

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich

Portman Road, Ipswich, IP1 2AX

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress through the school is too variable, particularly in reading and writing. The current Year 6 pupils have made too little progress in reading.
- Results in the Year 1 check on pupils' knowledge of the sounds made by letters (phonics) are too low and the programme for teaching these sounds does not extend into Year 3 for those who need it.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and varies too much in quality between classes and year groups.
- Attendance rates are below average.
- Too few teachers consistently plan lessons which meet the learning needs of all pupils, particularly those of more-able pupils.
- Teachers' comments in marking are mostly not pin-pointed on what pupils are learning or their targets. Pupils do not improve their work in the light of teachers' comments or use their targets to take the next steps in their learning.
- Leaders are not focusing strongly enough on improving teaching or holding teachers sufficiently to account for improving the quality of their teaching or pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well, are respectful and cooperative. The school nurtures pupils' self-respect and confidence well, in addition to their respect and tolerance of each other.
- From Reception to the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.
- Additional activities develop pupils' wider skills and understanding across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have eradicated much inadequate teaching and have improved the quality of some of the teaching. Governors are contributing to improving the school and have influenced changes of staff for the better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher or senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons in each class.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school development plan, information regarding pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring information on school performance, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspector met parents informally at the start of the school day. They took into account the responses to a recent school survey and the 26 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Whittle

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Rudman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is over twice the national average.
- A third of the pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is slightly below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2013, improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better and improve pupils' achievement, by:
 - making sure all teachers plan work which is well matched to the range of pupils' abilities and which provides a good level of challenge for all groups, particularly the more able
 - making sure that teachers' marking comments refer to what pupils are expected to learn and to the improvement targets set, and that pupils improve their work and make the next steps in their learning
 - extending the programme for teaching phonics into Key Stage 2 in order to improve pupils' reading and writing skills
 - ensuring that the key skills of reading and writing are developed in all subjects.
- Improve attendance by:
 - raising the importance of pupils' regular attendance in the meetings held with parents
 - convincing parents of the importance of their children attending school every day.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all leaders hold teachers to account for pupils' progress through rigorous checks on their work
 - evaluating closely the effectiveness of actions taken to improve teaching and attendance
 - making sure that the impact of action taken in response to planned development priorities to ensure key improvements are made quickly is fully evaluated, including by governors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From starting points below those usually found nationally, children make good progress through their Reception Year. Their rate of progress is sustained into Key Stage 1 and they reach average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Having fallen in 2011, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 rose in 2012, and has risen again slightly in the current year, except in reading. However, Year 6 pupils' progress has been uneven through the school, including in reading. Their progress is, currently, improving with better teaching and they have made slightly better- than-expected progress in writing, and good progress in mathematics since the end of Year 2.
- Progress is too variable across Key Stage 2 for all pupils, however, with the exception of pupils who speak English as an additional language, who make good progress from the specialist support they receive. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 make less progress than those in the other Key Stage 2 year groups in reading and writing, while pupils in Year 6 are making better progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same, variable, progress as other pupils and their progress and achievement also require improvement.
- Pupils from Year 1 who read to inspectors made good use of their knowledge of phonics to help them read. However, results in the phonic screening check in 2012 and 2013 show that too few pupils reached the expected level, which limits both their reading and writing skills. Pupils in Year 3 did not have the same knowledge as those in Year 1 because they are no longer taught phonic skills.
- In 2012, the standards reached by Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium were nearly two terms behind other pupils in English, and less than a term behind in mathematics. Eligible pupils are, currently, less than a term behind in both English and mathematics, showing that the school has successfully narrowed the gap between the attainment of these pupils and that of others in English, but not in mathematics. In other year groups with the exception of Year 3, standards reached by eligible pupils are broadly similar to those of their classmates due to the good support they receive.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching ranges from inadequate to outstanding. It is good in the Reception Year and in Key Stage 1. There is too much variation in Key Stage 2, not only between classes and year groups, but also between subjects.
- In the lessons observed, learning activities were planned well to meet the needs of less-able pupils, particularly in mathematics, but there was too little challenge planned for more-able pupils. Work in pupils' books showed that too often pupils of all abilities are doing the same work. This means that many less-able pupils are only able to do their work with help, and that more-able pupils are prevented from making accelerated progress.
- The teaching of literacy skills varies too much. In some lessons, pupils made good progress because teachers gave pupils an appropriate level of challenge. In other lessons the pace of learning was not good because pupils spent too much time listening to teachers and not actively

learning.

