

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102664
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	335945
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Grace Marriott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Garth Theron
Headteacher	Mary Jane Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 7 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors, groups of pupils and informally with parents in the playground and by telephone. Inspectors considered the responses in 140 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, teachers' plans and records, the school improvement plan and monitoring information and minutes of meetings.

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

- Attainment in English and Mathematics in Year 6 in 2010.
- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the use of the inside and outside areas.
- The impact of the work of leaders and managers at all levels, particularly the impact of subject leaders on school improvement priorities.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average for a primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities is higher than in most schools, though relatively few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than in most schools, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Matthews is providing its pupils with a good education in a lively and stimulating environment. The school's commitment to all children and its Christian ethos underpin all that it does.

Some aspects of the school are already outstanding, particularly in the outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership and their vision is shared by others. By Year 6, attainment is high and in mathematics has improved considerably since the last inspection. The strength of the pastoral care is reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development, their behaviour and the way in which they show the same sense of shared values, purpose and respect for others as the adults in the school.

'The school has a very strong sense of community, its nurturing, kindness and warmth are shown in so many ways,' was typical of comments from parents. Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and then build on this well in the rest of the school. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school. They appreciate and respond well to all that is offered. They enjoy working together, whether with their 'talk partners' or in larger teams, and enthusiastically take on responsibility. One parent commented that older pupils are encouraged to befriend and mentor younger pupils. Pupils are confident that they have an influence through the school council and can give examples of ways in which the school has made changes in response to their suggestions. Pupils feel very safe in school and believe that if there is any bullying, it will be dealt with effectively.

Pupils' good progress is a result of good-quality teaching which engages them and motivates them to want to learn. Teachers assess and mark pupils' work carefully and give good guidance on how to improve. Staff are improving the curriculum to provide better opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and become more independent learners, but this is not yet consistent enough. In the Reception and Nursery classes the outdoor area is not used as effectively to develop independent learning as the indoor areas.

Leaders at all levels demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the school and have a clear sense of where the strengths are and what needs improving. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have implemented effective management systems and a rigorous approach to monitoring which have proved very effective in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in mathematics in particular. They are keen to extend involvement in monitoring to give subject leaders more responsibility, but as they are relatively new in post, this has not yet been achieved. The improvements seen since the last inspection indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During this academic year, develop the curriculum to:
 - create more opportunities for pupils to develop even better independent learning skills and use their literacy and numeracy skills across the different subjects
 - improve the facilities and use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage to match the facilities and use of the indoor areas.
- Increase the impact of the work of subject leaders on pupils' progress, by developing their skills in monitoring teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are making good progress in lessons, enjoy their work and achieve high standards because teachers provide them with good opportunities and interesting contexts in which to learn and practise new skills. When given the opportunity, pupils improve their skills in English and mathematics through work in other subjects. For example, pupils have learnt a lot about measurement and capacity from the work done on water in geography and science. In Year 5 where the current science topic is Earth and Space, they were using their literacy skills very successfully to write their own version of a myth to explain the origins of time and day.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and are able to make progress at least as good as other pupils. Some make outstanding progress so that they are often able to work well in class without additional support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because their needs are identified carefully and they too receive good support.

Attendance rates are above average. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and their excellent behaviour contributes strongly to the quality of learning. Pupils have adopted very healthy attitudes to life, know the importance of a balanced diet, and a high proportion attend a range of sports' clubs and activities. The pupils make a very strong contribution to their own community and keenly support a range of charities. They develop a mature understanding of their own values and beliefs and learn to respect the values and beliefs of others.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Teachers plan activities which motivate pupils and from an early stage they encourage pupils to discuss and ask questions. This was very evident in an art lesson where pupils were making very perceptive comments on the work of Henri Rousseau and also in a mathematics lesson on statistics where the paired discussion was contributing strongly to good progress. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own performance and set their own targets. The marking of their work is generally constructive and pupils find their teachers' comments helpful.

The curriculum is well organised and the high-quality displays illustrate how it provides a good range of opportunities and experiences for the pupils. It is greatly enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. These are particularly good for a school of this size. Staff are working on improving the links between subjects, but this is not yet consistent enough. They rightly know that they need to plan more specifically to provide better opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and to develop even better skills as independent learners. The excellent care, guidance and support that the pupils receive underpin the very positive atmosphere within the school. Strong links with families, partnerships with agencies and very carefully planned provision combine to enable any pupils who experience difficulties to make good progress.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team, supported by staff and the governing body, has a very clear focus on improving the quality of education for pupils and raising standards still further. Attainment is high, but there is no sense of complacency and leaders have set ambitious targets. The programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching by senior managers is thorough. It focuses strongly on the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and is clearly linked to areas of school improvement. Regular meetings to discuss class progress and that of individuals provide the information needed for teachers and managers to plan both day-to-day work and specific intervention. Similarly, the careful checks of how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, are doing, illustrate well the commitment to equality of opportunity. This also ensures there is no discrimination. The school has had significant changes of staff as a number of experienced teachers have retired in recent years. Leaders are able to identify areas for development and put in place a good programme of professional development which supports new staff, enables expertise to be shared and external support sought as necessary. Subject leaders, for example in English, science and information and communication technology, who have taken on these responsibilities relatively recently, provide good support for their colleagues in planning, but are not yet directly involved in monitoring and supporting teaching and learning. Senior managers and subject leaders recognise the importance of developing their skills in this area to increase the impact of their work on pupils' progress.

