

St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Cromwell Road, Malvern Link, Worcestershire WR14 1NA

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership is inadequate. Over time, leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve the standards of education across the school. Currently, leaders, including governors, do not have the capacity to make the improvements required.
- Governors have not provided sufficient challenge or held leaders to account. They have not sought appropriate external support to help secure the improvements needed.
- Pupils' outcomes have been significantly below those seen nationally for more than two years. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment is well below the national average. Only a third of pupils attain the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' writing skills are not developed across the curriculum. They cannot write with the accuracy or depth expected for their age.
- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across the school from their starting points. Consequently, not enough pupils are working at the standards expected for their age. They are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate across a range of subjects because of low expectations and a lack of challenge. Assessments are not used well enough to plan work which matches pupils' abilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils make particularly poor progress. Very few of these pupils reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.
- The most able pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make enough progress over time. Until recently, interventions were not helping these pupils catch up quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of pupils who reach a good level of development in the early years has risen steadily over the last four years.
- There is a strong sense of community across the school. Loyal and committed school leaders, staff, parents, carers and pupils work hard together.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Standards at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 are in line with national averages.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly, feel safe and behave well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - appropriate external support is secured to assist current leaders
 - improvement planning is sharper and sets clear priorities for improvement which leaders and governors check and evaluate
 - all leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are held to account by senior leaders and governors
 - newly appointed leaders develop and embed their skills so that they can monitor provision in their areas of responsibility and bring about improvements
 - leaders make clear to staff what they need to do to improve outcomes across the school
 - governors, using national and local comparative data, challenge leaders effectively about the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make over time.
- Urgently improve pupils' achievement so that all groups of pupils, including the most able, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make the progress needed to reach age-related expectations and close the gap with other pupils nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers sharpen their use of assessment information and knowledge of what pupils can do in order to maximise progress from their starting points
 - leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching accurately and use this information to provide appropriate training and support for teachers
 - teachers plan work so that pupils can apply their writing skills across the curriculum and write with the accuracy and depth expected for their age
 - pupils who have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and skills are helped to catch up
 - teachers thoroughly check pupils' understanding of what they have read so that pupils acquire and deepen their comprehension skills
 - teachers provide pupils with the accurate information they need to improve their learning

- all teachers insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' work and tackle errors and misconceptions at the earliest opportunity.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Expectations have been too low for too long. As a result, the quality of teaching and outcomes over time are inadequate.
- Over time, governors have not monitored the learning and progress of pupils carefully enough or regularly enough. They have not challenged the low standards or held leaders to account. Consequently, the necessary action has not been taken to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- External support has been limited. Leaders, especially those who are new in post, and teachers have not received the help they need to drive the improvements required to raise standards. Expectations are not clear and practice is not consistent across the school.
- Although new leaders are clear about some of the areas for improvement and can identify strengths in the school, self-evaluation is overgenerous. This is because the focus of monitoring has been on compliance with school policies and procedures rather than on the impact on outcomes for pupils. This has been compounded by the lack of an external view to challenge leaders' perceptions. Consequently, leaders have not been well supported to make full and accurate judgements about the school.
- The new headteacher has not yet developed a clear strategic view. The overlong school development plan has 17 areas for development. Areas needing rapid improvement are not clearly identified. Concise success criteria and measureable outcomes are not specified for each area so that progress can be effectively tracked. As a result, the current improvement work is having little impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Middle leaders are new to their leadership roles. They have action plans linked to their area of responsibility. However, they are not yet fully involved in regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and holding others to account. The impact of their leadership on pupils' outcomes is yet to be realised.
- Leadership of SEN and/or disabilities is in its infancy. Leaders have developed a better understanding of the difference between pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are low attaining. Interventions are now being more closely evaluated. However, not all pupils are currently receiving the right level of support or challenge. Consequently, this group of pupils makes limited progress.
- The use of pupil premium funding is not effective. Leaders and governors have put in place a number of actions but these have not made a positive difference. The funding is not monitored closely enough or linked with pupils' outcomes. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make less progress and are not helped to catch up as quickly as they could be.
- The sports premium funding is used effectively. There is an appropriate strategy in place which is increasing pupils' participation in a range of sports. Opportunities for staff to develop their skills in teaching specific sports are provided. This results in high-quality sessions which pupils enjoy.
- A broad balanced curriculum is in place, which is taught over a two-year period. It

enables pupils to study a range of artists, historical periods and places around the world. Pupils enjoy the creative, practical elements of the curriculum, although the quality of work in pupils' books does not reflect the richness of what is taught.

- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly supported. Pupils contribute to and participate in charitable events such as the local 'Malvern walk', as well as singing in a massed choir. Pupils have a voice and are regularly given opportunities to make choices. They appreciate differences in cultures, faiths and lives but also recognise the similarities. Tolerance and respect are lived out, especially on 'Friendly Fridays', when pupils of all ages are able to play together.
- Parents are supportive of the school. Many commented to inspectors about the happy family atmosphere in the school. They say that their children enjoy coming to school. Several parents stated that they enjoyed the range of creative homework tasks and felt that the school supported their children well with the move to high school.
- It is recommended that newly qualified teachers are not appointed.

