

St Matthew's Church of England Infant School

Downside, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 3NA

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress enabling them to reach above average attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Sensitive and well-targeted support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs helps them to learn exceptionally well.
- Inspirational teaching motivates pupils so that they are very excited about learning new things and are rarely absent.
- Teachers provide work that is just right for pupils of differing ability, including the more able. Very occasionally, they do not check up on pupils who are working independently and adapt their tasks so that they maximise learning during a lesson.
- Pupils behave very well and their attitudes towards learning are exemplary. They take part in all activities with great willingness and total concentration.
- Pupils are very polite and friendly and enjoy helping each other at playtime and when working in class. They feel very safe at school.
- Leadership is of an exceptionally high standard and the headteacher successfully guides other leaders in identifying the next steps needed to develop the school even further.
- The leadership and management of teaching, including by governors, are highly effective and have led to ongoing improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted fully at all times so that pupils gain a deep understanding of how to be a responsible young citizen.
- Governors have a clear picture of how well the school is doing and consequently are able to offer the right level of challenge and support to help its journey of improvement.
- The curriculum is varied and exciting. Wider opportunities for pupils to make choices about how they use their learning in literacy and numeracy to support work in other subjects are being developed.
- Parents and carers are delighted with the work of the school and are impressed with the quality of information and support they receive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in nine lessons, all jointly with the headteacher. All teachers at the school were observed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account 110 responses to the online Parent View survey and held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in survey responses from 12 members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding (additional government funding given to the school for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs at school action is broadly average and the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The headteacher became a local leader of education this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Always check up on pupils who are working independently, and adjust their work when they are ready to move on to something new.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and make appropriate choices about how they use their learning in literacy and numeracy to support their work in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The large majority of children are working within the levels typical for their age when they start school in the Reception Year. They make outstanding progress, especially in their personal development and speaking skills. Children are confident about sharing their ideas and talking about what they have learned. By the time they join Year 1, most are working at the levels typical for their age, with a good proportion exceeding them.
- Excellent progress continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and consequently pupils' attainment is consistently above average, and has risen since the last inspection in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve especially well in reading, and attainment in the national phonics screening test (testing knowledge of letters and sounds) was above the national average at the end of Year 1 in 2012 and 2013. Pupils use this knowledge well to help them to read unfamiliar words. They have a very good understanding of what they are reading and its purpose. As one pupil said, 'Cooking helps your reading because you read the recipe.'
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do exceptionally well from their starting points because their specific needs are very well met and teachers and teaching assistants nurture their talents and support their learning fully.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is too low to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals. Funding provides tailor-made support and pays for clubs and visits, enabling these pupils to experience the same level of success in learning as other pupils. As a result the small gap in attainment is closing rapidly.
- Physical education is promoted strongly and pupils are keen to take part in lessons and the well-attended clubs. These activities help them to develop healthy lifestyles, improve their physical well-being and help them to reach the performance levels of which they are capable. For example, in the Reception Year, children enjoyed aiming beanbags at a target and extending their aim by throwing and catching with a partner.
- The school is right to want to increase opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in their learning so that they are able to make independent choices about the way they use what they have learned in literacy and numeracy when working in other subjects.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils learn very quickly because teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in asking probing questions that make pupils think carefully about what they are learning. For example, in the Reception Year, children were expected to think hard when asked, 'If 10 conkers balance two teddies (on the scales), how many conkers will balance one teddy?'
- Excellent relationships are fostered and very strong teamwork and exciting activities ensure that pupils are highly motivated and concentrate very well on their work. They make comments such as, 'Teachers want us to have fun' and 'They help us in class with our work.'
- Teachers give very precise instructions verbally and through marking, so that pupils are very clear about what they are to learn next and why. For example, in Year 1, pupils were able to work very quickly because they understood their task in finding out information about wildlife, and that using an index would be helpful.
- Pupils are given work that is at just the right level of challenge in almost all lessons because teachers check up on how well they are doing extremely effectively to ensure everyone moves forward in their learning rapidly. They are often taught in small groups so that they gain maximum support and benefit from the expert help from members of staff. For example, in Year 2, pupils with special educational needs were helped to work accurately when they held a large number in their head before adding on a smaller one to work out the total.
- Very occasionally, opportunities are missed to check up on pupils working independently and to

adjust their work when they are ready to move on to something new.

