

St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118709
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358428
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	George Logan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Brewin
Headteacher	Amanda Cebunka
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 20 lessons taught by 15 members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. They looked at the school's documentation including pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. Responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 105 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How far advanced are children when they enter the Reception class and how much progress do they make during that year?
- How rapidly do pupils progress in Years 1 and 2?
- How well do staff use assessment to plan work which challenges older pupils sufficiently, particularly boys and, for all pupils, in writing?
- To what extent do governors meet their duties, particularly in relation to community cohesion?

Information about the school

St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Primary School is larger than most primary schools. The school's population is predominantly White British. There are very few pupils at the early stages of learning English. A very small number of pupils are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. Pupil mobility, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social issues, or speech and language difficulties. The number of pupils currently known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It promotes aspects of pupils' personal development successfully. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They show respect for adults and for each other's views and individuality. Staff take care to ensure children's safety and well-being and provide good support for those who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils feel very safe and know that they can rely on staff should they have concerns or feel threatened. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' contribution to the school is good. In spite of these strengths pupils' academic achievement remains satisfactory. While links with the local community are good, the school's promotion of community cohesion at the national and global levels is more limited.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, although their skills are better developed in reading and mathematics than in writing. This is partly because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing in other subjects. Overall, they make satisfactory, if erratic, progress through the school, with older pupils, particularly those in the school the longest, making the best progress. Up to 2008, outcomes at the end of Reception were very low. However, changes in staffing, reorganisation of management roles, better assessment systems and an improving intake have all contributed to better provision and much higher outcomes in 2009 and, particularly, in 2010.

Until 2009, attainment at the end of Year 2 had been low. However, progress in Years 1 and 2 has now improved, particularly in mathematics, so that attainment rose in 2010. Although teachers in these years now more accurately evaluate pupils' progress, they are not yet ambitious enough, given the greater number of more-able children now leaving Reception. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. Some, with more profound needs, do better than this because they receive particularly good support. The curriculum promotes literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily. Individual writing targets show pupils how to make improvements to their work.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. As a result, most pupils attend regularly. However, the attendance of a small group of pupils is low and this depresses the overall school figures. Gypsy/Roma heritage pupils attend well, and mostly attain at levels appropriate to their age, largely because of the positive bond of trust established between home and school. School leaders have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although self-evaluation is at times too positive. The governing body is active and committed, but is not sufficiently aware of where the school's performance sits in relation to the national picture. The headteacher's increasingly effective actions to shift embedded underperformance in the lower year groups, improved

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teaching and progress, more effective middle management and better assessment practice ensure that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate at which pupils develop their writing skills, ensuring that they have more frequent opportunities to write at length, for different purposes and across a range of subjects.
- Ensure that teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2, have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and progress, particularly of those who are more able, and that better use is made of individual learning targets to increase the pace of progress.
- Seek, in cooperation with parents and carers, to resolve the issues around the low attendance of a small group of persistently absent pupils.
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - developing meaningful links with schools and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally
 - further extending pupils' knowledge of cultures, religions and beliefs other than their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children's skills on entry to Reception have been improving and are now broadly typical for their age. Progress across the school is satisfactory. While progress in writing remains inconsistent for younger pupils, older pupils, including boys, are making more rapid gains due to the more effective use of assessment information. Improved progress in mathematics reflects, in part, the positive impact of teaching older pupils in ability groups. The headteacher has acted to increase the focus on writing, implementing, for example, a new handwriting scheme in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. This is now being progressively extended across the school.

A key reason for inconsistencies in progress is that not all teaching challenges pupils sufficiently. Pupils' enthusiasm and commitment are built upon more effectively in some lessons than others. In an impressive Year 5 mathematics lesson, able pupils were unexpectedly engaged by unpromising content ♦ the conversion of units of length. The animation, pace and enthusiasm which the teacher brought to the session, and the sustained commitment of the pupils, ensured that learning was at least good. By contrast, other lessons, particularly with younger pupils, lacked such pace and challenge and did not build upon pupils' potential so creatively.

Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to challenges. They work well in pairs and small groups. On occasion, introductions are quite lengthy and this inhibits learning. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make steady progress when taught in small groups or on an individual basis, because staff match work closely to their precise needs. Across the school, the focus on evaluating one's own work is helping to increase pupils' awareness of how well they are doing and this, together with more effective marking of written work, is contributing to better learning.

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Pupils treat each other, and adults, with courtesy. The school council organises fund-raising activities and gives pupils some access to the democratic process. Older pupils take responsibility for those who are younger and willingly undertake many community tasks. Although multicultural awareness is not systematically developed, spiritual, social and moral development is good. Adequately developed basic skills ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future study and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but improving. Relationships are a strength. While planning generally suggests that activities are well matched to pupils' needs, the delivery of lessons is not always so successful. Teachers' expectations, particularly in Years 1 and 2, have sometimes been too low with insufficiently rigorous evaluation of pupils' progress data. However, more challenging targets, greater accountability and higher outcomes from Reception are all contributing to better progress. Teachers question pupils closely to ensure that they have understood key ideas. Pupils now make good use of self-evaluation strategies, both oral and written. Teachers' marking and individual writing targets increasingly provide guidance for pupils on the next steps in their learning. Though much is relatively new, these strategies are contributing to improving progress.