The school improvement plan is a very useful tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work and planning specific action to further improve provision. Governors are fully involved in planning for school development. They take their responsibilities seriously and new governors are being carefully inducted. All relevant procedures for safeguarding are in place. The headteacher and the governing body are continuously looking at ways of improving the accommodation to maximize the use of space and improve soundproofing, so that its limitations are not allowed to have an adverse effect on learning.

The school is a welcoming and tolerant community. Its Christian foundation is clearly evident, but pupils from all backgrounds are welcomed and respect is shown for different faiths and cultures. For example, Muslim pupils were encouraged to share information about the celebrations for the Festival of Eid Ul Adha with their classmates. Pupils learn about worldwide issues and cultural diversity through personal, social and health education, religious education and studying topics such as Japan. Here the school is drawing on the knowledge and skills of parents. The school is aware that its strengths lie

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in work with the local community and in international links and that there is more to be done to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the national context in which the school works.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children learn to work and play together well in the Reception and Nursery Classes and the confidence they develop as learners at such a young age contributes strongly to the good progress pupils make as they move through the school. The provision is well planned and managed to ensure that the needs and interests of the children are met and that they have a good foundation for the next stage of their learning. The majority start school with knowledge and skills which are broadly in line with expectations for their age. These are built on well so that, by the time they move into Year 1, their attainment is better than expected for their age in all the areas of learning. From the time they start in the Nursery and in Reception, the children are well taught. The children take part in interesting activities, both those led by adults and ones that they choose themselves. The children do particularly well in their personal and social development and in their language skills. For example, in an excellent story-telling session in the Nursery the children were totally engrossed in the story and their comments and questions showed how much they were learning.

Children enjoy the outdoor areas, but facilities are, in general, not as stimulating or as well used as the indoor areas. For the Reception Class in particular, the position of the main outdoor area does not allow lessons to flow easily from indoors to outdoors, which limits some of their experiences and the opportunities for children to become independent. Staff know the children and their families well and pay considerable attention to children's welfare. They track children's progress using the information from observation of what

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they can do when they start school, particularly in personal development and communication skills. This is not, however, extended to give a view of the progress of each cohort of children across all the areas of learning. As a result, it is difficult for staff to check whether children make equally good progress in all areas.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are rightly happy with the work of the school. A few were concerned about the level of communication with parents. The school is actively promoting use of the new website to improve communication. A few parents were also concerned about the level of challenge for some more-able pupils. Standards in the school are high, but staff are far from complacent about this and have set challenging targets for progress. Teachers' planning focuses very much on providing activities which will motivate all pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthews CE 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 140 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	74	33	24	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	107	76	31	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	51	60	43	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	52	54	39	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	84	60	45	32	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	45	66	47	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	98	70	40	29	1	1	0	0
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)	67	48	52	37	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	46	62	44	8	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	52	59	42	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	44	65	46	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	87	62	45	32	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	67	38	27	4	3	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



22 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's School, Merton SW20 0SX

On behalf of the team, thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to so many of you. You told us how much you enjoy school and we agree that you are right to be proud of it. You go to a good school which is outstanding in several ways.

This is what we found about your school.

- You work very hard and achieve really well - the standards you reach in the national tests and assessments are much higher than in most schools.
- St Matthew's is a really friendly place in which to learn, adults look after you extremely well and you feel safe in school.
- Your behaviour is excellent and from the youngest children onwards, you work and play well together.
- Good teaching and interesting lessons help you to learn and make good progress.
- You thoroughly enjoy all the exciting events and activities provided for you.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a good start.

The headteacher, teachers and governors do a really good job in running the school and they have been very successful in improving it. There are, though, some things they could do to make it even better. We have asked them to look at how to:

- give you more opportunities to be independent learners and use your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- make the outdoor areas in Reception and Nursery even more interesting places in which to play and learn
- help teachers responsible for different subjects to check on how well you are doing and suggest ways in which teaching and learning could be improved.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Marriott
Lead inspector

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