- Similarly, mathematical skills are developed well in some lessons. In one lesson, there was a good emphasis on practical activities to support the learning of less-able pupils. In another, good challenge was given to Year 2 pupils when solving problems. However, a lack of challenge to extend the learning of more-able pupils limited their learning.
- Pupils' work shows that their problem-solving and investigational skills are not being developed sufficiently in mathematics or in science. In addition, pupils are not asked to practise key literacy skills in other subjects, and this inhibits the development of these skills.
- Opportunities are not given to pupils to develop their reading and writing skills in relation to their targets, especially at Key Stage 2. Also, practice in marking is inconsistent. Teachers mostly identify points for improvement, but these are often not linked well enough to what pupils have been learning and pupils do not improve their work in the light of these comments. As a result, pupils are not taking the next steps in their learning. Not all work is marked, so pupils do not always know how well they are doing.
- Pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, are given good support in small groups by well-deployed and skilled teaching assistants. However, not all teachers deploy teaching assistants well in other situations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given good support, but leaders and managers have not rigorously checked that additional small-group activities for these pupils are making a real difference to their rates of learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school. They relate well to each other in lessons. They apply themselves well to their work, both on their own and when working in groups, when they show high levels of cooperation.
- Pupils appreciate the emphasis placed by the school on helping them to understand the process of learning – 'learning power' – because they know that this will help them now and in the future.
- Pupils say they feel safe, are aware of how to keep themselves safe and are confident that any bullying will be dealt with swiftly and effectively by adults. They know the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are aware that they can share responsibility for decision making in the school and of their role as citizens in developing their ability to influence wider decisions. Pupils in Year 3 proudly pointed out letters written to the local mayor and to the Queen and the Prime Minister. Pupils showed great appreciation of the letters the class had received in response.
- The school provides a nurturing, caring environment for pupils with a range of different learning needs. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. A number of parents say they choose the school for their children because of the harmonious atmosphere.
- Attendance is below that of other schools. Pupils are keen to attend, but leaders and managers have not persuaded all parents of the importance of their children not missing lessons

unnecessarily, for example, because of extended holidays and have not evaluated closely enough the action taken to improve the situation.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders regularly observe lessons, teachers' planning of learning, pupils' work and progress. They are accurate in their evaluation of the quality of teaching when observing lessons, but have not evaluated well enough the impact of all the key weaknesses in teaching evident in pupils' work which are inhibiting pupils' progress over time.
- The headteacher has empowered senior leaders to take responsibility for the progress of pupils in the key stages to which they are assigned. She expects teachers to be accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes, but has not made sure that all teachers fully accept their responsibilities.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly with staff. Senior leaders meet with staff to discuss the progress of individual pupils in each class, but these reviews are not having sufficient impact on promoting progress. In addition, leaders' expectations of pupils' progress are too low, as they aim to promote expected, rather than good or rapid, progress. They do not evaluate closely enough the impact of additional work provided in small groups for pupils at risk of falling behind.
- The school works well with parents, especially those who have particular needs. Most parents speak well of the school and value the open-door policy which gives them ready access to relevant staff. However, not all have been persuaded to make their children's attendance the highest priority.
- Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the work of the school. The school promotes this well through well-established, positive relationships. Good opportunities are given to pupils with specific personal or learning needs and those pupils who have particular talents in areas such as music. However, because pupils do not all make good progress, equality of opportunity is not yet fully established.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet requirements.
- The broad range of learning opportunities planned for pupils contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, not enough is done to make sure that pupils develop key reading and writing skills across all subjects.
- Good support has been given by the local authority in challenging the school and supporting the headteacher in addressing inadequate teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body checks the work of the school, including safeguarding priorities, and liaises with subject leaders to gain an understanding of pupils' progress and attainment. Governors closely review the school's data on pupils' progress. They know the schools' strengths and areas for development, including the need to improve progress and raise standards. However, they do not evaluate closely enough that action adopted in response to planned school-development priorities is sufficiently effective. For example, governors are not included in meetings between the headteacher and parents to discuss attendance, so have less opportunity to evaluate the impact of these sessions for themselves. The governing body takes responsibility in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, and has

influenced changes of staff with a resulting positive impact on teaching quality. Systems for the approval of pay awards are always tied to how well staff help pupils to achieve, and weaker teaching has not been rewarded. The governing body checks that the budget is spent appropriately to support pupils' achievement, including the additional funds provided through the pupil premium.

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	124783
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402293

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	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Nick Atkins
Headteacher	Sue Todd
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2010
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