

# St Matthias Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100267
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	376378
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Howard

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Sylvester
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anthony Doudle (Head of School) Sian Davies (Executive Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Wordsworth Road London N16 8DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7254 1148
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-matthias.hackney.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	27–28 September 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 16 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They met with pupils, members of the Interim Executive Board, the Learning Trust and various members of staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including its self-evaluation, policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children and data about pupils' progress. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils, staff and the 45 parents and carers who returned a questionnaire.

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

- The current picture of attainment and progress in all year groups.
- The consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- How successfully leaders and managers accelerate pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 2.

## Information about the school

St Matthias Church of England Primary is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils have a minority ethnic heritage, with a large majority having Black British, Black Caribbean or African heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very much higher than the national average and the proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above that found nationally. More than one fifth of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; a higher than average proportion. Nearly one third of pupils join or leave the school part way through their education and this is much higher than that found nationally.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend either full or part time in the Nursery and attend Reception full time in one of two classes. Breakfast and after-school clubs are run by the school every day.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a particularly turbulent period. Delegated powers of the governing body were removed in 2009 and an Interim Executive Board was appointed to fulfil its roles and responsibilities. In the following year, leadership of the school changed three times and staff turnover was high. The school formed a partnership with an executive Principal and local primary schools. In September 2010, a substantive head of school was appointed and in September 2011, the partnership was formalised with a federation that included five primary schools in the area, led by the executive Principal and a newly-formed governing body.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

St Matthias Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. The school has undergone a period of considerable change in leadership and staffing during the last two years and attainment declined rapidly. In both 2009 and 2010, attainment and progress were significantly lower than national expectations. In addition, evidence shows that the positive ethos of the school that had been reported in the previous inspection deteriorated. The local authority, through the Learning Trust, had judged that the school required intensive support. However, under the strong leadership of the current executive Principal and the head of school, the school has made a concerted and effective effort to transform itself. Behaviour is satisfactory and the school is calm and orderly. As one pupil said, 'It's much better here now. We can learn properly.' Pupils are friendly and polite, generally keen to learn and get on well together in a range of situations.

Solid evidence from the school's own data and in lessons show that, importantly, although attainment remains low, progress is satisfactory overall and is securely and quickly improving in all year groups, especially in Key Stage 2. As a result, achievement, which evidence indicates has been inadequate for two years, is now satisfactory. Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. While pupils are acquiring sound basic skills, they do not consistently apply these well to a range of contexts. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which was inadequate, is now satisfactory as a result of effective provision and sound teaching.

Strengths of the school include the safeguarding of pupils, pastoral support and the effectiveness of its partnerships. The school looks after its pupils well, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and as a result their progress is accelerating. The very large majority of pupils feel safe because the school's safeguarding arrangements are good and parents and carers agree. Effective partnerships with schools in the federation have meant that improvements throughout the school have been accelerated.

The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall and good in a minority of lessons. This, together with effective intervention programmes for pupils who may be underperforming, is enabling pupils to accelerate their progress. Lessons provide pupils with a clear outline of what they are learning. Although the structure of lessons is well planned, there is not a consistent match of activities to the needs of all pupils, especially higher attainers. There are examples of very good marking of

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work, especially in Key Stage 2, where written feedback provides clear guidance on how to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are not always sure about how well they are doing or what they need to do to make their work better. The highly structured provision for literacy and numeracy has been successful in raising achievement but there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently across the school.

The school is well led and managed and has effective systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of its work. It knows its strengths and weaknesses and plans effectively to address them. Over the last year, all aspects of the school have improved, most notably, attendance, behaviour and the quality of teaching. Consequently, progress throughout the school is accelerating and the school's capacity to secure further improvements is good.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in mathematics and writing by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge in a range of contexts.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 80% is good or better by July 2012 by:
  - ensuring that activities are matched to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the higher attainers.
  - using assessment consistently to let pupils know how well they are doing and what their next steps in learning will be.
  - offering opportunities for pupils to learn independently throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Children join the school with skills and abilities that are well below age-related expectations. Their skills in numeracy and literacy are particularly weak. Pupils' progress, which data show as being inadequate for the last two years, is accelerating and is now at least satisfactory for all subjects and for all year groups in the school. Pupils make good progress in reading and as a result reach minimum national expectations in English in Key Stage 2. However, attainment remains low in mathematics and in writing, although it is improving at a fast rate.

The quality of learning and progress that pupils make in lessons is satisfactory overall and in over a third, it is good. For example, in a 'Success for All' lesson that included

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Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils, the well-prepared work was appropriately matched to pupils' abilities and as a result they confidently discussed settings in a story. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress overall, including those who join part way through their education. A few groups of pupils, notably those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have a Black African heritage, make good progress. This is as a result of effective support given to them by teaching assistants in lessons and through the highly structured programmes for reading, writing and mathematics. The previous significant underachievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is being addressed and the gap between them and others is now considerably smaller.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They particularly enjoy singing, which is of a very high standard, and sports activities, where they achieve well. Attendance, which was low, has improved rapidly and is now average as a result of the effective support and intervention strategies that the school has developed.

A minority of pupils are concerned about behaviour in school. Inspectors found that behaviour is satisfactory and that staff manage behaviour well. The new 'Stay on Green' policy is effective in reinforcing what pupils need to do to be able to learn and is used very effectively to support pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Most pupils say that they now feel safe, that they know who to go to if they have concerns and are confident that the school will take action. Their knowledge of internet safety is good. They make a constructive contribution to the school and wider community, including leading weekly assemblies at the local church. Pupils learn sound social skills and know the difference between right and wrong. They develop a reasonable knowledge of their own culture and get on well with pupils from different backgrounds. Their knowledge of other cultures is less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

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## How effective is the provision?

