

# St Stephen's Tockholes CofE Primary School

Rock Lane, Tockholes, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0LX

## Inspection dates

13–14 September 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher provides outstanding leadership to the school. She is ably supported by two assistant headteachers. Together they are transforming the school.
- Senior leaders have put safeguarding at the heart of the school's work. They have evaluated strengths and areas for development accurately and implemented an ambitious plan to improve the school further.
- From their different starting points, all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well. They assess pupils' work regularly and provide challenging activities for pupils of all abilities.
- Children in the early years make a positive start to their learning because they are taught well, like school and feel safe.
- Pupils are kind and respectful towards one another. They develop strong moral values. They have a deep understanding of tolerance and equality. All pupils feel safe because of the high-quality nurture and care they receive.
- Pupils behave well in school. They say that they feel valued and can voice their opinions. Most pupils work hard and listen to their teachers.
- Attendance is consistently above average. No pupils are persistently absent and there are no exclusions from school.
- The partnership with Blackburn the Redeemer CofE Primary School is benefiting both schools through the opportunities it gives leaders and teachers to share expertise, and the wider opportunities for pupils to learn collaboratively.
- Skilled governors know the school well. The governing body provides a high level of challenge and is ambitious for every pupil. The school is rapidly improving because the governing body has tackled previous weaknesses.
- The school is not yet outstanding because the progress that pupils make in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. Some pupils have a fairly limited vocabulary.
- Some pupils give up too quickly when faced with more difficult learning challenges.
- Subject leadership is still at an early stage of development.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching so that pupils make more rapid progress, particularly in writing, by:
  - systematically improving pupils' vocabulary so that their understanding of unfamiliar words is developed across the curriculum
  - setting higher expectations for the content and quality of pupils' written work in all subjects
  - building up pupils' resilience and confidence when they are faced with new challenges or are required to work on their own.
- Improve leadership and management across the school by developing and enhancing the skills of subject leaders.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and the two assistant headteachers are unwavering in their determination to secure an excellent education for all pupils in the school. They have successfully driven the school forward by improving the quality of teaching, eliminating weak practice and accelerating pupils' learning. The executive headteacher is a national leader of education and the partner school, Blackburn the Redeemer CofE Primary School, is an outstanding school.
- Rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress ensures that assessments are accurate, teaching is effective and pupils are making good progress. Teachers are secure in their assessments because they have received extensive professional development and participate in cross-school moderation of assessments, including with the partner school.
- Best practice is shared across both schools. Teachers and teaching assistants are part of a professional learning community where they can experiment, try new strategies and raise standards for all pupils.
- Staff morale is high. There is a strong sense of teamwork because all staff, whatever their role, feel valued and know that they are working together towards the same goals.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and sharply focused on improvement. Judgements about the quality of the school's work are firmly based on the analysis of information about pupils' attainment and progress, work seen in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and direct observations of teaching.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture where high expectations are the norm and the barriers some pupils face in their learning are not allowed to hinder their progress.
- Funds to enhance the learning of disadvantaged pupils are used to tailor learning to the precise needs of the pupils. Their effectiveness is measured in terms of individual pupils' attainment and progress. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress compared to other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6.
- The additional funding for primary physical education and sport is used well to enhance the professional development of staff and to offer pupils a wide range of sporting activities and clubs. As a result, the level of participation of pupils in sport has increased, more pupils attend after-school clubs and three quarters of pupils take part in inter-school sporting competitions. Pupils recently won a local small schools athletics competition.
- The curriculum is imaginative and develops in pupils a strong sense of responsibility for others. It is enriched by a wide range of educational visits and visitors. Last week, pupils joined with their partner school to visit the House of Commons and sang in a Bishop's celebration at Ewood Park. Activities last year included visits to a working farm, concerts and a local synagogue, and a residential trip to a water park. Pupils have numerous opportunities for discussion and debate. They understand what it means to live in a culturally diverse society.

