

Matchborough First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132821
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	360445
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Baylis
Headteacher	Jackie Harris
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2008
School address	Matchborough Way Matchborough East, Redditch B98 0GD
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed all teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and groups of pupils, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking information, the school development plan, monitoring reports and pupils' workbooks. The inspection questionnaires were analysed, including 120 from parents and carers, 18 from members of staff and 89 from pupils.

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

- The progress in mathematics of middle attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, and the progress in writing of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' planning and their use of assessment to find out whether they provide sufficient challenge for the pupils.
- Whether or not there is a disparity between the schools' judgements for community cohesion and pupils' contribution to the community.

Information about the school

This school is situated within an industrial area and is slightly larger than other schools of its type. The majority of pupils are White British and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number learn to speak English as an additional language and the main languages spoken at home are Polish, Punjabi and Slovak. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average but there is a high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school's specialist provision caters for most of these pupils in a ten-place Speech and Language Resource Base. In addition to the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school also caters for a small number of three- and four-year-olds from other settings in Redditch. They attend the school's eight-place nursery, known as 'Nursery Plus', for help with their specific learning difficulties.

The school shares its site with a privately-run breakfast club, a nursery and a children's centre, all of which are inspected separately. It also holds a 'second breakfast' session for pupils, which is managed by the governing body.

The school has the Active Mark status for sports, a Silver Eco Award, the Leading Parent Partnership Award and Healthy School status.

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

The school's motto of 'Aim High and Smile!' is clearly shared by all staff and pupils. They greet visitors, parents and carers with a warm, friendly welcome and are keen to do their best. Parental comments endorse this by saying, 'The dedicated staff are well motivated and the school has a lovely, happy atmosphere.' The school has good links with families and promotes good community cohesion through strong links with support agencies, partner schools and local groups such as the Chinese community. Attendance is good and most pupils behave well, taking on responsibilities willingly.

Achievement is good. Children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils' attainment is broadly average by Year 2, and above the national expectations by Year 4 in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence and the school's data show that the higher attaining pupils do particularly well in writing at Key Stage 2. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, although middle attaining pupils achieve well in mathematics at Key Stage 1, their handwriting, presentation and use of punctuation are inconsistent.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff make sure that all pupils are valued equally and they successfully promote learning within an inclusive community. Classrooms are vibrant learning environments and there are plenty of colourful displays of pupils' artwork and photographs to interest them. The school has a good curriculum which provides pupils with a wide range of activities to help them learn. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, especially for vulnerable and disabled pupils. Pupils have clear targets to help them learn, although teachers' marking in mathematics does not always identify what pupils need to do next to improve their work. The school effectively supports pupils with special educational needs and helps them make good progress. Pupils are taught especially well in the Speech and Language Resource Base and Nursery Plus. This is because well-qualified specialist staff liaise carefully with other professionals, such as speech therapists, to ensure that pupils receive good quality teaching. The majority of children with special educational needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage have their specific difficulties catered for but the procedures are not rigorous enough to identify accurately the needs of a few children so that adults can adapt activities for them.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is driving the school forward at a brisk pace. Senior staff and governors support her well and all work hard to provide a strong sense of ambition and purpose. Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have successfully addressed the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection by improving writing at Key Stage 2, introducing better tracking procedures to measure progress and improving the effectiveness of the governing body. Individual governors make good contributions to the life of school and take their responsibilities seriously. Based on its good track record of

