

Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 111382 |
| Local authority | Warrington |
| Inspection number | 378293 |
| Inspection dates | 28–29 November 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Geoffrey Yates |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 201 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jane Morris |
| Headteacher | Jane Dilorenzo |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 September 2006 |
| School address | Stretton Road Stretton Warrington WA4 4NT |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed, taught by eight teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke informally with a small number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors also analysed 111 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The degree to which pupils achieve well as they move through the school, especially in using their writing skills well, not only in literacy lessons, but also in other subjects.
- How effectively the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children for the next stage of their learning.
- Whether teaching is consistently good or better and whether teachers use marking and other forms of assessment well.
- How well the school meets pupils' personal needs.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized primary school, in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. The proportion of pupils belonging to minority ethnic groups is well-below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has had two different acting headteachers in the last two years. A substantive headteacher is due to take up her post in January 2012. The school has gained many awards, including Healthy Schools status.

There is privately-run childcare provision on the school site. The provision did not form part of this inspection, but a report on its quality is available on the Ofsted website.

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 good school. It provides its pupils with an interesting and enjoyable education, as borne out by pupils' consistently high attendance and by the school's welcoming environment for learning. Over their time at Saint Matthew's, pupils make good progress overall. By the end of Year 6 they reach well-above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics, from starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage that are as expected for their age. There are outstanding aspects to the school. In particular, the care and guidance pupils receive, pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and their excellent contribution to the school and the community. The impact of changes in the leadership of the school has meant some aspects of its provision have not improved as well as others. For example, while teaching is of good quality overall throughout the school, it is not consistently good or better.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they get on very well with each other and with the staff. Pupils are appreciative of the high level of care shown to them and say that they feel safe and secure at all times. Comments such as 'My teacher is really helpful when I have a problem' and 'I don't know anyone who has been bullied' are typical of those received during the inspection. Those aspects of school life are important factors in promoting pupils' personal development.

Some teaching is of outstanding quality, but the school recognises that a small amount of practice is only satisfactory. Sometimes, too much time is taken to explain tasks to pupils and the use made of marking is not sufficiently helpful. Enough is not always done to involve pupils in their own learning by using targets that identify what they need to achieve in order to improve further. While there are some good examples of pupils using their above-average writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum, this is not consistent across the school. The curriculum is good and includes an interesting selection of activities out of school hours. A recent improvement in information and communication technology equipment has allowed pupils to use and develop their skills well in this area.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The current acting headteacher has targeted the right things to improve the school further and has the full support of the staff. She has ensured that the tracking and use of information about pupils' progress has been improved further and she has involved staff even more in decision-making. The incoming headteacher has been involved closely with the acting headteacher in the decisions made, so that the transition of leadership

can be as smooth as possible. The school's accurate self-assessment, alongside the above-average standards of attainment, not just this year, but also in recent years, pupils' continued good progress, the strong support of an effective governing body, and improved links with parents and carers all point to the school having a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - involving pupils more in improving their own learning
 - making marking more effective
 - making sure introductions to lessons are not too long
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their good writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

| |
|---|
| 2 |
|---|

Pupils make good progress and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Pupils enjoy their learning and are eager to succeed. For example, pupils in Year 2 were very keen to show inspectors their good-quality work about Florence Nightingale and politely answered questions about her life. Older pupils were keen to talk about the well-scripted letters they had written to the headteacher asking permission to raise money to help a Peace Centre in a local town that is reliant on public funding. One younger pupil responding to a question about how hard pupils worked said 'Our class could not work harder because we try our very best!' All age groups demonstrate good concentration in lessons because the work set is mostly interesting and challenging and pupils know teachers value their contributions. However, pupils do not yet have enough responsibility for their own learning by being involved in knowing how they can improve.

When children enter the school, their development is at the level expected for the age group. They make good progress and attainment on entry to Year 1 is above the expected levels in all areas of learning. Pupils continue to progress well and, as a result, attainment by the end of Year 6 is well-above average and has been so over the last five years. Inspection evidence shows currently that a good proportion of pupils are working at or above the expected levels in both English and mathematics. Pupils can mostly apply their skills well in other subjects when asked to do so. But, across the school, there are missed opportunities in lessons for pupils to use their good writing skills well in other subjects. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of being safe and they enjoy taking on responsibility, such as acting as buddy friends to young children or as school council members. By Year 6, they display mature, responsible attitudes and are keen to help those less well-off than themselves by raising considerable amounts of money for charitable causes. Pupils of all ages are adamant that bullying is not tolerated. With good academic standards and excellent habits of attendance and punctuality, pupils are well prepared for their future education. Successful links outside school help pupils to appreciate and value diversity, as well as expanding their horizons.

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 | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good or, occasionally, better than good, lessons move at a fast pace and great care is taken in ensuring that pupils do not have to listen too long before being asked to carry out activities. In those lessons, work is very challenging. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils show tremendous enthusiasm and good levels of skill in working out the strategies that need to be used in solving mathematical problems. They are keen to share their ideas. Where teaching is not as strong, lessons do not move at a good pace and pupils are not involved sufficiently in their own learning because individual targets have not been set in consultation with the pupils and marking is inconsistent. Throughout the school, teaching assistants support pupils very well.

