

# Mather Street Primary School

Mather Street, Failsworth, Manchester, Lancashire, M35 0DT

**Inspection dates** 30 April 2014–1 May 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- From Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement because teaching is not yet good enough to secure consistently good progress.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- The information on pupils' progress and attainment is not always used well enough by teachers to plan activities which are sufficiently challenging for all pupils, especially for the most able in writing.
- On occasions, tasks are not adjusted well enough, when necessary, as pupils learn, to ensure that activities meet pupils' needs and move learning on at a good rate.
- In some classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extended pieces of work in a wide range of subjects other than English.
- Pupils' work is not always presented neatly.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking on, or leading improvements in, teaching and learning in their subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership. She has developed a strong staff team, committed to improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Teaching is good and the vibrant learning environment excites and captures children's imaginations.
- Pupils' progress is now accelerating rapidly. In reading, pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and progress is improving in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils are at the heart of this caring school. Their behaviour is good. They show respect and courtesy towards each other and staff and feel safe and happy at school.
- Governors have improved their understanding of the school's provision and outcomes, so they are better able to support and challenge the school about its performance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which two observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher and the executive deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to six pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, deputy executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with three members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with parents who brought their children to school at the start of the school day. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for results to be meaningful.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

## Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Mather Street is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- In September 2012, the school federated with Yew Tree Community School with which it shares a governing body. The schools share an executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher. These appointments came about at the time of the school's federation.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well-above average.
- Most pupils are of White British Heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise achievement from Years 1 and 6 in writing and mathematics, by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
  - always using assessment information to plan activities so that pupils of all abilities are consistently challenged, especially the most able pupils in writing
  - providing pupils with more well-planned opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
  - adjusting and refocusing activities, when necessary, as pupils learn to ensure they move forward at a good rate.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work throughout the school by ensuring expectations of how pupils present their work in all subjects are consistently high.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management even further by developing and sharpening the skills of middle leaders to check the quality of teaching and lead improvements in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- From Year 1 to Year 6, pupils' achievement requires improvement in writing and mathematics. Too few pupils make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in writing, because the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good or better.
- It is evident from information gathered by observing learning in lessons, talking with staff and pupils, analysing school data and reviewing pupils' work that progress is currently accelerating rapidly. Very effective leadership by the executive headteacher and the senior team and significant changes in staffing are leading to better quality teaching and achievement.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The vibrant and well organised indoor environment for the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the Reception class, promotes children's curiosity and interest. They make good progress. As a result, by the time children enter Year 1 levels of attainment are closer to average.
- Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 1. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 at the end of Year 2 was similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a below-average proportion do better than this.
- Achievement in Key Stage 2 is improving. The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in 2013 in reading and in mathematics, for example, were higher than in 2012. Pupils in Key Stage 2 now make good progress in reading and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Although standards in mathematics have also improved and are now average, too few pupils make good progress from their starting points and, as a result, achievement in mathematics still requires improvement.
- In 2013, the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in writing fell to below average. Leaders accurately identified weaknesses in pupils' writing skills and remedial actions were quickly put in place. This has resulted in better rates of progress and rising standards in writing, which are now closer to average. Even so, pupils still do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English and their achievement requires improvement.
- The results of the end of Year 1 reading screening check have been well-below average in the last two years. Actions taken in response to these results have improved pupils' understanding and progress in recognising and linking letters with the sounds they make. Pupils currently in Year 1 are achieving much higher standards than their peers last year.
- As pupils move through the school they develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'I can enter into the different characters. I can feel what they feel and think what they think. It consumes my time.'
- Pupils are generally proud of their achievements. However, pupils do not always present their work neatly, particularly their written work. Not all teachers have consistently high expectations of how pupils present their work in all subjects.
- The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunities for all and keeps a close eye on the progress and achievement of all pupils. Boys and girls make similar progress to each other and those who are disabled or have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates.
- Across Years 1 to 6 the achievement of the most able varies and so requires improvement. This is because work is not always challenging enough, particularly in writing. The most able pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics so that by the end of Year 6 they attain standards equal to similar pupils nationally. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in writing is much lower than that in reading and mathematics and lower than the national average.
- The pupil premium is spent wisely on, for example, one-to-one tuition and employing additional teaching assistants. As a result these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress equal to, and sometimes better than their classmates. In Year 6 in 2013 they reached standards similar to their classmates. Inspection evidence and the school's data

show that this is set to continue.