Strategies to improve the quality of teaching have been very effective, so that in most lessons, secure subject knowledge, good relationships and effective use of new technologies support learning. In a minority of lessons that are good, effective modelling and open-ended questioning enable pupils to reflect on their learning. For example, in a writing task undertaken by a mixed group of Years 3 to 6, the teacher modelled her own writing and then used pupils’ assessment of it to apply to their own paragraphs. As a result, pupils were able to use complex sentences and redraft their own writing. Data are used effectively by teachers to identify underperformance and plan and review the impact of interventions in progress meetings. There is good evidence to show that pupils who are supported in this way make good progress. However, data are not used consistently to help meet the needs of higher attainers. In Key Stage 2, where the proportion of good teaching is higher, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve but this is not consistent across the school.

The curriculum has been developed over the last year with a range of initiatives to improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils’ progress in these areas is accelerating, especially in reading. The curriculum is enhanced by after-school clubs and by a strong range of partnerships including visiting authors, trips and visits and by specialist teaching in physical education and French. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum has recently been developed but is not embedded in all lessons. Opportunities for cross-curricular work are increasing.

The school knows and supports its pupils well and gives them the help they need. An intensive range of strategies has improved attendance and punctuality for the vast majority of pupils and, as a result, attendance has rapidly improved from low in the previous year, to average. The school is very welcoming and this has resulted in pupils settling quickly into the school. Most parents and carers and pupils agree that pupils are well prepared for moves between year groups and between schools. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are supported very well through effective partnerships with external agencies and as a result the majority make good progress in a range of areas, including their behaviour, social skills and self-esteem. A breakfast club provides opportunities for play and social activities before school every day and this helps pupils to improve their social skills and/or attendance. This good level of care, support and guidance has enabled pupils to rapidly improve in a range of areas, including how safe they feel, their behaviour and their achievement.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The executive Principal and head of school have shown determination in turning the school around. Their shared vision is enthusiastically embraced by staff and they are well supported by senior and middle level leaders and managers. The Interim Executive Board has been actively involved in the strategic direction of the school and, together with the local authority through the Learning Trust, has rigorously challenged, monitored and evaluated the school’s progress. Leaders and managers plan meticulously for future improvements and have taken very effective steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning. While more needs to be done to raise attainment and progress, there have been considerable improvements over the last year in all aspects of the school.

During the last year, engagement with parents and carers has improved and as a consequence, parents and carers are better informed and more involved in school-led activities. Partnerships, particularly with the federation and with the Learning Trust, underpin the rapid improvements in the quality of pupils’ learning and progress, teaching, behaviour and the effectiveness of the curriculum.

The school’s safeguarding arrangements are very effective. Child protection arrangements are strong and there are comprehensive risk assessments. The school promotes equal opportunities and is taking steps to address gaps in performance between groups of pupils. Incidents of discrimination, which are very infrequent, are managed well. Pupils’ understanding of diversity within the school and local community is good but is less well developed with regard to national and global diversity.

*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	2
<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>3</b>



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<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points which are generally well below age-related expectations, especially in literacy and numeracy, children’s progress is satisfactory. This is because there are well-organised arrangements to help children feel safe and settle quickly. Relationships with parents and carers are good. As one parent said, ‘Our son has only been at school for two weeks. Our first impressions of the school are very positive and our son is very happy.’ Children behave well and know the difference between right and wrong. They respond well to adults although they do not have enough opportunities to develop independence.

Teaching is satisfactory as a result of good relationships and speaking and listening are developed well through good levels of conversations with adults. The curriculum provides adequate opportunities for creative activities and supports learning, especially in the teaching of links between letters and sounds. There are fewer opportunities for children to improve their calculating skills. There is a good balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities and the outdoor area has been considerably improved to create further opportunities for play. The school has developed an effective system for recording data about how well children are doing and this is informing teachers’ planning for the next steps.

Leaders and managers identify priorities and plan actions to address weaknesses. Consequently, children’s progress, while not yet good, is accelerating. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well supported by leaders and managers from the federation and this is driving improvement. Staff work well together as a team to plan activities that sustain children’s interest.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are positive about their child's experiences in school. All say that their child feels safe and the vast majority say that their child enjoys school and that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

A very small minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not meet their child's particular needs. Inspectors found that the school meets the needs of most pupils very well but that planning does not always meet the needs of the higher attainers. The school has agreed to address this.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthias Church of England 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	58	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	51	21	49	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	44	21	49	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	28	24	56	4	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	28	24	56	4	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	18	42	19	44	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	28	27	63	0	0	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)	11	31	19	54	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	30	22	51	5	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	40	21	49	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	16	27	63	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	16	32	74	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	12	28	25	58	5	12	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.**



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Matthias Church of England Primary School, London, N16 8DD**

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently. We very much enjoyed our visit and I am writing to tell you what we found out.

St Matthias is giving you a satisfactory education and is improving. We could see that you are making progress in your lessons and that the 'Stay on Green' rules are helping you to behave well and get ready for learning. You work well together and especially enjoy singing, which we thought was very good. You also enjoy sports and practical activities.

Your progress has improved and you are doing much better in English and mathematics, although you do not always use these skills in other activities. In a few lessons, you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve, and when this happens you make even better progress. We thought that although you work well in most lessons, you need to be able to learn on your own at times.

Most of you told us that you feel safe in school and that you trust the adults. We think that the school cares for you very well.

We have asked the school to do two things that will help to make it even better:

- Help you to make even better progress in mathematics and in writing by using your skills in different activities.
- Make lessons even better by:
  - making sure all of your work is at the right level
  - letting you know how well you are doing and how you can improve your work
  - helping you to learn by yourselves.

You can help by continuing to work hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely  
Helen Howard  
Lead inspector

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