

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number	100267
LEA	Hackney LEA
Inspection number	276279
Inspection dates	7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Krafft

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000
School address	Wordsworth Road London N16 8DD
Telephone number	020 7254 1148
Fax number	020 7275 9215
Chair of governors	Ms Rosemarie Perkins
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Cole

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Matthias is a large, Church of England primary school with a nursery. The community it serves has very high levels of deprivation. The number of pupils who start or leave the school at different times and the percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals are high. Most pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being of black Caribbean and black African heritage. Over half of the pupils speak a language other than English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is high.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and gives sound value for money. In the nursery and reception classes pupils make good progress, especially in their language, personal and social development, because the teaching is well planned and meets pupils' needs well. At the end of Year 2 and 6 standards are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory although work is not matched precisely enough to pupils needs and not always challenging enough. Marking is inconsistent and pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language are supported appropriately and so make satisfactory progress.

The charismatic headteacher has created a caring, attractive environment where pupils feel safe and generally behave well. Although the school has taken some steps to improve attendance it remains unsatisfactory and exclusions are too high. The leadership team has been expanded and with the support of the local authority, subject leaders are now involved in improving teaching and learning. Although the school's self evaluation is based on an increasing range of monitoring evidence it is over generous in its judgements because many systems are new and it is not yet evaluating the impact of its actions on improving attendance and behaviour.

There has been improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the role of subject leaders so the school is in a good position to continue to improve further.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching by ensuring that work is matched to pupils' needs and capabilities;
- Improve the consistency of marking so that pupils know how they can improve;
- Evaluate the impact of school actions on improving teaching, learning behaviour and attendance and identify how to improve further.

Achievement and standards

When pupils start school the knowledge and skills most have, particularly in relation to language, literacy and communication, are well below that expected of their age. As a result of good teaching, a well planned curriculum and effective use of resources in the nursery and reception

classes they make good progress. Most reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is because teaching is satisfactory. In 2005 overall results in Year 2 fell. However, over time there is an improving trend in standards in writing and mathematics. In 2005 results in Year 6 improved from the previous year and pupils made satisfactory progress. However, fewer pupils reached the higher levels, particularly in science and mathematics. Although revised to reflect the high level of pupil mobility targets were not met because work is not always challenging enough. The school has recently introduced a system to monitor the progress each pupil is making but it has not yet had an impact on improving standards and achievement.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language make satisfactory progress because they are given appropriate additional support.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well being are satisfactory. Pupils trust and respect the adults in school so feel safe and know who to ask for help. Most have a positive attitude towards school and are keen to participate in activities. They confidently express their views in lessons and school council meetings because they know they will be listened to. As a result they acquire the basic skills which prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education and future economic well-being. The majority of pupils behave well and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with calmly and effectively. However, exclusions have risen and the school is developing its systems to monitor this. Pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and take part in a number of sporting activities and after school clubs. They make a positive contribution to the community through fund raising and the choir singing at local events. Although the school monitors absence and rewards good attendance with certificates, more could be done to encourage those with poor attendance records. Attendance has declined over the past two years and is below the national average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They talk openly and with confidence about their feelings in circle time and listen respectfully to each other. Most play well together at break times and co-operate in lessons. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of other cultures and faiths. Links with the local church and the development of quiet areas on the playground are enhancing their spiritual awareness.

Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Foundation Stage teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn and this ensures that children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.

Although there are some examples of good teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teaching is inconsistent across the school, and this results in pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress. Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those at early stages of learning English, helps to ensure that these pupils also make satisfactory progress.

The school has recently focused on improving the marking of pupils' work. Whilst this is now good in some classes, it is inconsistently applied across the school. Teachers' marking comments do not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. A newly introduced pupil tracking system is beginning to provide helpful information on the performance of individual pupils and year groups but this is not yet fully utilised in informing teachers' planning.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally positive and pupils say they enjoy their learning. Where teaching is good, pupils make good progress and are well behaved and interested in their lessons. However, when lessons lack pace and challenge, and the work is not well matched to their learning needs, pupils become distracted, behaviour deteriorates and, as a consequence, progress is restricted.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum overall is satisfactory and the Foundation Stage curriculum is good. The school is beginning to make effective links between different subjects to provide more exciting and meaningful opportunities for pupils' learning.

The school is well supported by a local authority project which has helped to develop curriculum leadership skills. This has ensured that English, mathematics and science have a high profile across the school and that other subjects such as geography, history and personal, social and health education are effectively covered.

Physical activities encourage pupils to keep fit and active. The school has a football club and all pupils have the opportunity to attend Aikido lessons.

The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school. The school provides a sound range of opportunities for pupils to visit places of educational interest in the London area. However, opportunities for pupils to visit other parts of the country are limited.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good elements. Pupils are well supervised and say they feel safe in school. They are confident about approaching a member of staff if they have a problem. This view is endorsed by parents. Child protection, health and safety and first aid procedures are in place.

The guidance provided to help pupils improve their work is inconsistent. Although some pupils are aware of their targets and the levels they are working at, particularly in literacy and numeracy, they do not know how to improve their work. Too many do not achieve their targets because work is not sufficiently challenging or matched to their needs.

There is appropriate additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language so they make satisfactory progress. Support plans are being developed for some pupils following a recent rise in exclusions but are not yet in place.

Grade: 3

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is enthusiastic and charismatic. He has a good working relationship with the staff which has resulted in the school having a full complement of dedicated teachers. The school is generally orderly and calm and runs smoothly.

Subject leaders and members of the newly extended senior management team have been well supported by the local authority and are beginning to develop effective leadership and management skills. A range of new initiatives and projects have been introduced during this academic year but the evaluation of the impact of these, in terms of outcomes for pupils' learning and well-being, is underdeveloped.

There are a number of vacancies on the governing body and some meetings of the governing body have had to be cancelled due to poor attendance. Although some individual governors support the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, the governing body overall does not sufficiently challenge the headteacher and the school.

School self-evaluation is generally effective and identifies the school's main strengths and weaknesses. However, its overall judgments on some areas of its work are over generous.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and has satisfactory capacity for further improvements.

Grade: 3

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate

School Overall 16-19

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

Leadership and management

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA
The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy		
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily		Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise		Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse		Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health		Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe		
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements		Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place		Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism		Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them		Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution		
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships		Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them		Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community		Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being		
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills		Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams		Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form		NA
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy		NA

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

On behalf of all the inspectors, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing you in lessons.

You and your parents like your school. You trust and respect the adults and you told us you feel safe and know who to ask for help if you need it. Most of you behave well and you enjoy your lessons. In circle time you talk about your feelings and express your ideas confidently. You enjoy being active and using the play equipment at lunchtime. We particularly enjoyed seeing some of you take part in Aikido lessons.

We think your headteacher and teachers have made your school a caring and attractive place and you get a satisfactory education. To make it even better, we have asked them to help you do as well as you possibly can by making sure the work you do isn't too hard or too easy and letting you know how you can improve. We have also asked them to keep checking how well you are doing so that they know if they need to do anything differently, particularly to help some of you behave better and attend school more often. We would like to thank you again for making us so welcome and hope that you carry on enjoying being at school and get even better at your work.

Best wishes

Jackie Krafft

Her Majesty's Inspector

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