

St Elisabeth's Church of England Primary School

St Elisabeth's Way, Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 6BL

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- A legacy of weak leadership has led to a significant decline in pupils' progress and attainment in recent years.
- Ineffective governance has allowed the school's deterioration to go unchallenged. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties. They have failed to question leaders about pupils' achievement and the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium.
- There is a wide variation in the design and delivery of the curriculum. Over time, leaders have not ensured that teaching in different subjects is consistently effective, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not hold staff to account well enough for the implementation of actions to improve pupils' progress in a range of subjects.
- Staff do not equip pupils with mathematical reasoning skills. Teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions in this subject.
- Staff have become deskilled. A lack of professional development in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics means that teachers fail to meet the demands of the renewed national curriculum.
- The teaching of reading does not provide pupils with appropriate strategies to read accurately or to understand the texts that they are reading. This is particularly true for boys.
- The quality of pupils' written work is poor, especially in key stage 2. Teachers do not address common errors well enough to prevent them from being repeated.
- The 2018 provisional information for pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 shows that pupils underachieve considerably. The warning signs have been evident for some time in pupils' outcomes.
- Ineffective leadership in English and mathematics has been a significant factor in the school's decline.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has started to unravel the scope and depth of the inadequacies within the school. However, it is too soon to see the difference that leaders' actions are making.
- Children continue to make good progress in the early years. The leadership of this area has been consistently strong.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Science and history are taught well. Pupils progress well in these subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour for learning is good. They are keen and attentive learners. They are kept safe and feel safe.

Full report

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rectify the weaknesses in governance by ensuring that governors:
 - understand and fulfil their statutory duties
 - hold leaders to account for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders raise their expectations of staff and pupils in order to improve rapidly the quality of teaching and learning
 - leaders rigorously hold staff to account for implementing actions to improve pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - subject leadership improves, especially in English and mathematics, so that leaders improve pupils' outcomes across the curriculum.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make the progress of which they are capable in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring that training equips staff with the skills and subject knowledge to teach reading, writing and mathematics more effectively
 - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - making sure that younger pupils have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words
 - developing pupils', especially boys', understanding of vocabulary and comprehension when reading
 - ensuring that pupils' basic errors in writing are eradicated
 - developing teachers' understanding of how to teach mathematical reasoning skills
 - ensuring that tasks match the different abilities of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to enable them to progress well and catch up on learning they have missed.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- This school has lost its way. Ineffective leadership over time has led to a significant decline in the standard of education provided to pupils over the last few years. Support from the local authority has been superficial and has glossed over the school's significant shortcomings. This has allowed the decline in the quality of teaching and learning to go unquestioned.
- Since the introduction of the revised national curriculum, staff have been let down by a lack of development in their skills for teaching reading, writing and mathematics. This has left them feeling demotivated, unskilled and unable to promote pupils' basic skills effectively.
- The new headteacher has been the spark that has rekindled the fragile confidence of staff. Leaders have restructured staff meetings to support teachers and teaching assistants in developing their teaching skills. However, leaders do not check rigorously enough on how well staff have implemented agreed actions to improve their teaching, or on the difference that these changes are making to pupils' work. As a result, too much variation in teaching remains.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have accurately identified the next steps that the school needs to take. They are tenacious and have brought the focus of school improvement back to pupils' academic gains. It has taken time to establish the scale and depth of some of the issues within the school. There has not been enough time for leaders' actions to overturn the historically low expectations that have been allowed to persist over the last few years.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has been sharpened to better identify and address pupils' needs. The headteacher has restructured staffing to enable more focused support for pupils' learning. However, there has not been a demonstrable difference to the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional funding received by the school for primary school physical education (PE) and sport is being used increasingly well. Pupils like having a range of equipment to use on the playground at lunchtimes and enjoy the sports clubs that are on offer.
- There is a mismatch in the design and quality of the curriculum between subjects. While pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics have been left to flounder, other subjects are designed well to match pupils' interests. The schemes of work for subjects such as geography, history and modern foreign languages provide a structure from which teachers can plan appropriate sequences of lessons to support pupils' subject-specific skills and knowledge.
- Leaders have taken steps to address previous shortcomings in the leadership and quality of provision for pupils with SEND. They have introduced systems to check on pupils' progress and to make sure that appropriate targets are in place. However, it is too early to see any significant impact from these changes on the learning and progress of pupils with SEND.
- Until recently, middle leaders have had limited opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. There has been one notable exception to this.

The science leader has had the opportunity to develop her leadership skills through the process of applying for the science quality mark. This has ensured that there is an organised and sequenced curriculum for science. This is in stark contrast to the experience of the leaders for English and mathematics and shows the missed opportunities for the development of staff that have contributed to the school's decline.