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improvement, rising standards and strong leadership, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 1 so that a higher proportion of middle attaining pupils reach at least the nationally expected level at the end of Year 2 by improving pupils' handwriting, presentation and use of punctuation.
- Sharpen up the use of assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve their work when they mark their mathematics books.
 - more accurately identifying children's special educational needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage and adapting activities for them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 to 4, from attainment that is below expectations for their age on entry to Reception. The school has worked hard to drive up standards in writing at Key Stage 2 and its persistence has paid off. Successful strategies, including one-to-one tuition, pen pals, use of the school's 'Laptop Cafe' and enjoyable 'Hook Days' have enabled pupils to increase their literacy skills effectively. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently working at levels that are above those expected for their age in English and mathematics, and all pupils make good progress, including the higher attainers. For example, in a lesson about subordinate clauses, pupils in Year 4 made good progress and showed clear understanding when thinking up sentences such as, 'Mr Big, who was wearing a stunning red hat, fell down the hole'. Attainment in Year 2 was broadly average last year in reading and writing but the middle attaining groups did not do as well as similar pupils nationally and girls outperformed boys. The school is closing the gap steadily; attainment is average overall at Key Stage 1, but pupils' handwriting, presentation and use of punctuation are inconsistent. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are integrated well to help them make good progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills. They achieve well and enjoy discussing their work with adults, benefiting from teachers' skilled questioning techniques and specialist knowledge.

Attendance is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school in their smart red uniforms and they feel safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because most pupils know right from wrong, play harmoniously together and are tolerant of each other's beliefs and cultures. Behaviour is good, and most pupils with special educational needs respond well to the good support they receive, especially those who are taught in the Speech and Language Resource Base. All pupils understand how to live well by taking regular exercise and eating healthy food: they maintain a flourishing garden and grow produce to share with others. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school and local community through regular events and through the school council. For example, they have designed a bus shelter for the local neighbourhood in a 'Matchborough Matters' project. Pupils develop their enterprise skills well by acting as play leaders, managing events for charities, such as Comic Relief, and by saving money with a national bank whose representatives

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hold weekly sessions in the school. They are looking forward to the school's 'Big Cook, Little Cook' sessions when they will make Chinese stir-fries with their parents and carers.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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 has improved well since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and good subject knowledge. Relationships with pupils are pleasant, and teachers often have a cheerful rapport with them, especially during practical activities. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on negative numbers and understanding climate temperature, the teacher's good knowledge, lively explanations and brisk pace made learning enjoyable for the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a good team to guide small groups of pupils and individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the mainstream classes and for those who receive specialist support in the Speech and Language Resource Base. Assessment is used satisfactorily to guide lesson planning and pupils have challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics. New tracking procedures are fully embedded. Marking is good in pupils' writing books but it is not as detailed in mathematics and does not give pupils enough pointers to help them improve their work.

The school's broad, balanced curriculum is well organised and planned. It provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities based on a thematic approach to learning. Staff are currently developing creative links between subjects such as in English and art. Light, airy

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and clean classrooms are adorned with pupils' colourful artwork and teachers' informative displays, which provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment. Activities are adapted well for higher attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they have equal access to the curriculum. Personal, social and health education are promoted well, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their independence in 'Forest School' outdoor activities. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended in the school's clean and well-maintained buildings and attractive grounds. These include sports clubs, musical activities, choir, Chinese club and Mandarin language lessons. Residential trips also enhance pupils' enjoyment, as do breakfast club, 'second-breakfast' activities and visits to places of worship, such as a Birmingham synagogue.

Staff know the pupils well and care for them in a supportive learning environment. Teaching assistants liaise closely with class teachers to make sure that disabled and vulnerable pupils are supported very sensitively, and they help all pupils to learn effectively, including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. Transition arrangements are well organised for pupils who leave at the end of Year 4. The school does all it can to promote good relationships with the local middle school. The procedures to promote good attendance are effective and the school follows up absences diligently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Appointed shortly before the last inspection, the headteacher has become a dynamic leader whose drive and determination have led to some significant improvements in the school. For example, weak teaching has been eradicated and school governance has improved to a good level. The ambitious senior leadership team and deputy headteacher work together closely with the headteacher to ensure effective leadership and management of all phases of learning. The inclusion leader carefully manages and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Self-evaluation is accurate and data are used well to help staff set realistic and challenging targets for the future. Although a few leaders are new and still developing their roles, effective subject leadership is characterised by regular monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance, especially in writing and mathematics. These aspects of learning are rightly included in the detailed school development plan, which clearly identifies specific areas for improvement, such as spotlighting the need to improve writing. This focus is already paying dividends because literacy standards have risen well in Years 3 and 4, although there is still more to be done in the younger classes. To this end, the school strives to

