, and also in areas such as geography and science. Their learning in art is particularly impressive. Their sketchbooks show that their drawing skills are being very well developed over time, and this is further showcased by the high-quality work on display around the school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. Outstanding provision in the early years gives children a flying start and they make excellent progress. By the time they leave the Reception class, an above-average proportion have achieved a good level of development and many are exceeding that level. They are exceptionally well prepared as they move into Year 1.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is first-rate. Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent understanding of the early years curriculum and how young children learn. They skilfully develop children's language skills while broadening their understanding in other areas of the curriculum. For example, children delighted in using a balloon to power a 'rocket' to fly across the playground. The teacher adeptly encouraged children to use powerful words to describe how fast the rocket moved, while also getting them to make scientific predictions about what would happen if the balloon had less air in it.

- Children benefit from an attractive, high-quality learning environment, both indoors and outside. Staff ensure that there is a wide range of engaging activities available for children to explore and enjoy.
- Staff make regular, detailed observations of children's learning to check on their progress and attainment. They then use this information, and their knowledge of children's interests, to meticulously plan the next steps in children's learning. This ensures that children's learning is continually moving forward.
- Behaviour in the early years is excellent. Children get on well with each other, such as when working cooperatively to build a balancing track outside. They are also extremely welcoming to visitors, and were happy showing inspectors around and explaining what they were doing in different areas of the classroom. Relationships between staff and children are exemplary.
- The partnership between school and home is very strong. A clear illustration of this is at the start of the day, when staff work alongside parent volunteers to deliver focused phonics sessions to individuals and small groups of children. This is extremely successful in developing children's early reading skills, and contributes to the consistently outstanding progress made in phonics across the early years and Year 1. The development of such effective partnerships is also an illustration of the high quality of leadership in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	105723
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10090521

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Mark Rahn
Headteacher	Mrs S M Hall
Telephone number	01457 872 264
Website	www.greenfieldstmary.oldham.sch.uk/
Email address	head@greenfieldstmary.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2009

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- Very few pupils in the school are eligible for pupil premium funding and, at the time of the inspection, there were no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs, which together are known as St Mary's Diamonds. This provision is overseen by the governing body.
- The school is a member of The Dovestone Learning Partnership, which is a collaborative group of local schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. They also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss school life and the curriculum and to hear some pupils read. They also talked informally with pupils around the school. They took into account 88 responses to the Parent View survey.
- Inspectors met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. They had discussions with staff in the school, including the leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and a range of subject leaders. Inspectors also met with the teachers jointly responsible for the early years, the designated lead for safeguarding and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance and records of meetings of the governing body. They also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Deane OBE	Ofsted Inspector
Maria McGarry	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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