- The school has been particularly successful in tackling the drop in pace that occurred in some lessons at the time of the last inspection and whole-class discussions are now brisk and informative.
- Teachers are exceptionally skilled at sharing pupils' work with the class and discussing their prior learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils' work was projected onto the whiteboard so that they could all see how well a pupil wrote their number sentences.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely keen to learn and delight in the wide range of exciting activities provided. They say positive things about learning such as, 'I like doing my work in numeracy because I have got the hang of it' and 'I like making up my own stories in literacy.'
- They concentrate very well in class and are enthusiastic about helping each other. For example, in mathematics in Year 2, pupils were highly motivated to help each other with their problem solving so that the class could win 'magic keys' to help defeat the 'evil goblin'.
- Constant praise and reassurance enable pupils to become very confident in their own ability and this is evident in their willingness to put forward different points of view even when others in the class disagree. For example, when sorting types of suffix, one pupil in Year 2 could explain to the class why another pupil had put a word into the wrong set.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school day and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree. There is a considerable calm when pupils are socialising in the dining hall or during collective worship and an excited buzz in lessons when they are working together and learning new things. The school is strict about attendance and consequently rates of attendance are well above average.
- Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and show respect for others because the school is highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity and successfully discourages any form of discrimination. Pupils have high expectations of their own behaviour and consequently can be over critical at times, especially about the amount of noise others make at playtimes.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they understand how to stay safe. For example, they can explain in detail what they need to do on hearing the fire alarm. Pupils feel free from all types of bullying and respond to the school's very proactive anti-bullying policy. For example, when pupils have a concern they are confident that they can deal with it themselves, but know they should speak to an adult if this strategy does not work.
- Pupils take responsibility willingly when caring for the environment and other people by recycling waste and acting as 'buddies'. They are not always enabled to take the initiative in the way they complete their work in some subjects and leaders are actively tackling this.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have very high expectations for all pupils and members of staff, and are constantly seeking new ways to develop teaching and extend pupils' learning and achievement.
- Very effective teamwork is a strong factor in the success of this outstanding school and all staff, governors and parents and carers share the same vision and determination for driving the school forward. All staff benefit from opportunities that build their leadership and management skills and are involved in planning priority improvements.
- Systems for checking up on how well teachers are performing and arrangements for providing training are very rigorous. Leaders pinpoint what teachers need to do to improve their practice and set clear targets so that their skills are constantly developing and supporting the pupils' outstanding progress.
- Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the work of the school and make positive comments

such as, 'It's constantly improving' and 'I couldn't speak highly enough about the school.'

- The recent primary school funding for sport is being used well to pay for specialist support for teaching and learning and to provide additional clubs and resources.
- The pupil premium funding is targeted very effectively at pupils' specific needs whether they are academic or social, enabling this very small but significant group of pupils to do very well at school.
- The local authority provides appropriate light touch support for this highly effective school and the headteacher's impressive leadership has recently been acknowledged as she has become a local leader in education.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, with very good use being made of the outdoor and local area as well as indoor classrooms. For example, in Year 2, pupils enjoyed picking up numbered 'seeds' on the playground to use when counting forward and back in 10s. Visits and visitors promote some very impressive and inspirational work, but some opportunities are missed for pupils to take the initiative in using their numeracy and literacy skills to record what they have learned in other subjects.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is interwoven into all aspects of school life and supports pupils extremely well in becoming considerate and deep thinking individuals. Pupils demonstrate what they have learned when discussing ways of recycling waste and their acts of 'kindness' and 'care' are celebrated in the weekly 'achievement assembly'.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All members of staff are fully trained in caring for the pupils and have undertaken the appropriate checks before working at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now highly effective. Governors work closely with the school and are very effective in supporting and challenging senior leaders as part of their work to check that the school is the best it can be. Governors are keen that all groups of pupils should achieve equally well and consequently invest heavily in funding the support for teaching in small groups. Governors understand how well the school compares with others and how effective teaching is. They know why good teaching is rewarded and how minor areas for development in teaching are supported and developed by leaders. They are clear about how the school ensures that all members of staff increase their knowledge and skills so that they play a key role in ensuring the continued success of this outstanding school.

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	125178
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426619

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Don Seeback
Headteacher	Rhian Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2008
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