- The school has benefited from the very effective support of the diocese and the local authority during a period of transition. The local authority now has full confidence in the school's future, pointing to the transformation in the learning environment, the sense of purpose, the wider curriculum and the quality of teaching and leadership as the basis for this confidence.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has changed significantly since the previous inspection and now operates effectively under a new and experienced chair of governors.
  - Governors bring a wide range of professional experience to their role. They are dedicated to school improvement. They have a clear and accurate understanding of the school from reports, meetings and direct experience.
  - The governing body is active in holding leaders to account. Governors are rigorous in their examination of progress data and regularly ask questions about the progress of individual pupils, the impact of additional funds and the performance of staff.
  - Governors play a key role in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to the Equality Act 2010.
  - The governing body has ensured that the school is financially stable. Its commitment to the future is demonstrated in the improvements to the building and grounds this summer and plans for further building next year.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of safeguarding pervades the school. Safeguarding is embedded in all school activities. Pupils feel safe and know how to respond to situations so that they keep themselves safe. All safety policies are reviewed on an annual basis and all staff training is up to date. The executive headteacher checks that staff fully understand all elements of the safeguarding training that has taken place.
- In addition, a well-informed governor oversees the school's safeguarding procedures.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers are continually working to improve their practice. Together with the senior leadership team, they consider the strengths of their teaching and where they have been less successful. Through a range of training activities, such as visiting other schools and working with colleagues from the partner school, teachers have successfully tackled previous weaknesses. Teaching is now consistently good.
- Teaching assistants have also benefited from wider opportunities for their professional development. They now feel well equipped to make a strong contribution to the learning of individual pupils, small groups and larger classes.
- Very good relationships have been established with pupils so that teachers manage their groups well. Teachers set high expectations of what pupils can do in class and

how they should behave. They give clear explanations so that pupils know what they have to do. For example, pupils in a class in key stage 1 were helped in the task of correctly sequencing a story by using a puppet theatre to rehearse their writing.

- Teachers ask questions that make pupils think hard and explain their answers. In mixed-age classes, pupils are often working on very different challenges and teachers are expert in ensuring that pupils of all abilities have the same opportunity to make rapid progress. In mathematics, teachers always expect pupils to explain their answers and they are encouraged to work out the same answer using a different method to check their accuracy.
- A minority of pupils do not always respond positively when faced with completing individual tasks when no adult is observing them. They can sometimes give up too easily.
- Good teaching is evident in subjects such as science, French and history. In science, pupils were considering what would be the most effective material for a detective's bag of equipment. They needed to think about what places detectives might visit, the conditions in which detectives work and the secrets they carry.
- Teachers assess pupils' understanding regularly in lessons and mark the work in their books frequently. Teachers provide helpful advice, indicate next steps and require pupils to correct errors. Pupils do this promptly, often in 'fix it' time at the start of lessons. Work in pupils' books shows good progress, but teachers are not always setting high enough expectations for the quality of presentation of work. Some books are very untidy with too much scribbling out.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show high levels of respect for each other and value their support in both learning and play. Older pupils readily take on responsibilities around the school helping younger ones and enjoy working with them. Pupils say that they sometimes feel more like a family than just friends.
- Emotional and spiritual well-being have a high priority in school. Staff work closely with external agencies to develop self-awareness and support children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. As a result, all pupils feel nurtured and cared for, a view confirmed by comments from parents.
- The warm and happy atmosphere in school develops confidence in the pupils that they are in a safe environment. Pupils say that they feel safe but they are also highly aware of the dangers that exist around them. At the appropriate age, the school ensures that pupils understand how to stay safe when using mobile phones, the internet and social media, when on the road or pavement and in other possibly risky situations.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and records confirm this. They have absolute confidence in adults to stop any bullying should it occur: 'No one is scared or worried.' There is very little use of derogatory language.

- Pupils recognise that many different people from different cultures and faiths make up the world and that many live in the United Kingdom. They know that all people should be treated with tolerance and respect, and this is reflected in their own treatment of each other and adults in the school. Pupils are proud of the efforts they put in to raising funds for less fortunate people and are concerned for the feelings and needs of others.
- Pupils' respectful approach to assemblies and their joyful singing exemplify their excellent spiritual development. Their awareness of moral, ethical and cultural issues is developed well through the curriculum and is mirrored in the high quality of care that they have experienced from the school.
- Pupils feel that they have a genuine voice in the school. They feel that the school council has an important role in representing their views. For example, pupils were pleased when the school responded to their request to set up an ethos group to look at ways of developing the spirituality of the school. Pupils work together successfully to agree school rules.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and polite.
- Pupils' conduct through the day is good. At breaks and lunchtimes, they enjoy playing together and older pupils make sure that no one is left out.
- There is no low-level disruption in lessons, but occasionally the behaviour for learning of a minority of pupils is less positive. Some pupils can be reluctant to work unless an adult is watching them and some give up as soon as they meet any difficulty.
- Attendance is consistently above average and often high. No pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils respect their school and help to keep it tidy. Pupils appreciate the work of their teachers and are proud of their school.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- From their different starting points, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are making good progress, sometimes achieving above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress across a range of subjects, including science, history, geography, physical education, art, French and computing.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national figure. Early indications show that pupils in Year 6 did equally well in 2016.
- The very small size of each year group means that test results can vary significantly when compared with national figures. The school focuses instead on the progress of each individual child, which is good throughout the school.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in each class achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally and some are making even faster progress. The school provides