- The school should not appoint any newly qualified teachers before its next inspection.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties. There has been no oversight of the work of leaders in the school. Governors have failed to understand their duties and they have not questioned leaders about the attainment and progress of pupils in the school. They have done nothing to arrest the decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- The lack of training and development that has had a significantly negative impact on the quality of teaching has similarly affected governance. Governors' skills and knowledge have been woefully underdeveloped. Prior to the arrival of the new headteacher, none of the governors understood the central functions of the governing body. Governors have not been provided with sufficient information about the performance of the school. For example, governors have little understanding of how the pupil premium funding has previously been used or the difference this has made to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are aware of their past failings and are keen to improve. The headteacher has ensured that more effective governance procedures have been put in place. She has established committees to oversee the different aspects of school leadership and management.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that appropriate safeguarding training for staff has been put in place and that the systems for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being have been strengthened. She has been instrumental in re-establishing a strong focus on safeguarding in the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because of the care that is provided by staff.
- The staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse because of the training that they have received. Governors have also received training for the safer recruitment of staff.
- The school's checks on the suitability of staff are comprehensive and well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The lack of professional development for staff has allowed the quality of teaching and learning to slip alarmingly. Teachers do not have a grasp of the requirements of the national curriculum. Expectations in the core subjects of reading, writing and

mathematics are low and inconsistent. Teachers do not develop pupils' knowledge and skills sufficiently.

- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding is weak and does not accurately inform teachers' planning. Consequently, the work that teachers plan is not matched to the pupils' abilities or prior learning.
- In key stage 1, staff teach a narrow range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Although phonics is taught effectively, pupils are reliant on these skills alone when they read. They struggle to use other cues for reading difficult words. In key stage 2, pupils' comprehension skills are poor. They do not question the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and cannot recall key aspects of the text that they are reading when questioned. This is reflected in the low attainment of pupils, particularly boys, in reading at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils' writing is devoid of quality. It is particularly weak in key stage 2, where pupils do not have an awareness of the standard expected of them. Teaching is ineffective, and pupils do not apply their learning from one piece of writing to the next. Basic errors, such as issues with simple punctuation, persist in pupils' written work. They have little opportunity to write at length to practise their skills before moving on to new content.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress in calculations is superficial. Pupils learn processes and do not have a good underlying mathematical understanding of the work that they complete. They do not have the skills to explain their answers clearly. Pupils struggle to explain how they solve problems. Teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions. Pupils are not taught the skills of reasoning. They are left to complete tasks that do not enable them to develop their reasoning skills
- There is a disparity in the quality of learning between the reading, writing and mathematics and other subjects in the curriculum. Staff have adapted much better to the content of other curriculum subjects. The schemes of work for subjects such as history and geography focus on developing pupils' subject-specific skills. For example, pupils' work displays a clear focus on developing historical enquiry. Topics are chosen to stimulate pupils' interests. The sequence of subjects beyond English and mathematics is planned well to demonstrate pupils' development and acquisition of knowledge.
- In science, learning follows a clear pathway to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Pupils have opportunities to carry out practical investigations. For example, in Year 4 pupils learn about the function of the ear before exploring pitch and carrying out an experiment to see how sound travels over distance.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The strong Christian values at the school have endured throughout the downturn in the school's fortunes. It is credit to staff that the weaknesses in leadership and management have not affected pupils' personal development, which has been promoted well against a backdrop of decline elsewhere.

- The work in pupils' topic books displays a well-thought-out sequence of learning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, Year 3 pupils explore the meaning of belief as a concept before applying this to understanding the beliefs of others.
- Year 5 pupils learn about the effects of antisocial behaviour and move on to study people who challenged unfair systems, such as Nelson Mandela. There is a strong theme of developing pupils' awareness of equalities throughout their topic work.
- Pupils in all year groups learn about the effects of bullying and how they can help to ensure that this does not happen. As a result, pupils understand the importance of treating others fairly. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that staff deal with any issues that may arise. They say that behaviour at the school is good, which corresponds with leaders' records of behaviour.
- Older pupils enjoy opportunities to debate different topics. They understand how the British values of democracy and the rule of law apply to their own lives, such as through the work of the school council.
- Pupils feel safe in the school because of the measures that are taken to make sure that the site is safe. The new computing leader has improved pupils' awareness of online safety. As a result, pupils have a comprehensive understanding of how to stay safe online.
- The new headteacher has used the expertise of governors to ensure that regular health and safety checks are carried out.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Despite weaknesses in teaching, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and willingness to try their best have not faltered. Teachers have failed to capitalise on pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for school.
- Pupils' conduct in and around school, including at breaktimes, is good. Pupils adhere to playground rules and adults' instructions well.
- Pupils are polite and attentive. There is little disruption to lessons. Their behaviour for learning is strong and shows that they are keen to learn. There are some occasions when their attention wanes due to the lack of challenge in learning, but pupils do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils' attendance for the last academic year was just below the national average, although over time it has been broadly average. Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has improved the attendance of targeted pupils because of the new strategies that have been implemented by the headteacher.
- The published data for the school and the school's own records show that no pupils have been excluded in the last three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- As a result of ineffective action to improve the school over the last few years, pupils underachieve considerably. The decline in pupils' progress in reading has persisted for

the last few years. There are no signs of recovery in the provisional results at the end of key stage 2 in 2018.

