

Stretton St Matthew's C of E Primary School

Stretton Road, Stretton, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 4NT

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress in all classes across the school. By the end of Year 6 they consistently reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above the national average.
- The high quality of teaching throughout the school has an outstanding impact on pupils' achievement. Staff know pupils very well. They have high expectations and set challenging work that enables all pupils to reach high standards and make excellent progress.
- Thorough and very effective marking ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work, and pupils respond to this feedback extremely well.
- Children thrive in the early years and make rapid progress from their different starting points. As a result, they are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school and say that they are very happy at St Matthew's. They have excellent attitudes to learning and are very keen to do well. Pupils get on extremely well with one another and this creates a warm and harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because of the high quality support and guidance they receive.
- They enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum that is enhanced with a range of activities and clubs to promote their interest in many different areas, including music, sport and art. Residential visits and school trips further add to the opportunities on offer.
- The headteacher and other school leaders have high ambitions for the school. They are determined to make the school the best that it can be. They have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection successfully. However, opportunities to share the excellent practice that exists within school are not always taken.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths. They ask informed questions and challenge school leaders rigorously so that the school continues to improve.
- Staff morale is high because staff feel appreciated and supported. They are extremely positive about all aspects of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time, including observing teaching and learning in lessons and looking at the school's own progress data and work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with a group of pupils and talked informally with pupils around school.
- Inspectors met with a group of five governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several parents over the course of the inspection. They also took account of two phone conversations with parents and an e-mail received from a parent, as well as records of the school's own consultations with parents and 82 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of 15 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Iwaskow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is low. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In the early years, children attend Reception class full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to establish opportunities for staff to share their excellent practice, both within their own school and with other schools in the local area.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, provides very strong and effective leadership to a dedicated team of staff. All school leaders, including governors, are very ambitious and have high expectations for the school. They have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour since the previous inspection.
- School leaders have created successfully a school community in which high standards of teaching, learning and behaviour are expected and are the norm. Staff enjoy working at St Matthew's and show a clear desire to make the school the best it can be for all of its pupils.
- Senior leaders make regular and rigorous checks on how well each pupil is learning and the progress they are making. This information is used very well to ensure that pupils are challenged to reach their potential, and to put in place quickly additional support that might be needed to prevent any pupil from underachieving. This reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures very successfully that the extra support for those pupils who need it is delivered efficiently and is very effective in raising achievement.
- Appropriate training and professional development have contributed to a rise in the overall quality of teaching since the previous inspection, and there is much outstanding practice within the school. However, opportunities to share this best practice, both within school and with other schools, are not made best use of to the benefit of all. Teachers have targets linked to pupils' achievement and progress, and these are taken into account when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- The school's curriculum is rich and varied. It provides pupils with a wealth of interesting topics to learn about, often enhanced by visits to places such as Chester, when studying the Romans, and Dunham Massey, or by visitors coming into school, including music and theatre groups. Pupils also enjoy additional activities, such as creating a ceramic mosaic and learning French, which further enhance their learning experience.
- The school makes excellent provision for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Different cultural traditions are celebrated, as was seen in high quality art and written work around school. Pupils have many opportunities to help others and raise funds for a wide range of charities, both working locally and abroad. In addition, the school also promotes and celebrates British values through work on tolerance, freedom of expression and the rule of law. This shows the school's strong commitment to fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The small amount of pupil premium funding that the school receives is used effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are making the same excellent progress as their peers.
- The primary sport funding is spent well to supplement pupils' physical education lessons and to extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils during and after school. It has also led to an increase in teachers' confidence and skills in delivering a range of sports and games.
- Arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and effective.
- The local authority has provided appropriately 'light touch' but effective support for the school, supporting the checks that leaders make on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, based on a secure understanding of performance data and high quality and detailed information provided for them by senior leaders. They are very supportive, but are equally effective in ensuring that they hold the school fully to account by asking probing and challenging questions. They undertake regular training to improve their own skills, including around the use of data, and are ambitious for the school to be as successful as it can be.
 - Governors make sure that pupils' achievement is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay, and have a clear overview of the quality of teaching across the school. They ensure that the school's finances are sound and well managed, including making sure that the additional funding for the physical education and sport and pupil premium is used effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their love of school and eagerness to learn and succeed is reflected in their excellent punctuality and above-average attendance. They are unfailingly polite and welcoming to visitors, and show a great deal of pride in their school. At break times, pupils of all ages play happily together, enjoying the well-resourced outdoor provision.
- Pupils' conduct in class is exemplary. They settle very quickly to work in their lessons and are always ready to learn. They display attitudes to learning that are consistently extremely positive, and this is one of the reasons why they make such excellent progress.
- Pupils relish having a range of opportunities to take on different responsibilities, such as being a house captain, school councillor or play leader. They also enjoy the opportunities that they have to represent their school, such as in singing events and sporting competitions.
- Pupils say that poor behaviour is very rare, and school behaviour records confirm this. Pupils know how they are expected to behave, and respond well to the school's high expectations. They know that, if there are any problems, staff in school will deal with them effectively.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe in school and are cared for and supported very well. A typical comment was that pupils 'know we can speak to our teachers about anything at all.' They have a very good knowledge of different forms of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is very rare, and almost all pupils said that they had never seen any in their school.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of safety related issues, including matters such as staying safe on the Internet.
- The governing body ensures that detailed risk assessments are in place as required, particularly those relating to school trips and residential visits. Thorough checks are made on all adults who visit or work in the school to make sure that all pupils are safe and effective measures have been taken, such as improving the perimeter fencing around school, to ensure that the environment is as safe as possible.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey, or who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection, say that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress because teaching is always at least good, and is outstanding over time and in a range of subjects across the school. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and pupils respond very well. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and make rapid progress in all year groups.
- Teachers know the children very well, and have a clear understanding of what children already know and what they need to learn to move their work on to the next level. They use this knowledge to plan work which skilfully challenges each individual to make the best progress they can during each lesson. A key feature of learning is the way teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to make their own checks on how well they are doing. Pupils respond very well to this expectation by further challenging themselves to improve their work. Teachers' marking is of a high standard, praising pupils' achievements and giving clear guidance about the next steps in their learning.
- Where pupils need additional support, including those children who are disabled or have special educational needs, this is provided very effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. This support enables these pupils to make excellent progress from their different starting points.
- The school's systematic approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make) ensures that pupils are able to use their phonic knowledge to help them to read. The teaching of reading throughout the school is highly effective. This helps pupils to become confident and successful readers. Staff promote a love of reading, so that pupils become keen readers with firm ideas about their favourite books and authors.
- The teaching of writing is outstanding. Pupils have a range of opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills across subjects, such as when writing diary entries in history or creating non-fiction texts about dinosaurs. Teachers ask challenging questions that help pupils to think through their ideas to produce lively and thoughtful writing. They challenge pupils to choose words for impact and effect, as was