The curriculum satisfactorily supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and effectively promotes their personal, social, health and citizenship education. The

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development of a skills-based curriculum is providing more interesting opportunities for learning and there is evidence of exciting work in history and art. However, opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other curriculum areas are not planned with sufficient regularity, although their mathematical skills are used regularly in science. Extra-curricular provision and enrichment opportunities are good. External support and partnership activities contribute satisfactorily to extend learning opportunities for all pupils including those who are gifted and talented.

Staff care for pupils, and often their families, well and are very responsive to their needs. Links with the Gypsy/Roma community are well developed. The school works closely with all support agencies, particularly for pupils with specific needs. Transition arrangements are good. There is good practice in supporting the health, social, behavioural and transition needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The skills of teaching staff with specialist knowledge of, for example, autistic spectrum disorders, and those of learning support staff, are used well to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has effectively sustained and developed those aspects of provision which ensure that pupils are cared for well and which support their good personal development. However, although staff are well motivated and committed, and morale is high, improvements in pupils' learning and attainment have been slower to come through. Significant staff changes and redeployment of key staff within the school are strengthening the teaching and there are now clear lines of accountability through the recently restructured senior leadership team. The school development plan accurately identifies where improvement is needed, although there has not been sufficient urgency in its implementation. External partnerships, while satisfactory, support a range of shared activities with neighbouring schools and these are beginning to have an impact on learning. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The headteacher has a close knowledge of the strengths of the teaching. However, newer middle leaders have had few opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching in their area.

Governors have a visible presence in the school and are closely involved in monitoring aspects of its work. As a result, they understand where improvement is needed. However, while governors provide increasingly effective challenge, they do not have a sufficiently clear view of pupils' achievement in comparison with other schools. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined, and discrimination is tackled rigorously. The school is internally cohesive and links with, and

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knowledge of, the local community are good. There are some opportunities to learn about other faiths and communities through the curriculum and visitors to school. However, provision is limited in relation to more diverse communities either within the United Kingdom or globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception from a wide range of pre-school provision. Children's skills and knowledge on entry, while below those expected for their age in previous years, have risen in the last two years and are now more consistent with their age group, with some children working at higher levels. Effective induction arrangements help children to feel safe. They are well cared for and establish good relationships with adults and other children. Children play together confidently and safely, and behave well. This contributes strongly to their social development. However, there is not yet enough focus on enabling children to develop independence in their learning. New and increasingly effective leadership is having a positive impact on the quality of provision. Overall, children are making at least satisfactory progress in their learning and in 2010 their attainment was securely average by the end of Reception, with some reaching higher levels. Children's skills in reading and writing are satisfactorily supported by a systematic programme for teaching sounds and letters. Sessions of direct teaching are sometimes, however, rather brief and have limited impact. Some children are articulate and present their ideas thoughtfully. However, staff have not fully recognised the changed intake, so that activities at times offer insufficient challenge, particularly for the more-able children. While children have opportunities to make choices, the outdoor area does not stimulate learning sufficiently. Resources do not always mirror what is available inside, particularly to encourage boys' reading and writing. All areas of learning are planned for in the detailed weekly planning, but with insufficient focus on the needs of the more able. Regular

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assessments provide plentiful information on children's progress. However, the analysis of entry data is not yet sufficiently rigorous to enable staff to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and increase the pace of learning still further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the school and what it provides for their children. One said, 'My daughter has thrived in her time at St Matthew's and enjoys every minute of school life.' Parents and carers particularly appreciate the opportunities which the school offers and the support which it provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. While a few parents and carers feel that insufficient account is taken of their views, their main concern relates to the progress their children are making. The school itself recognises that the rate of pupils' progress, though improving, has been erratic, and often too slow. This has been particularly true of the lower school and, generally, in writing. Inspection evidence suggests that this is improving as better-prepared children enter Year 1.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 365 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	58	40	38	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	61	58	42	40	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	49	45	43	7	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	49	41	39	12	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	48	52	50	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	43	50	48	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	41	56	53	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	34	54	51	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	38	55	52	7	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	26	60	57	6	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	26	62	59	9	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	34	61	58	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	54	41	39	4	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Primary School,
Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9DY**

Thank you for making us welcome during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you, and hearing your views on school life. We found that St Matthew's is a satisfactory school. It has a number of strengths. These are our main findings.

- You work hard, enjoy lessons and behave well.
- You make satisfactory progress and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Progress is more rapid in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- You make a good contribution to the school by undertaking lots of jobs in school and you also engage very successfully with the local community.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good lessons.
- Most of you feel very safe, and have a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- School leaders ensure that you are well looked after.

To help you to do even better we have asked your school to:

- help you to make more rapid progress in writing by enabling you to use your writing skills across other subjects
- ensure that teachers, particularly in the lower school, plan work which really challenges you and moves your learning on rapidly
- work with parents and carers to ensure that you all attend school regularly
- establish meaningful links with other communities and faith groups within the United Kingdom and around the world.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead Inspector

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