

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Mill Lane, Normanton-on-Trent, Newark, NG23 6RW

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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

- The quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils' achievement, declined after the previous inspection. Since then, neither has been consistently good.
- Until recently, pupils have not made good gains in their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet promoting consistently good progress over time. Work set for pupils in parts of some lessons is not hard enough.
- The teaching of the matching of letters to sounds (phonics) has not enabled enough pupils to develop good writing and reading skills.
- Targets for pupils, and reading records, are not used to their best advantage.
- Although leaders and governors are working successfully to bring about improvements in pupils' achievement and in teaching, subject leaders have not yet had sufficient time to have the impact on teaching quality intended.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has a clear understanding of how to improve the school and is well supported by governors.
- The quality of teaching has improved recently, due to good training and rigorous checks. Consequently, far more pupils have made good progress this year.
- The school's good work to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, enables these pupils to make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. As a result, pupils are confident and contribute eagerly to the school community.
- Pupils are considerate and behave well in class and around the school. They and their parents are confident that pupils feel safe in school.
- Partnerships with local schools are strong and bring benefits to pupils and staff.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and saw all the teachers teach. She observed eight lessons, most jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books to obtain a view of current achievement and progress over time. Some of this scrutiny was carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector talked to many pupils about their work, what they are involved in at school, and what they think about behaviour.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and checked the school's records of reading progress.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). She also considered the parents' views expressed in surveys carried out by the school and the views of staff in the 14 staff questionnaire responses received.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, senior staff, teachers with responsibility for subjects and teaching assistants. A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, records of the quality of teaching, the improvement plan, and the school's tracking of pupils' progress. She also looked at safeguarding documents and the school's records of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Class 1, for Reception-age children and Year 1; Class 2, for Years 2, 3 and 4, and Class 3, for Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a much smaller proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than typically found.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported on school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is far smaller than average. The pupil premium is extra funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or who have a parent in the armed services.
- The school is in an informal collaboration with a group of thirteen local schools, including the other primary school led by the executive headteacher.
- The executive headteacher is a Professional Partner through the National College of School Leadership, and supports two other headteachers.
- Subject leaders are mostly new to their roles.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the recent improvement in teaching so that it is always good or better over time, and raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - activities planned are demanding enough to enable the best possible impact on pupils' progress, whatever their ability
 - pupils' reading and writing skills are improved through better teaching of phonics, giving more attention to accurate spelling, and improving the status and use of pupils' reading records
 - teachers remind pupils, during lessons, of the link between their individual learning targets and the task in hand, so pupils can see more clearly how to reach the next level in their learning.
- Strengthen the capacity of leaders, managers and governors to accelerate improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - the intensity of the checks made by governors on the school's work is sustained
 - subject leaders contribute more to ensuring that remaining weaknesses in teaching are addressed and its quality improves to be, at least, consistently good
 - the teaching and progress in phonics and spelling is more rigorously checked across the school
 - the improvement evident in pupils' learning and progress is sustained over time and improved further, to ensure higher attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2012, standards in Year 6 dipped to below average in mathematics and to average in English. Hardly any pupils made good progress over the four years of Key Stage 2. It was the same picture in Key Stage 1. Few pupils made good progress over the key stage in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Reading and writing for the youngest children are less well developed than other areas of learning. In Year 1, half of the pupils did not do as well as they should in the phonics check in 2012.
- Progress in reading and writing, although improved this year, is still held back for some pupils because the teaching of phonics at all levels is not consistently good. This means that pupils do not all develop good spelling. Reading records throughout the school are not used well to promote home/school links or as an incentive for pupils to read more widely.
- Children settle quickly into Class 1 because it is a welcoming and bright area. Outside resources have much improved since the previous inspection, and the children relish the well-planned, stimulating experiences.
- Pupils of all ages are catching up on previous underachievement, and the majority of pupils are now making good progress in all their learning because the executive headteacher and staff have worked diligently and successfully to raise achievement this year in every class.
- The best progress is evident in mathematics, where pupils had fallen furthest behind, because new strategies have been introduced and extra training for staff. In Class 3, songs and games, used to help teach the subject, were much enjoyed and helped pupils to make rapid progress in learning about averages.
- This year's better progress and standards have yet to be sustained over time. Through the school, in reading, writing and mathematics, work is not always well matched to the different abilities, and this sometimes holds back progress.
- The progress of most groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make more rapid progress against their individual education plans because they are well supported within the school, and imaginative ways are found for them to learn.
- The small amount of pupil premium funding is used well to enable eligible pupils to provide additional help in class to enable these pupils to catch up on gaps in their learning. There were no pupils for whom the funding is provided in the 2012 Year 6 cohort. Across the school, progress of pupils for whom the school receives the funding is at least in line with, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There has not been enough good or better teaching over time to ensure that pupils make good progress.