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encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning through workshops, parental forums and questionnaires, and it successfully provides information for them to help support pupils at home. Parental comments to the inspectors indicate that they appreciate this and feel valued by staff. The school's good work with parents and carers has recently been acknowledged with the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

Under the astute eye of the Chair, the governing body has increased its supportive role and now has a good handle on the school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors have close links with subjects and other aspects of provision such as special educational needs. These links benefit the pupils because they help the governing body to keep a close check on how well the school is doing and to take prompt action when needed so that it can hold the school to account and provide good challenging support to leaders.

The school has rigorous systems for safeguarding children, particularly for ensuring child protection and the safe recruitment of staff. Very clear procedures for risk assessments and regular staff training ensure that systems are well-defined to maintain pupils' safety. Equality and diversity are celebrated well because staff value all of the pupils equally and treat them with great respect and courtesy. Community cohesion is promoted effectively for the benefit of the pupils. The school has strong links with local groups, businesses and the church, as well as Maple Trees Children's Centre which is based on the same site. It also has a few extended links nationally to enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures, including African religions and Muslim customs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
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 are taught well and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because caring, kindly staff provide them with plenty of interesting activities. Attainment

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on entry varies from year to year but the school's data shows that it is below expectations for their age when children start in Reception. Even so, most children attain the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception year, and sometimes exceed them. Children settle happily at the beginning of the day and play well together, listening carefully to adults' instructions and behaving sensibly. They participate eagerly in physical activities such as 'Write-Dance' sessions that help them develop their writing skills through movement and music. They also enjoy finding out about prehistoric animals in the 'Dinosaur Dig' activities. A good range of resources such as wheeled toys, tricycles and a climbing wall are easily accessible. All children show curiosity and they eagerly explore the world around them. They particularly like to watch the school's chickens in the outdoor area and play with the musical chimes. Most children understand that eating healthy food is good for them and all enjoy eating juicy oranges at snack time. The good teaching means that children develop their early reading, writing and numeracy skills effectively. Children's records, known as 'Learning Journals', are regularly updated and are shared openly with parents and carers. Provision is good for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the Nursery Plus class: very kind, calm and patient staff work as a caring team to support and engage them. Assessment is used satisfactorily to guide teachers' planning in the mainstream classes, although it is not always used consistently to identify children's specific learning needs and match work to their abilities. Leadership and management are good because the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage works closely with other staff to oversee and develop provision.

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

A good proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the vast majority are pleased with the education provided by the school. They particularly praised the dedicated and committed staff. They feel that the school is led and managed well and that staff make sure that children are safe. A very small number would like more information about their children's progress. The inspectors followed up parental concerns and found that a good amount of information is shared with parents and carers about their children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Matchborough First 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 312 number pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	68	35	29	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	66	40	33	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	54	45	63	53	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	47	62	52	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	54	52	43	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	50	58	48	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	50	55	46	3	3	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)	50	42	63	53	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	41	64	53	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	33	71	59	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	42	60	50	5	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	65	54	51	43	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	61	45	38	2	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Matchborough First School, Redditch, B98 0GD

Thank you for being so kind to us and helping us to learn about your school when we visited you recently. Here are some of the things we found out.

We think you all make good progress in your learning and attain good standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 4.

You told us that you really like coming to school and enjoy learning about new topics.

Your behaviour is good and those of you in the school council take your responsibilities seriously.

You understand that healthy food and regular exercise are good for you.

The teachers and the teaching assistants take good care of you and make sure that you are safe when you are in school.

The headteacher leads and manages the school exceptionally well.

We have asked your teachers to help you do better in writing in Years 1 and 2. We have also asked them to help you to know what to do to improve your work in mathematics when they mark your books. You can help by making sure that you always present your work neatly and keep your handwriting tidy.

Yours sincerely

Anna Coyle

Anna Coyle

Lead inspector

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