

# St Matthews CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124346
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	363979
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev David McHardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Albert Griffin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lightwood Road Rough Close, Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST3 7NE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed and four teachers. Meetings were held with groups of parents and carers, pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including national test results and the school's assessments, school policies and governing body minutes, samples of pupils' work, monitoring information and documentation relating to safeguarding pupils. Also taken into account were 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- Whether attainment overall at Key Stage 1, and mathematics at Key Stage 2, have improved.
- Whether the quality of teaching is consistent throughout the school.
- Whether leaders have evaluated the school's performance accurately, particularly that in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-size primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There have been significant changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and holds the Eco Bronze 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

This is a good school. Strong and dedicated leadership from the headteacher, with support from a committed staff team and governing body, has ensured that pupils' continued good achievement is underpinned by outstanding care, guidance and support. Excellent engagement with parents and carers and highly-effective management of teaching and learning to bring about better quality, contribute to the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

When children enter the Reception class their stages of development are generally typical for their age. Progress has improved over the past year. Currently on entering Year 1, all children work securely within the early learning goals and a significant number are more advanced and reach a good stage of development in some areas of learning. This is commendable, though not outstanding because of the limiting facilities of the outdoor space for learning. Progress is improving in Key Stage 1, following an unsettled period of teaching which resulted in more-able pupils not consistently getting the challenges they need. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 where they attain above-average levels in English and mathematics and achieve well by the time they leave the school.

Good teaching has resulted from rigorous monitoring and support by the headteacher and senior staff. Some teaching is outstanding but there are also satisfactory elements, most notably the inconsistent quality of marking across classes and subjects. The curriculum engages pupils well and extends their learning through a good range of clubs and activities, though pupils would like even more.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have some outstanding personal qualities. Behaviour and the way in which pupils contribute to school life, for example, are exemplary and these aspects contribute to pupils always feeling safe in school.

Leaders have an accurate overview of the school's work, have identified clear priorities for further improvement and good systems to bring about planned improvements. The vision and drive for the school's success is equally shared among the whole school community and generates the supportive family ethos under which the school thrives.

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

- Raise the quality of all teaching and learning even further by:
  - ensuring more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 are always sufficiently challenged
  - ensuring that all marking is equally rigorous and helpful to pupils across all subjects and in all classes.

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- Improve provision and opportunities for independent exploration and play, in an outdoor setting, for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons is a major contribution to their good achievement and their enjoyment in learning. They are attentive and keen to do well. Pupils enjoy challenges, whether working independently or with partners and use what they already know to good effect. In a history lesson, pupils had to call on their personal knowledge and understanding of episodes from history to explain how these factors influenced future events. This proved to be a highly-motivating challenge for some boys, for example, who then set about writing their views on how spitfires had an impact on the outcome of the Second World War. Pupils know the levels at which they are working in all subjects because teachers discuss this with them and help them identify the next steps for themselves.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. Year-on-year fluctuation of numbers in the small cohorts means that the picture presented by national data is unclear. Individually, all pupils make at least expected progress and many reach the higher attainment levels in English and mathematics, the latter having improved significantly. While almost all pupils reach the levels expected for their age nationally, at the end of Year 2, fewer than expected attain beyond that. Nevertheless the overall performance in Key Stage 1 is improving, because of the closely monitored, and more settled teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Individual learning plans are carefully tailored to their particular needs and, with well-targeted adult support individually and in groups, they achieve well in relation to their learning targets.

Pupils are invariably polite and well-mannered. They are proud of their school and of what they achieve. They are mindful of one another in all situations and older pupils are quick to respond to the needs of younger ones in the playground or dining room. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to keep themselves and others safe. Bullying and racist behaviour are vigorously opposed. Consequently, pupils enjoy the security of a happy and supportive school. The active school council ensures that the pupil voice is heard and has very recently negotiated major refurbishment of toilet facilities for the start of the new term. Play leaders keep everyone active and ensure fair play during break-times and the eco-council is watchful over the school's use of paper and energy. Beyond the school's boundaries pupils have been involved in the restoration of a local windmill and have raised issues about parking outside the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Their attendance is above average and overall they are prepared well to acquire the skills they need for a secure economic future.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The best teaching is characterised by its constant pace and challenge. In most lessons, teachers use their assessment of pupils' abilities to match work precisely to individual needs. As a result no time is lost because pupils have the understanding and strategies they need to get on with the task. Pupils are highly motivated by this and are kept on their toes. In one instance, a Year 4 pupil's mathematical thinking was so sharp that the solution to a fractions problem was correctly explained before the teacher had time to finish her demonstration on the whiteboard. All teachers plan lessons well and their good use of resources, including electronic whiteboards and computers help to bring learning to life. Subject knowledge is good and there are consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Classroom relationships are very good so pupils are not reticent about 'having a go' exemplified by the comment that 'It's alright to make a mistake in French because your mistakes are usually funny.' Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies in that more able pupils in some lessons in Key Stage 1 are not sufficiently challenged to do their best, and get away with too many errors in their independent writing, for example. Also, while there is some impressive use of assessment involving pupils during lessons, this is not always complemented by best-quality marking in subjects other than literacy. Pupils do not always learn how well their work is valued by the teacher or how they can do better.