Curricular provision contributes effectively to the good promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. It is adjusted well to meet pupils' needs, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and higher-attaining pupils. It provides some imaginative opportunities for learning, based on visits to places of interest, such as a Roman fortress, and by the contribution made to the curriculum by specialist music staff and other visitors to the school, including a historian. There are some good examples of pupils using their writing skills well in different subjects, but this is not consistent throughout the school. The curriculum is enriched greatly by a varied range of extra-curricular opportunities that are well supported and enjoyed by the pupils.

The personal and social needs of pupils are met outstandingly well and parents and carers, too, get the support they need. The school, through its very welcoming environment, ensures every child is known as an individual. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the support their children receive. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that adults listen to them always. Effective links with other schools and external agencies ease transition between different schools. The school works successfully to encourage high attendance.

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

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 | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Despite changes in the senior leadership of the school, potential disruption has been kept to a minimum. Above-average standards of attainment have been maintained and recent improvements have enhanced what the school has to offer to its pupils. For example, deficiencies in the school's pupil tracking system have been addressed. The acting headteacher, with good support from the acting deputy headteacher and other senior managers, has carried out her role well and has successfully involved staff in developing their leadership and management responsibilities further. Together, they have ensured an environment where every member of staff feels included and wants to be part of the vision for continued success. The school's priorities for success are the right ones and there is a good focus on raising achievement and improving provision to the best it can be. The governing body discharges its statutory duties well. It is well informed and members bring with them a very good range of professional skills to underpin their roles. The governing body is effective because it is fully involved in decision-making, with some members visiting the school regularly and carrying out observations around school.

The school promotes safeguarding procedures well, taking prompt and decisive action when concerns arise. As a result, pupils and their parents and carers have no concerns about safety issues and pupils say they feel safe. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion. Leaders and the governing body promote it well and are very active in tackling any form of discrimination. The effective partnerships established with outside institutions contribute effectively to many aspects of pupils' academic and personal development. Community cohesion is good. There are very strong local links, especially with the church, and pupils participate well in community events such as a gardening festival. Links further afield are in place, but not as strong as the local ones.

These are the grades for the 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 make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle well into school because of the warmth of relationships established by staff. They engage well with the good range of learning activities available to them in the classroom and in the outdoor area. The activities cover all areas of learning. The environment is very safe and children’s welfare needs are paramount. The builders’ yard role-play area is of an exceptional quality and is well used by children to develop their creative skills. During the inspection a group of children were involved intently in another part of the outside area, creating their own sea monsters using natural materials picked up by them on a treasure hunt round the school’s extensive grounds. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and form very good relationships with each other and with adults. They enjoy their learning, but, whereas adult-led sessions are mostly effective, there is occasionally some over-direction of child-initiated activities. However, teaching and the quality of leadership are both good overall. The highly enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher and the experienced teaching assistant have developed good systems to evaluate children’s learning and they make good use of the data collected to match learning experiences closely to children’s needs. For example, during the inspection, more-able children were challenged to write their own sentences about the sea creatures and responded very well, with one child making a very good attempt, unaided, at spelling the word coral. When children enter Year 1, the majority are exceeding nationally expected levels. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the support their children receive and induction arrangements are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

There was an average-sized return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers. A small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about different aspects of the school’s work, including the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team discussed the issues raised with school leaders and were satisfied with the responses. Inspection judgements reflected the same positive views expressed by the vast majority in the questionnaire responses.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stretton St Matthew's CofE 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 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 76 | 68 | 35 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 70 | 63 | 41 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 43 | 39 | 64 | 58 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 46 | 41 | 56 | 50 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 62 | 56 | 47 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 58 | 52 | 51 | 46 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 55 | 50 | 51 | 46 | 5 | 5 | 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) | 49 | 44 | 53 | 48 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 52 | 47 | 52 | 47 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 35 | 32 | 58 | 52 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 40 | 36 | 56 | 50 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 41 | 37 | 61 | 55 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 61 | 55 | 49 | 44 | 1 | 1 | 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 is 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).

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">■ 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Warrington – WA4 4NT

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave to all the inspection team during the recent inspection of your school. It was good to see you work so hard in lessons. We agree with your school that it provides you with a good standard of education, with some aspects that are better than that. The care, guidance and support that your school provides for you are excellent, as is your understanding of healthy eating and your contribution to school life. The high level of care helps you feel very safe and valued. You get on together really well and your behaviour is good. It was a pleasure to observe children preparing so well for their Nativity play and to discuss the importance during the war of the Burtonwood air-base, with a group of Year 5 pupils. Their knowledge of the topic was far superior to mine!

Your school is always looking for ways to make things better for you, so to help it do this, there is one major thing we are asking your school to do and that is to make sure that all the teaching you receive is good or better. I have outlined below some of the things that will help to achieve this improvement. We have asked the leaders to:

- make sure that your teachers help you to know how you can make your work even better, by giving you challenging targets
- find ways to ensure that your teachers give you plenty of opportunities to use your good writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum
- make sure that your teachers make better use of marking.

I know you will all continue to work hard to play your part in making sure your school becomes even better. Keep up your excellent attendance record!

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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