

# Inspection of St Chad's RC Primary School

Balmfield Street, Cheetham, Manchester M8 0SP

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Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

The quality of education at the school is unacceptable. Deep-rooted weaknesses in leadership hinder school improvement. The capacity to improve the quality of education across the school is poor. Pupils' attainment in reading is very low in all key stages. Achievement across the curriculum is weak. This is particularly true for children in the early years. Throughout the school, pupils do not have a wide range of opportunities to promote their personal development.

Some pupils lack self-control because adults do not insist on high standards of behaviour. They are inattentive in lessons. They are too boisterous while they are playing. Some pupils are unruly as they move around the school. Some pupils are disrespectful when they are talking to each other.

Despite its shortcomings, pupils are proud to belong to their school. They feel safe and staff deal with bullying effectively. The school motto of 'Love one another as I have loved you' is apparent in some aspects of school life. Staff and pupils show this by the welcome that all pupils receive, regardless of their faith or ability. Pupils empathise with those who are vulnerable. They are keen to help others.

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

Leaders and governors have received intensive external support to help them to bring about much-needed improvement to the quality of education that pupils receive. Despite this work, leaders have failed to ensure that pupils benefit from a curriculum that enables them to achieve well across all curriculum areas.

Pupils' achievement is too low in reading, writing and mathematics. Published data shows that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 has been consistently lower than in other schools nationally. In 2019, fewer than half of the pupils in Year 6 reached the expected standards in these subjects. Disadvantaged pupils fare even worse.

Leaders are aware that the youngest children and pupils need to develop stronger phonics knowledge. They have recently introduced a new system for the teaching of phonics to enable this to happen. It is too early to say whether this is having an impact. Leaders do not make sure that pupils practise reading often enough to become fluent. In addition to this, the books that older pupils read are too easy. Pupils do not develop strong reading knowledge. This limits how well pupils can access other areas of the curriculum.

Curriculum planning has been rushed and not thought through. A significant number of staff feel overwhelmed by the many changes that leaders have implemented. Too little account has been taken of teachers' views in devising what pupils will be taught. This means that teachers do not fully understand what pupils already know. They are also unsure of what knowledge pupils need to gain in each topic. This has led to jumbled learning over time. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and an insecure understanding of important concepts.

The newly appointed subject leaders have recently begun to take action to improve the curriculum. Some leaders have begun to check on the quality of the work of other staff. However, some staff members told us that they do not get the support that they need from senior leaders to carry out their leadership roles effectively.

There has also been much external support to improve the curriculum in the early years. Staff are now more focused on learning in the Reception class. In the Nursery class, however, adults allow children to drift from one activity to another without purpose. Most children only join in activities if they are directed to by members of staff. The activities that staff lead tend to be mostly focused on literacy or mathematics. Children rarely attempt activities that are designed to develop their knowledge in other areas of learning. This is because aspects of the children's learning environment are bleak and do not capture the interest or imagination of children.

High standards of behaviour are not established throughout the school. Most of the time, pupils are kind to each other and behave well. However, some pupils display poor attitudes to learning. This prevents them from learning as well as they should. Some adults do not challenge pupils when they become distracted.

Leaders have no plans to improve pupils' wider development across the school. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are limited and ad hoc. A small number of pupils do have responsibilities in school. These include looking after the school rabbits, being sports leaders at lunchtime or being part of the school chaplaincy team. Given the opportunity, pupils carry out these roles well.

Some teachers have arranged trips to broaden pupils' awareness of the wider world. Pupils enjoy visiting local places such as the library, museums or water park. Staff provide some clubs after school for pupils. Older pupils take part in a residential outdoor activity trip.

All pupils are welcome at the school. Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all activities and lessons. Leaders provide additional support in class for pupils with SEND. However, their achievement, like that of other pupils, is limited by their poor grasp of reading.

Pupils enjoy having time to reflect in the school's prayer garden. They told us that the many different faiths that people belong to in the school help them to understand, respect and help others. Pupils are proud of the money that they have raised for charity.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff make sure that pupils are safe. They make effective use of the school's recording systems to support vulnerable pupils and to protect them from risk of harm. Leaders work closely with a range of other agencies. Pupils know how to keep

themselves safe, including when they are online. They tell adults about things that upset them. Some pupils are confident in reporting concerns themselves.

Leaders do not ensure that the documentation to support staff in following the school's procedures is kept up to date. Although all staff are given clear verbal explanations, written documents are not produced in a timely manner. The school's safeguarding procedures have only recently been updated in line with the latest guidance.

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

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

- There is a lack of clarity from leaders about what needs to be done to bring about the improvements needed to the curriculum in the school. Leaders have relied heavily on external support and yet have been unable to bring about the necessary change. Teachers and subject leaders are not clear what they need to do to help pupils learn well. Leaders need to make sure that all members of staff and governors have a shared understanding of what a high-quality curriculum looks like. They should also make sure that this curriculum is then delivered consistently well in all subjects and classrooms.
- Some subject leaders do not have the skills or knowledge that they need to bring about improvements in their subject area. There is no agreed plan for how or when subject leaders are expected to carry out their roles. This means that the quality of education is not checked. Leaders have a poor understanding of the weaknesses in their curriculum planning. They are also unsure how well these plans are delivered in different classrooms. Senior leaders need to provide effective support for subject leaders, especially those new to the role. Leaders need to ensure that a high-quality curriculum is delivered consistently well in all subject areas. Senior leaders also need to ensure that the workload for staff is manageable.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is very low. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, pupils are not able to achieve as well as they should in all areas of the curriculum. This is because the reading curriculum is weak. As a result, pupils' reading knowledge is not strong enough. Leaders need to review and adapt the reading curriculum to ensure that pupils can practise and develop their reading knowledge as they move through the school.
- Staff in the early years, and particularly in the Nursery class, do not ensure that the curriculum supports children in all aspects of their learning and development. They also do not make sure that the learning environment supports the intended learning. As a result, children do not have the skills, knowledge and attitudes that they need to succeed in the key stage 1 curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all staff understand how to support children to achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Some staff do not follow the school's agreed procedures for ensuring that pupils demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour. This undermines the school's

ethos and culture. It also affects the quality of learning. Leaders need to ensure that all staff members have a shared view of what the expected standard of behaviour is. Leaders need to make sure that pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.

- The opportunities that pupils have for their personal development are limited. Pupils do not develop a wide range of interest and talents. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans provide high-quality opportunities that contribute to pupils' wider development.

## 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 are the school and you are 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>	105525
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110956
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Dr Paul Leigh-Baker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic James
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-chads.manchester.sch.uk/">www.st-chads.manchester.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 July 2015

## Information about this school

- There have been two new headteachers appointed since the previous inspection. The most recent headteacher took up their post in September 2019.
- There have been recent significant changes to staffing and to the structure of the leadership team. This includes a new deputy headteacher, who took up their post in September 2019.
- The school has received considerable support since the previous academic year from the local authority and the diocese.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford and had its last section 48 inspection in July 2016.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- We spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- We looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the record of required checks carried out on school staff. We spoke to pupils about safeguarding. We also reviewed staff training logs and case files. We met with the person responsible for safeguarding to discuss how the school keeps pupils safe.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at breacktimes and lunchtimes. We also observed them in the breakfast club and as they moved around the school.
- We spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- We looked at the 14 responses to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 10 free-text responses from parents and carers to find out their views of the school. We spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- We focused closely on reading, mathematics, science and history. We talked to the leaders of these subjects. We visited lessons. We looked at examples of pupils' work. We talked with teachers and pupils about what pupils were learning.

### **Inspection team**

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Ofsted Inspector

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