- The school's monitoring of teaching shows that more teaching is now reliably good or better, and that rates of progress are rising rapidly as a consequence. However, weaknesses remain. In parts of some lessons, pupils are set work that they are already able to do, and new work is too easy. This slows progress.
- The teaching of reading has developed through regular group-reading sessions but the teaching of phonics is not yet effective enough to advance younger pupils' early reading and writing to form a solid base for good achievement overall.
- Pupils have individual targets for numeracy and literacy in their books but, in practice, these are given too little importance as a help to generate progress. They were rarely referred to during lessons observed. Pupils who were asked about their targets had to think whether they had been given them or not.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and often present topics to pupils in an engaging way. Pupils said on a number of occasions that what they liked best about school was that their 'learning was fun'.
- Teachers use questioning well, encouraging pupils to reflect on what they are learning. In a guided reading session, more-able pupils in Years 5 and 6 responded animatedly and maturely to the teacher's questions probing them about the style features of Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*.
- Resources are used well. Pupils in Years 1 made rapid progress working out how much change they needed from 50p when buying a piece of fruit of their choice. The learning area was bright with plastic fruits, labelled with the price, and money and number cards helped pupils work out the correct change.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are engaged in activities alongside their fellow pupils because work is adapted to enable them to do so, and support is regularly available.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The good relationships they have with their teachers mean that they want to work hard for them. They are polite and courteous when walking around school and readily engage in conversation.
- Pupils have good opportunities to contribute, such as being 'PALS' (play and learning secretaries). This group acts as a council to put across the pupils' voice and suggest improvements in resources or raise money for charity from ideas they initiate.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is average and rising. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.
- All pupils spoken to say they feel safe in school. Parents responding to the Ofsted online survey are unanimous in agreement that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying but say that it is rare and that there is always an adult available to sort out any situation which arises.

- Pupils' respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities they are given to develop strong spiritual awareness, and to develop a set of strong moral values and social skills.
- Behaviour is not exemplary. Just occasionally, in lessons where teaching requires improvement, there is some passive disengagement. Also, a few pupils find good behaviour extremely difficult to sustain. These pupils are supported well, not only by staff but also by the pupils themselves, who show a very mature attitude to the needs of others.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers did not deal effectively with weaknesses in teaching and target setting until attainment in mathematics dipped in 2012 to below average. Although pupils' learning and progress have improved this year, over time there have been weaknesses that have led to lower levels of progress and attainment since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders are developing their skills through well-selected training and are working closely together, but they have yet to be fully involved in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects throughout the school, to enable them to contribute fully to the drive for improvement. Because of this lack of involvement, the weakness in the teaching of phonics has not been dealt with.
- The executive headteacher ensures that staff are provided with good levels of training. As a Professional Partner for other headteachers, she is able to evaluate training needs astutely. She has accurately identified the reasons why achievement dipped and the staff team has systematically addressed these over this year.
- Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously and weaknesses quickly dealt with. Robust systems for managing the performance of staff have been implemented and additional training has been provided. As a consequence, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils in the current year have improved, although there is still further to go before it is consistently good.
- The school focus on the teaching of English and mathematics is reaping benefits. There is a lively range of other subjects and experiences offered to pupils. They talk animatedly about these, which include science-based themes such as 'Mad Scientist', regular mathematics problem sessions known as 'Maths Detective', and a range of extra-curricular clubs such as 'Chill Out Club', in which pupils can choose what to do.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of this school, reflected in the very caring attitudes pupils have for each other and the strong development of moral values, self-belief and confidence.
- The school has strong links with the other schools in the collaboration, and joint ventures in learning and in training staff benefit all in the school community. The good partnership between the school and the local authority has led to helpful support in conjunction with the sister school led by the same executive headteacher. These links have helped the school to improve this year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The governing body is working closely with the school to raise achievement. Governors realise that weaknesses in mathematics teaching, especially, had been developing unchecked, and are now working relentlessly with the executive headteacher to make sure that the weaknesses are dealt with and standards rise.

- Governors now have a much better understanding of the data on pupils' progress and attainment. There is evidence that they are now challenging the school much more rigorously and effectively on pupils' performance. Governors rightly recognise the advances the school is making this year.
- Governors make sure that teachers' pay and promotion are linked to the contribution made to raising achievement and standards. They scrutinise in detail provision for the pupil premium and ensure that eligible pupils benefit from the funding.

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

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| Unique reference number | 122764 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 412294 |

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 controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 52 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Martin |
| Headteacher | Wendy Ramshaw (Executive Headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 March 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01636 821217 |
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