

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Kentford Road, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 2JL

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This improving and highly inclusive school is much valued by parents and the community.
- Children get off to a good start in their learning in the caring and creative Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Progress for pupils is good in Key Stages 1 and 2, resulting in good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good; they behave well and keep themselves safe.
- Teaching is good overall and improving, contributing well to the good and sometimes better progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They have also managed the large increase in the number of pupils joining the school and the staff changes well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils consistently reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not of a consistently high enough quality across the school.
- Pupils do not always fully understand how to improve their work further or regularly receive opportunities to act on the advice they are given.
- The steps taken by senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are not always sharp enough to bring about improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons. They also listened to pupils reading and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, and members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's improvement plans, monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings, data on pupils' past and current progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the three responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parental views.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Jones

Additional Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had significant increases in the number of pupils on roll across the school in the last two years and has moved towards having two classes in each year group. This has led to increases in the number of school staff employed, including teachers.
- A major building programme at school has recently been completed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have the opportunities to fully develop their speaking and listening skills
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - more pupils consistently reach higher attainment levels
 - pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the learning tasks teachers set consistently enable pupils to make the best possible progress, particularly those who are more-able
 - all learning time in lessons is well used
 - pupils are regularly given time to act on the advice given on how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers know precisely how to improve the quality of their work
 - sharpening the steps taken to evaluate the improvements made in teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They settle quickly and benefit from the skilled and caring support they receive and the stimulating environment in which they learn. As result, children make good progress, especially in their personal development and in their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.
- Pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points as they move through Key Stage 1, so that by the time they leave Year 2 they reach the standards expected for their age. Attainment increased in 2012 after a dip in 2011, and more pupils reached the higher levels in Year 2 in reading and writing because more challenging work was given to these pupils and there was a greater focus on developing writing skills in this year group.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 from their starting points, reaching standards generally in line with those expected nationally and sometimes above. Attainment increased in 2012 with more pupils doing well for their age in Year 6 in English and mathematics, especially in reading. This is a direct result of the work senior leaders have done to improve teaching and to raise expectations regarding the amount of progress that pupils should be making.
- However, pupils in some year groups do not always consistently make as much progress as they should, especially the more able, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In addition, some pupils are not always given enough opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills and this is holding them back in their learning.
- The school has worked diligently to improve the progress of boys to match that of girls and records of pupils' progress during 2011-2012, with current work seen during the inspection, demonstrates that such work has been successful.
- Achievement in reading has improved especially in Key Stage 2 due to good teaching which builds skills systematically year on year. The teaching of the sounds that letters make is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and built on further in Key Stage 2. This is of particular help to the increasing numbers of pupils who join the school with English as an additional language. These pupils also benefit greatly from the skilled staff appointed to support them.
- Learning throughout school is good and occasionally outstanding. For instance, in a Reception class lesson, learning was rapid when children explored how numbers are made up and investigated missing numbers in a pattern.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is as good as other pupils in school because their individual needs are identified early and effectively met through targeted support.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils make good progress because the vast majority of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents agree their children are well taught and inspection evidence supports this view.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from consistently good or better teaching resulting in them making good progress and wanting to learn from an early age. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall, but sometimes weaker teaching leads to some pupils underachieving, especially the more able.
- The most effective teaching inspires and motivates pupils to learn, try their best and behave well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use skilled support staff effectively and regularly check that pupils understand what they are doing. They also build very positive and caring relationships with pupils that help to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In the better lessons, pupils are fully engaged in creative, practical learning activities that 'stretch' them and

give them opportunities to practise their skills, learn from each other and to work independently. For instance, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils very much enjoyed investigating and interpreting information in challenging, practical ways that helped them stay interested and to achieve well.

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers spend too long introducing work and pupils are asked to complete tasks that do not always help them with their learning. This is particularly the case for the more able pupils who are capable of being challenged further.
- The marking of pupils' work is helpful but some teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to act on the advice given and this slows the progress they make.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to appoint additional staff to support learning. This has already helped those pupils who receive this support to narrow the gap between their performance and the national average.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well mannered; they get on well with adults and each other. The overwhelming view of parents is that behaviour is good and inspectors agree. A typical pupil's view is 'I like this school because learning is fun and the adults look after us and keep us safe'.
- Good behaviour and eagerness to learn helps pupils to concentrate well in lessons and make good progress. Pupils are well supported by the praise and rewards they receive and the methods staff use to manage the few incidents of poor behaviour.
- An impressive feature of the school is the inclusive ethos and how well all pupils get on and support each other. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures, many joining the school at different times throughout the year, are well supported, integrate quickly and make friends.
- Attendance rates have been improving and are now at the national average. This reflects the good work the school has done with families. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make them eager to arrive to school on time.
- Pupils understand the various forms that bullying may take, including name calling, cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. Pupils are confident that on the rare occasions it happens it is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils report they feel safe and understand what makes an unsafe situation. Parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Pupils feel valued and are proud of their school. They enjoy the range of responsibilities they can take, for example, helping with younger children in the Reception class or being a member of the Green Environment Team, who help make sure the school saves energy and looks after the planet.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is very effectively led by the headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy and assistant headteachers. Her high expectations and relentless drive for improving the school has been successful in focusing the efforts of the whole-school community, senior leadership team and governors. There is a shared and clear vision for improving teaching and increasing pupils' progress and staff morale is high. This has led to rapid improvements since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement which are now both good.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and have set these out in carefully planned actions in the school improvement plan. However, the steps taken to check on the areas of teaching that need to improve are not always sharp enough to bring about the desired improvement, especially in the amount of challenge that more-able pupils receive in some classes.
- Performance management is rigorous and well focused on improving pupils' progress, the quality

of teaching and teachers' professional development. This has led to better teaching and clear improvements in how well pupils achieve, particularly in reading and writing.

- Senior leaders and governors have worked very effectively to integrate the large numbers of additional pupils joining the school, as it grows to two classes in each year group. They have also ensured the prevention of discrimination of any kind so that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to learn about each other's backgrounds and faiths, helping them develop tolerance and understanding.
 - Changes to the curriculum are making it more creative but these need more time before they are fully in place. Although pupils are provided with exciting topics which link subjects together, not enough opportunities are being provided for pupils to use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
 - Pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their work and the Harvest assemblies were used very well to celebrate the school values and forge even stronger links with parents.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school ensures that rigorous checks are made on all staff before they start work at the school so that pupils are kept safe.
 - The local authority has provided effective support that has contributed well to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of school's strengths and areas for development and contribute well to the plans for improvement.
 - Improvements to the ways in which the committees operate mean governors are better able to hold the school to account.
 - The governing body has ensured that pupil premium funding is used well to provide targeted support for pupils which has helped to improve their progress.
 - Governors have worked very effectively to ensure that the building work, appointment of additional staff and the management of large numbers of pupils joining the school has not disrupted learning more than could be reasonably expected.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105205
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	400768

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Farhat Shaheen
Headteacher	Barbara Haworth
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2010
Telephone number	01204 333005
Fax number	01204 333006
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