

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Norris Street, Little Lever, Bolton, BL3 1BQ

Inspection dates 17–18 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Given their starting points, almost all pupils make good progress at all key stages throughout the school. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- In a very large majority of lessons teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for and they are very polite and well mannered.
- The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are often exemplary.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and parents overwhelmingly support this view.
- Attendance has continued to improve over recent years and is above the national average.
- Senior leaders and the governing body know the school well and provide good leadership and management. They are clearly focussed on driving the continued improvement of teaching and of pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking of pupils' work is not consistently applied across all subject areas, especially in numeracy.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities in lessons to do their corrections or to complete the work asked for in teachers' written comments.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subject areas.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not get enough opportunities to develop their basic reading, writing and number skills when learning outdoors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. Two observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, documents relating to pupils' behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of the governing body meetings, pupils' progress data and work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, staff, three members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the replies to a parental survey carried out by the school in June 2012, three letters received from parents and an informal conversation with two parents.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Flitcroft

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Matthew's is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls on roll is well below the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average and the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school accommodates a before-school club that is attended by some children from the school. This provision is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award, the Church School Award and the Activemark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring that marking is consistently applied across all year groups and subjects, especially in numeracy
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to do their corrections or complete their work as requested in teachers' written comments
 - creating further opportunities that enable pupils to develop their writing skills across all subject areas.
- Improve achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children make more rapid progress by creating even more opportunities for them to develop their basic reading, writing and number skills outside the classroom.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well over time because of good teaching. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those that are expected for their age, but below that expectation for some children, especially in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the Reception Year the vast majority of children have developed skills that are slightly above that typically expected for their age across all areas of learning. However, although children are making relatively good progress, opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills in their outdoor learning are more limited.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is good and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012 was above the national averages. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' progress in 2012 was above the national average in English and mathematics.
- An emphasis on improving pupils' reading skills through the introduction of a new whole-school reading scheme is successfully raising pupils' attainment in reading. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subject areas.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced effective strategies to develop pupils' basic skills in mathematics and as such attainment in mathematics has improved.
- Pupils' achievement in lessons is good. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and work well on their own and with others.
- Lesson observations, inspectors hearing pupils read and scrutiny of work confirm that current pupils are making good progress. Parents are accurate in their positive views that their children are making good progress.
- Senior leaders check the progress of individuals and groups of pupils well. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those eligible for pupil premium funding, achieve as well as their peers because work in lessons is well planned and meets their specific needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of parents believe that the quality of teaching is good and inspectors agree with this view.
- In the most effective lessons learning takes place at a good rate and timed activities keep pupils focussed on their work. This good teaching provides pupils with many opportunities to become actively involved in lessons. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and activities and resources are used that match the needs of individual and groups of pupils well. Teachers question pupils effectively to challenge them and check their understanding.
- In the vast majority of lessons teachers' standards are being met well. The systems and processes used to check and improve the quality of teaching and learning are effective and contribute to training opportunities for staff. For example, staff meetings are regularly used to develop the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across all areas.
- In the Reception Year and across Key Stage 1, phonics sessions about letters and the sounds they make are organised effectively by ability groups with tasks that match pupils' needs. This enables pupils to make good and at times outstanding progress.
- The new whole-school reading scheme is very effective and is accelerating the development of pupils' literacy skills across all stages. Pupils respond well to their guided reading sessions. Teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress shows that most make good progress in reading.

- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, although teachers provide generally good feedback through their marking of pupils' work it is not consistent across all subject areas, especially in mathematics. In addition, teachers' comments are not always followed up by pupils because they do not have sufficient opportunities to do their corrections or to complete work.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, including the disabled or those with special educational needs and those identified by the school for additional support. This enables them to make progress that is consistent with all other pupils.
- The school has very strong relationships with parents and regularly invites them to school events. For example, the school's Harvest Service at the local parish church was well attended by parents, friends and relatives. This was extremely well led by the Year 3 class, demonstrating their self-confidence and presentation skills, and contributed well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils display extremely positive attitudes towards school. They are keen to be actively engaged in their lessons. Instances of them becoming distracted or distracting others are rare.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered and relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are exemplary. Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying. They report that bullying is rare and any instances are quickly resolved. Pupils feel confident to talk to an adult if they have any concerns.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school because the adults look after them well. Year 6 Play Leaders help to look after the reception and Key Stage 1 children. The responses to the school's parental survey and to Parent View indicate that a vast majority of parents consider their children are safe at school and would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school pays due regard to safeguarding and the school site is secure. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know about internet safety and visits to the school by the police, fire and ambulance services promote their awareness of safety matters and keeping safe. Pupils are very well supervised when visiting the local church.
- The excellent pastoral system ensures that pupils are well cared for. Effective partnerships with parents and external agencies are a strong feature of the school. Children who display any cause for concern are identified early and this ensures that appropriate support is provided. The school's support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable is very effective.
- Attendance has continued to improve over the last three years and is high. Punctuality is very good.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for further school improvement with a strong focus on teaching and learning. They know its strengths and weaknesses well. Consequently, the school has accurately identified the priorities to raise standards further.
- Regular lesson observations and accurate feedback on teachers' performance ensure that teaching continues to improve. The senior leaders and governing body are developing systems further to incorporate more fully the teachers' standards.
- The well-planned and resourced curriculum meets pupils' needs well. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills in a stimulating learning environment that has a significant impact on pupils' progress.
- Through a variety of enrichment activities such as the trips to Bolton museum, Skipton Castle

and Formby Beach, pupils develop a greater understanding of the world around them.

- Throughout the school there are many opportunities that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in July Year 6 pupils organised a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs for other pupils. These included an art club, Zumba, road safety club and football. These activities raised funds for the Toilet Twinning charity that helps transform lives of poor communities across the world.
- The local authority provides effective support for this good school. Since the previous inspection advice and support have been given to develop mathematics and as such pupils' numeracy skills have improved.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very well informed and is able to effectively challenge and support school leaders. It is actively involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school and has identified areas for improvement.
- Members have a good understanding of the allocation of funding for those eligible for the pupil premium, for example, providing additional support through the Sunflower Club and one-to-one help for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. They are beginning to check and evaluate the impact of this spending on pupils' progress.
- The governors undertake their statutory duties effectively. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.

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	105242
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	404978

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

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Wiseman
Headteacher	Georgina Ryding
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2010
Telephone number	01204 333692
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