- In 2017, pupils' assessed progress in writing was weak and it remains so in the work of current pupils. The provisional 2018 results show that only just over half of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2018 achieved the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The current progress of pupils in writing, as seen in their literacy books, is poor. The provisional data for the end of key stage 2 in 2018 shows that none of the pupils in that cohort achieved beyond the expected standard. Despite these warning signs, there was little intervention from governors, leaders or the local authority until the appointment of the new headteacher.
- Disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress in reading and mathematics in 2018 than other pupils nationally.
- The attainment of pupils with SEND was markedly lower than their classmates in both Year 6 and Year 2. Historic weaknesses in provision had hindered the progress they were able to make from their starting points.
- In key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading in 2018 was only slightly below the national average. Their use of phonics is secure and assists them to achieve, but pupils' reliance on a small range of strategies does not prepare them well for the more complex work in reading and writing in key stage 2.
- Pupils' results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been broadly average in previous years. However, the provisional data shows that this has dipped in 2018 to be below average.
- Over time, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in mathematics has been poor. The 2018 provisional data shows this to be weaker still. Pupils' attainment is below that seen nationally at the end of key stage 2. It compares even less favourably with the national picture at the end of key stage 1, because just over half of the pupils in Year 2 reach the expected standard.
- Due to the endemic weaknesses in attainment, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders have ensured that there are small signs of recovery in the positive progress of pupils who have accessed small-group sessions for reading and mathematics. However, these have been small gains and leaders have not yet replicated this on a larger scale.
- In contrast to reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' progress in subjects such as science, geography and history is stronger. Pupils have opportunities to develop subject-specific knowledge and skills, such as learning how to use artefacts to find out more about a period of history.

Early years provision

Good

- While the quality of teaching has declined in the rest of the school, the good-quality provision in the early years identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. This is due to good leadership. The early years leader has kept her expectations high and continued to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning. She has accessed professional development through local network meetings which have ensured that she has the skills and up-to-date knowledge to meet the learning needs

of the youngest children in the school. The good-quality early years curriculum has ensured that children are able to flourish during their time in Nursery and Reception.

- The early years leader has a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Children enter their Nursery and Reception Years with skills that are broadly typical for their ages, although there is an increasing proportion of children who enter with skills just below those typical for their age. There has been a slight decline in the proportion of children attaining a good level of development in the last few years. However, the records of children's work detail their good progress by the time they leave the early years.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years is good. Tasks are skilfully designed in the different areas of the provision to match children's next steps. For example, in the Reception class children independently access tasks to write simple words and sentences on letters to then post in the postbox. Children exhibit good phonics skills when reading and writing.
- Adults ask questions to probe and extend children's understanding. Children respond well because they are inquisitive and motivated learners.
- The outdoor areas for Reception and Nursery are well resourced and welcoming. They are spacious and allow children to explore their own learning. Children engage in tasks that are supported by adults.
- In the Nursery, no learning time is wasted. For example, at snack time children pour their own drinks and sit patiently for others while adults discuss children's knowledge and understanding of what they have learned.
- Safeguarding is effective and the welfare requirements for the early years have been met. Children show that they feel safe by exploring the learning environment confidently. The relationships between staff and children are excellent.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is good. They focus well on their learning.
- Staff provide effective communication with parents to help them to work with their children at home, for example through a phonics workshop.

School details

Unique reference number	106110
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10046072

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Jameson and Mrs S Collins
Headteacher	Mrs B Burrows
Telephone number	0161 432 5785
Website	www.st-elisabeths.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-elisabeths.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 December 2011

Information about this school

- St Elisabeth's is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school that is housed in a grade 2 listed building.
- The school's intake has increased from 30 to 45 pupils. The increase in admissions means that Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 have an allocation of 45 pupils. Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 remain at 30 places. The school's capacity will continue to increase for the next three years until it reaches its full capacity.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of schools with a religious character, took place in March 2017.
- The school has 40 part-time places in the onsite nursery.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. This included joint observations with senior leaders. They examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from all year groups read, both individually and as part of classroom activities. They spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, playtime, lunchtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the parent surveys that the school provided.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, such as the school's evaluation of its own performance, including its areas for development. They also looked at the systems in place to manage behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice, and spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Nichol	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Blay	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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