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The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well. There is a good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The current review of curriculum planning is opening up more opportunities for pupils to use and develop those skills through other subjects. After-school clubs and work with local artists, for example, enrich pupils' learning and lead to some good achievement in sports and the arts. The annual residential visit is a good contribution to provision for pupils' personal development. There was a memorable day for pupils in Years 3 and 4, during the inspection, when every one of them arrived in school dressed in Roman togas ready to embark on their 'Roman adventure' in Chester. This was a credit to the school's imaginative planning and to parents and carers for the way they typically helped by dressing their children for the part.

Care for pupils is at the heart of what the school does, and without exception parents and carers regard their children as being in safe hands. Staff are extremely sensitive to the needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. Through effective liaison with outside agents, and additional funding from school, all get the provision they need. The clear guidance and care for all pupils with regard to relationships with others is amply reflected in their personal outcomes. Attendance is very closely monitored as seen in the resulting rise to above average. There are very well-managed systems for welcoming new pupils and parents into the school and equally effective arrangements for pupils to transfer to the next. All staff know all of the pupils extremely well so that transition from class to class is both caring and supportive. Parents feel well-informed, and that teachers are accessible and approachable. They are very happy with the information they receive about their children's progress and well-being.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders work effectively to improve the school. They continue to share a clear sense of purpose and make good use of professional development opportunities to enhance their skills. Recent appointments to the teaching staff have been managed exceptionally well. High-quality monitoring and evaluation of classroom performance and equally effective support and guidance where needed has ensured that good development of skills has raised the overall quality of teaching in all classes. The governing body fulfils its remit well. It provides good support and challenge. Active participation in the life of the school provides its members with a good overview of strengths and weaknesses and enables it to hold the school firmly to account. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. All forms of discrimination are challenged strongly and leaders are determined that all pupils will have the opportunities they need to succeed. To that end, in

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addition to the current focus on more-able pupils, plans are in place to raise staff awareness of issues around teaching English as an additional language in response to the very small number of pupils from different cultures beginning to join the school. Procedures to safeguard pupils are good. Policies and procedures for the safety and protection of school users are communicated clearly. Systems are reviewed regularly and there is immediate action to improve them when minor gaps are identified. The governing body promotes community cohesion well. The school has a high profile locally because of its links with community groups and there are productive exchanges with a school which has different cultural characteristics. Pupils gain a sound understanding, through the curriculum, of varied faiths and cultural celebrations. However, there is some unevenness in pupils' understanding of wider cultural issues in the United Kingdom and globally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective leadership from the recently-appointed teacher to the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children's good learning and development. Personal and emotional development is managed very effectively. Children are confident when choosing what to do and initiate their own activity in the classroom without adult supervision. They follow instructions, share resources amicably and consistently behave well. Well-planned English and mathematics activities engage children in purposeful challenges which they often follow up on their own. For example, children readily practise writing numbers in sequence and occasionally do some impressive calculations on the whiteboard. Good teaching of letters and the sounds that they make, boosts children's confidence in the early stages of reading and writing. This again encourages children to begin to write independently and many make good attempts at writing meaningful sentences on their own. Some use is made of the area outside the classroom for children to build upon what they learn indoors. For example, children took a boat they had made from junk materials on a 'voyage'



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around the playground, with the teacher, in order to stimulate writing. However, opportunities where children can follow up such activities in imaginative play are very limited because of lack of sufficient supervision and resources and no natural free-flow from inside to the outdoor area. Despite their overall good progress in most areas of learning, this has a limiting effect particularly on physical development and, to some extent, development of social skills because it lessens opportunities for children to solve problems collaboratively. Provision for children's welfare is good. Children are very well cared for. Parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to comment on their children's progress. Systems for assessment are thorough. They provide a very clear picture of individual learning and development and are used well to plan next steps.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 large majority of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Almost all of the views expressed about the school are positive. Parents and carers typically comment on how much their children enjoy school, the caring ethos that exists and the additional support given when it is needed. There were very few individual concerns raised in the questionnaires. Issues which did arise were discussed with school leaders while ensuring that anonymity of parents and carers was always protected.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthews CofE (A) 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 86 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	70	16	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	88	6	11	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	63	20	35	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	70	16	28	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	74	15	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	63	21	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	74	14	25	1	2	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)	33	58	21	37	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	67	18	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	56	23	40	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	39	35	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	56	24	42	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	72	16	28	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



16 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Matthew's C of E Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 7NE**

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and you gave us a lot of helpful information, for example, about how much you enjoy school, and some of the happy memories you will take with you when you leave. Well done for your above-average attendance. That is very important so do keep it up.

We were highly impressed by your politeness, good manners and outstanding behaviour. You make an excellent contribution to school life. The grown-ups in school take excellent care of you so that you feel very safe and achieve well.

St Matthew's is a good school. You make good progress and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are above average. Your teachers work hard to make sure your lessons are fun and we agree with you that they are. Children in the Reception class also make good progress.

We have asked your school leaders to help make your school even better by doing the following things. First, make all lessons and learning as good as the very best by making sure those who are more able, but especially in Key Stage 1, are always really challenged by hard work, and that all of your books are marked as well as your literacy work. Second, to make the outdoor area for Reception children a better place for them to learn.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead Inspector

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