seen when pupils were experimenting with writing formal and informal styles of dialogue. As a result, by the end of Year 6 pupils are able to write skilfully and confidently in a range of styles and genres.

- Mathematics teaching is highly effective. Pupils learn and develop mathematical skills very well and are challenged to apply these through different problem-solving tasks and challenges. Pupils respond very well, often working together enthusiastically to tackle problems and come up with possible solutions. Consequently, pupils' achievement in mathematics is outstanding.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils throughout the school, including children in the Reception class, make excellent progress and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above the national average and are continuing to rise. Results for 2014 showed that pupils' attainment in Year 6 was significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence from the work in pupils' books and the school's most recent data shows that all groups of pupils are currently making very strong progress throughout the school. Currently, Year 6 pupils are on track to repeat the excellent performance in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015. This demonstrates that achievement is outstanding over time.
- A key factor in pupils' outstanding achievement is the school's highly effective tracking of pupils' progress. This allows for the rapid provision of additional support to help pupils, should they be found to be struggling with a particular skill or concept. This ensures that pupils receive support when they need it and so continue to progress well.
- The most able pupils make excellent progress because they are consistently challenged with work that makes them think hard and apply the skills that they have already developed. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels is well above the national average, particularly so in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium achieve very well. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in each year group to make a reliable comparison of their attainment and progress in relation to other pupils nationally, but they perform as well as their classmates in school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their individual starting points. They benefit from their needs being very accurately identified and their progress carefully monitored by a highly skilled special educational needs co-ordinator. They receive very effective support from the school's dedicated and knowledgeable teaching assistants.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The majority of children join Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally typical for their age. However, a significant minority of children join Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in reading and writing. As a result of high quality teaching and effective leadership, they make rapid progress, so that the proportions of children reaching or exceeding a good level of development are above the national average and increasing. As a result, children are prepared extremely well to move into Year 1.
- The Reception class areas provide children with a warm, bright and engaging learning environment. Books and print are prominent in all areas, and these help to encourage children to develop their literacy skills. Staff use questioning very skilfully to encourage children to think about what they are doing and to talk through their ideas.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding. The early years leader knows all of the children extremely well and ensures that children's progress is recorded regularly and accurately. This information is used to plan stimulating and challenging activities to further develop their learning.
- Children's behaviour in early years is outstanding. Children are happy, eager learners who play sensibly together and cooperate exceptionally well. They listen attentively and share and handle equipment safely, both in the classroom and in the outdoor areas. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of their own personal safety and the safety of others.
- There are very strong links with parents, and staff keep them well informed about the progress their children are making. The school's 'buddy' system, in which older pupils are paired up with children as they come into Reception, works extremely well and makes an excellent contribution to the school's nurturing and caring ethos.

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	111382
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	461766

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Morris
Headteacher	Hazel Fryman
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
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