targeted support to meet individual needs. Disadvantaged pupils have full access to all the extra opportunities in the curriculum, such as exciting trips and regular after-school clubs.

- A well-planned programme of extra support ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress to others. Under expert leadership, the school's ability to identify children who have specific needs is much stronger than previously.
- The most able pupils are often given extra challenges which stretch them. For example, in mathematics, those who finish their work early move immediately on to 'problem cards', which explore the same mathematical concepts more deeply and in different contexts.
- Older pupils feel that they benefit from attending a small school because there are so many opportunities for everyone to be involved in all kinds of sporting, academic, musical and drama activities. They feel that they have gained confidence and self-awareness and are not worried about moving to much bigger secondary schools.
- The importance that the school places on spiritual, moral, social, cultural and community values is reflected in the rich curriculum. Pupils learn much about other cultures and faiths. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and their future lives in modern Britain.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children usually start in the Reception class with skills which are broadly typical for their age in literacy but below that in numeracy. Children now make strong progress in all the areas of learning because of improved teaching and outstanding leadership. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has increased recently.
- Learning is good because children settle very quickly and soon enjoy good relationships with other children and adults. A calm, happy atmosphere was already established during the inspection when children had only been at school for a few days.
- Children enjoy many activities which put fun at the heart of learning. They were enjoying singing with appropriate actions to start to practise making letter marks and using play dough to develop dexterity in their hands. Activities are often based on children's own suggestions and enthusiasms.
- Good learning is evident in a review of the learning journey folders from children in the previous Reception Year. These show meticulous attention to the small steps of progress children made and are full of delightful photographs of children learning, and examples of their own work.
- The learning environment is bright and vibrant, with many enticing books and equipment for all the subject areas. The outdoor learning area has been refurbished this summer to the same high standard.
- Children behave well. They get along with one another and enjoy working regularly with the pupils in key stage 1. Children are happy to share resources and take turns

equally. Most children respond very quickly to adults and quickly become confident learners.

- Children are kept safe. Adults are exceptionally well trained, experienced and vigilant. Transition arrangements up to Year 1 are seamless because the children often work together. The assistant headteacher is a lead practitioner for early years settings and has brought a wealth of experience to improve all aspects of provision.
- Leaders are working to develop and improve the school's partnership with parents to enable parents to feel more confident in supporting their children's education.



## School details

Unique reference number	119459
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10022469

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Adnitt
Headteacher	Alison Ashworth-Taylor (Executive Headteacher)
Telephone number	01254 701806
Website	<a href="http://www.tockholeschool.org.uk/">www.tockholeschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@tockholes.blackburn.sch.uk">office@tockholes.blackburn.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are currently taught in two mixed-age classes.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. None speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- There have been significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The school was led by two successive acting headteachers in the summer and autumn terms of 2015. In January 2016 the governing body entered into a collaborative partnership with a nearby school, Blackburn the Redeemer Church of England Primary School. Both schools are led by an executive headteacher who is a national leader of education. She is supported by two assistant headteachers who share leadership roles in both schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons on both key stages and the early years and observed learning in English, mathematics, science, history, information technology and French.
- The inspector attended an assembly, listened to readers in Years 1, 2 and 6 and visited breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, assistant headteachers, the chair of the governing body and other governors, and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector gained the views of pupils from talking with them in lessons and at playtimes and in a more formal meeting with a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The inspector considered the views of parents from the 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and from talking with parents as they collected their children from school.
- The views of staff were gained from responses to an Ofsted questionnaire and from many conversations with teachers and teaching assistants.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence relating to the school's view of its own performance and plans for improvement. Work in pupils' books, assessment data, records relating to the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documentation were examined.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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