- The school's imaginative arrangements for homework have contributed much to pupils' progress. It is linked carefully to ongoing learning taking place in classrooms. Parents welcome the efforts the school makes for them to support their children's learning at home.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Although improving, teaching is not yet consistently good in Years 1 to 6 to ensure that pupils make good progress. However, recently appointed teachers have brought new strengths that have added to the overall quality of teaching and so pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The information about what pupils know, understand and can do is not always used well enough when planning activities in writing and mathematics. When this happens, progress slows and prevents pupils from reaching the levels of which they are capable. Work set is not always at a high enough level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Consequently, pupils are confident learners. They are prepared to try hard, confident to ask for clarification and know that their teachers will help correct errors. However, checks on progress as pupils learn do not always identify pupils' errors and then reshape activities so that learning moves forward at a faster rate.
- When activities capture pupils' imaginations and match their needs they are enthusiastic learners. They rise to the challenge to respond to challenging questions that probe their thinking. This was particularly impressive within a Year 3 mathematics lesson in which pupils were encouraged to develop their own strategies for solving problems focused on real-life contexts of money, presenting their findings in a clear and organised way.
- Pupils gain in confidence and work well in pairs, small groups and by themselves in the calm working atmosphere that teachers create in virtually all lessons.
- There is good use of other adults in the classroom to support pupils with special educational needs as well as others.
- A new marking policy was introduced in September 2013. Marking is now good throughout the school, consistently praising pupils' achievements and clearly stating the next steps in their learning. Pupils enjoy and respond well to the opportunities they are given at the start of lessons to respond to the marking or undertake challenges set for them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle into school life by staff who are sensitive to their needs. A particular strength is the focus staff place on developing pupils' social, and speaking and listening skills. The use of space and resources in the indoor and outdoor area supports children's learning well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to belong to Mather Street Primary School. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued. It places pupils at the centre of all it does. This was exemplified by a group of pupils who expressed high levels of appreciation for all that their teachers and teaching assistants do for them. This led to one pupil saying, 'I'm happier at school than almost anywhere else.' This is contributing to rising standards of achievement.
- Pupils are respectful, courteous and polite. Their good attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to the calm but vibrant learning environment.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Most pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and display high levels of perseverance and enjoyment. They respond quickly to the guidance and direction given by staff and time for learning is rarely lost. Occasionally, when the activities set are too easy or too difficult pupils sometimes become a little restless.
- Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities. For example, they help in the school's

dining room, ensure that hats, coats and scarves are never strewn across the cloakroom floors and keep the school free from litter.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. Good relationships between staff and pupils, particularly for those who are most vulnerable, are a key factor in pupils' confidence that staff will sort out problems.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and its different forms, including physical, emotional and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying very rarely occurs because they are taught to reflect on the impact of their actions on others, to take full responsibility for their personal conduct and that everyone cares for one another. Virtually all parents who engaged in discussions with inspectors during the inspection agreed with these views.
- Pupils are aware of potentially dangerous situations and have been taught how to avoid these, for example, not talking to strangers or giving out personal information on the internet.
- The importance of attending school regularly is given a high priority and robust systems are in place. The senior leadership team have worked hard to liaise with parents and support them to get their children to school more frequently. As a result attendance has improved significantly from well-below average in the last academic year to average at the time of the inspection.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The executive headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She has very successfully developed a whole-school team with a shared ambition and commitment to doing their best for the pupils. Staff questionnaires reflect their resolve in supporting the executive headteacher's ambitions for the school.
- The executive headteacher, deputy executive headteacher and head of school provide consistently strong role models for pupils and staff. They have gained a thorough and accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs. Their rigorous checks on teaching and learning provide staff with sharp and focused guidance on how to improve. Teachers welcome this feedback about their classroom performance. Consequently, there is a reflective attitude among staff, all are willing to try new initiatives, evaluating whether these improve pupils' learning.
- This process is supported by effective systems to review teachers' work and performance. Teaching and pupils' achievement are improving quickly as a result. Even so, the roles of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and how it affects learning are not yet fully developed. This hinders the school from moving forward at an even faster rate.
- The local authority was involved closely during the school's transition to federation status. It now provides a light-touch support to the school. It has an accurate understanding of the school's performance and has confidence in its ability to improve further.
- The curriculum captures pupils' imaginations and now takes more account of pupils' interests, especially boys. It is enriched and enhanced by an exciting range of visits linked to the topics pupils study in the classroom which fire pupils' imaginations and bring learning to life. This, and the musical, sporting activities and clubs, makes a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across subjects other than English are still not well developed however, and so pupils' attainment in writing lags behind reading and mathematics.
- The pupil premium is allocated appropriately, thereby ensuring that eligible pupils receive extra support through one-to-one tuition and small group work by skilled teaching assistants.
- The primary school sport funding is being allocated appropriately. For example, employing a coach to extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils and providing training and support for teachers and thereby improving their teaching skills. More pupils now have access to a wider variety of after-school activities, thereby improving their health and well-being.
- Parents are supportive of the school and many speak highly of its work. In one letter written to the inspection team praising the work of the school one parent wrote, 'Since transferring our son

to Mather Street he has changed from being disruptive, disengaged and hating school into a boy who is now enthusiastic, happy and has a love for learning. That change is priceless.'

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well and bring a wide range of skills and experience to support its work. They understand the school's strengths and what it needs to do to maintain improvements. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and have a good understanding on managing teachers' performance and how well teachers should be remunerated for their level of expertise. Governors provide effective support and challenge, including setting school improvement targets which are reviewed regularly at governors' meetings. Governors monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement and the school sports grant to improve the quality of provision for physical education. Safeguarding and child-protection have a high priority and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105649
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	442348

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Samantha Gibson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martine Buckley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2191051
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