

# Inspection of St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Audenshaw Road, Audenshaw, Manchester M34 5HD

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending St Stephen's CofE Primary School. They feel safe in school. Pupils trust that staff will listen to any worries or concerns and help them when needed.

Pupils generally behave well and have fun at playtimes with their friends. They appreciate the new playground markings and enjoy running or walking the daily mile. However, pupils' behaviour in lessons is not as positive. Some staff do not ensure that pupils follow the recently introduced behaviour systems. This leads to disruption to pupils' learning in some classes across school.

The school has recently raised its expectations for what pupils should learn. This includes for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In some instances, this is beginning to make a difference to what pupils know. However, this is not consistent across different classes and subjects. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils enjoy the variety of clubs on offer, including football, choir and art. They enjoy competing in tournaments and performing for older residents in the local area. Pupils are keen to showcase their talents. They are enthusiastic about bringing the whole community together.

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

In the last 12 months, the school has made changes to its curriculum design. Most subject curriculums have been revised. The new curriculums are broad, balanced and ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. From the Reception Year to Year 6, the school has carefully mapped out the knowledge pupils need to learn. The curriculum is well ordered to help pupils build their knowledge over time.

The teaching of the curriculum is inconsistent across subjects and classes. At times, staff do not deliver new subject content as is set out by the school. This means that pupils' learning is sometimes disjointed. They do not learn important knowledge securely. As a result, in some subjects, pupils do not have solid foundations to build new learning on. This limits their achievement.

The school has strengthened its approach to the teaching of phonics and reading. However, the delivery of these programmes is variable. This means that most pupils are not confident, fluent readers by the time that they reach Year 2. While the school has introduced daily book time and provides rewards to encourage reading, most pupils do not show an enthusiasm for reading. They struggle to speak with confidence about authors and the books that they have read or enjoyed.

In contrast, children and staff in the early years sing well-chosen songs and rhymes together and hold extended conversations about books. Children enjoy and benefit from their learning, including in the school's well-organised outdoor area. However, the school's

early years curriculum has only recently been revised. The legacy of a weak early years curriculum remains. Many pupils in Year 1 are not ready to access the demands of key stage 1 and beyond.

The school and the interim executive board (IEB) recognise that a previously weak curriculum and instability in staffing have led to gaps in pupils' knowledge. They have ensured that those pupils who need to catch up receive effective and tailored support. This means that most pupils have caught up by the time that they reach the end of Year 6.

The school has supported staff to increase their knowledge and expertise around special educational needs. Some staff act quickly to identify when pupils may have SEND and provide them with effective support. Nonetheless, adaptations to the teaching of the curriculum to support pupils with SEND are not consistently effective across school. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has recently reviewed the behaviour policy. However, the new approach is not followed consistently well. In some lessons, pupils listen attentively and work cooperatively with one another. However, in most classes, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as strong. They regularly distract and hinder other pupils from learning.

The school's offer for personal development has recently been revised and improved. For example, pupils take part in many leadership responsibilities such as school council members, well-being ambassadors and eco-warriors. They are eager to get started and have their voice heard. Even so, previous weaknesses mean that some pupils have not learned all that they need to know in readiness for life in modern Britain.

Many staff are proud to be a part of St Stephen's. However, some staff do not feel that their workload and well-being are accounted for by leaders when making necessary changes.

The IEB, which has only been in place since the end of the last academic year, has a secure and accurate overview of the school's situation. Members of the IEB have spent much of that time bringing together and stabilising the staff and wider community. The IEB has not had sufficient time to be able to tackle the many historic weaknesses in the school. However, as a board, it brings the necessary skill set and commitment to support and challenge the school to improve further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some teachers do not deliver the new curriculum content as well as intended. This

means that pupils' experiences sometimes vary across classes and subjects. Some pupils are not learning the intended curriculum well enough. The school should ensure that all staff are suitably supported to deliver the curriculum.

- Some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND sufficiently well. This hinders how well pupils with SEND learn and achieve. The school should ensure that staff utilise the training they have received to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum and achieve well.
- The phonics programme is not delivered consistently well. As a result, some pupils struggle to become fluent readers by the end of Year 2. The school should ensure that staff receive further training to be able to deliver the phonics programme as intended and to promote a love of reading across the school.
- The school has not ensured that the behaviour system and routines are understood and adhered to by all staff and pupils. Some staff have low expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, the conduct of some pupils is poor. This interrupts other pupils' learning. The school must ensure that staff follow the new approaches to promote pupils' positive behaviour.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106246
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321301
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Fish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Guy Lovgreen
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ststephensprimary.co.uk">www.ststephensprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due by the end of 2029.
- There has been considerable change to the school since the previous inspection. Many staff, including the headteacher, are new to post. There has also been extensive change in the membership of the governing body resulting in the appointment of an interim executive board.
- The school provides a before-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and with members of staff. The lead inspector held discussions with members of the IEB, including the chair. She also spoke with representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other curriculum subjects. They spoke with leaders and pupils. Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work in these curriculum areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body and interim executive board meetings; leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement; and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with some parents during the inspection.

## **Inspection team**

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Peter Berry

Ofsted Inspector

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