Governance

- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, governors have not been successful in stemming the decline in the school's performance since the last inspection. They have failed to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the falling standards over time, especially in key stage 2.
- Governors have sought ways to improve their effectiveness. They adapted their patterns of meetings to keep a closer check on the school. However, currently, there is not a comprehensive monitoring programme in place. A planned review of governance in order to gather an external view on governors' effectiveness has yet to take place. More recently, governors used a skills audit to recruit new governors with appropriate skills. However, these governors have yet to take up their posts.
- Governors take their responsibility for keeping children safe seriously. Regular audits are carried out to ensure that school systems and procedures are followed appropriately. They make sure that all appropriate checks are made on staff employed to work at the school. Governors receive up-to-date training in child protection. As a result, they are well informed and ensure that children's well-being is given a high priority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that children are safe and well cared for. They ensure that the team leading safeguarding is appropriately trained and knowledgeable about child protection. The designated safeguarding lead has further developed and enhanced the policies and procedures for keeping children safe. These are now appropriate and enable staff to spot patterns or worrying trends quickly.
- Leaders know the children and families well and keep a close eye on those who are vulnerable. All staff are aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Timely and appropriate support

is sought and offered. This has contributed to the strong relationships between home and school.

- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to learn to keep themselves safe. The use of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's resource 'PANTS' helps pupils understand and know how to keep their bodies safe. Pupils work with their parents to write an internet safety pledge on a jigsaw piece. Younger pupils know what to do if a stranger approaches them. Participation in mental health awareness week helped pupils deal with a range of anxieties. All staff are fully committed to supporting and developing pupils' well-being. This is a strength of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been good enough over time to ensure that pupils make strong progress and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. They do not make good use of assessment information about pupils' starting points to inform their teaching. Teachers do not focus sufficiently on the age-related expectations for their pupils. Consequently, they are not clear about the standards their pupils are expected to reach. As a result, pupils have not made the progress they should. Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not developed effectively.
- The teaching of reading is weak. Pupils are taught to decode in their phonics work. They use this knowledge when spelling independently. However, the teaching of comprehension skills to ensure that pupils understand what they are reading is not well developed. Pupils struggle to infer and deduce what is happening in what they read. They lack the fluency and understanding that are expected for their age. There is no evidence of a cohesive strategy for improving reading, despite the school being in the bottom 20% of schools nationally for reading.
- There is a clear teaching sequence for writing. However, there is a lack of expectation in the quality of writing that pupils produce. Pupils' extended writing is poor and basic punctuation errors are common. Work in pupils' books shows that progress is not good enough. Handwriting lacks precision and fluency. Pupils are not able to write well in different subjects across the curriculum. As a result, across the school, many pupils are writing at a standard below that expected for their age.
- Recent changes in the way mathematics is taught are beginning to have an impact on pupils' outcomes, particularly in key stage 1. There is an enthusiasm for mathematics from teachers and pupils alike across the school. However, too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They are not being helped to catch up quickly enough and reach the expected standards for their age.
- Too few of the most able pupils have work set at the right level. They are not challenged sufficiently and have insufficient opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Additional adults offer support to pupils. They provide encouragement and help pupils complete their work. However, they do not routinely ask probing questions to extend

pupils' understanding. Therefore, they have a limited impact on pupils' outcomes.

- Work in pupils' books shows that standards of presentation are inconsistent. Expectations are not made clear and adults do not give good examples for pupils to follow. There is not a consistent approach to developing pupils' handwriting. Feedback on how to improve and extend work is sparse and pupils are unsure what to do next. As a result, pupils' work varies from day to day within the same class.
- Work in subjects other than English and mathematics is sparse and, as a result, pupils do not deepen their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The well-being of each pupil is at the heart of the school. Leaders and staff know their families well and care deeply about them. They use what they know about pupils' individual needs and circumstances to support them effectively. As a result, pupils are very well cared for and safe at school.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe. For example, when using the internet, they know not to give out personal information. They are aware of the dangers when crossing the road and know who to talk to if they have any worries.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities in the school. They take these seriously and carry them out sensibly. Pupils say that they like having a school parliament and feel that their opinions are now listened to seriously by adults.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare at their school as everyone cares about each other. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, including racist, homophobic and prejudicial bullying. Pupils state that it will not be tolerated in their school and know that adults will help them deal with it if it did happen.
- Leaders and staff are skilled in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They celebrate all achievements, both in and out of school. Pupils understand why they support various charities and develop a good understanding of the wider community.
- Many pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. However, pupils rely on adults to tell them what to do next and do not push themselves as well as they might. Not all pupils take pride in their work. As a result, work in pupils' books does not currently reflect their ability.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good manners. They are polite and helpful to adults. They are keen to engage in conversation with visitors and greet them with a smile. Pupils are courteous. They hold doors open and stand to one side to let adults pass.
- Pupils follow instructions well and respond positively to the clear structures and

systems in place. Their conduct is good around school and they are calm and respectful. For example, on the way to and during assembly, good behaviour was observed.

- Systems to manage behaviour are applied consistently by all staff. Leaders take effective, appropriate action when unacceptable behaviour occurs. Pupils understand the school rules and enjoy receiving rewards and recognition for positive behaviour.
- Pupils want to learn. Where teaching captures their imagination, they work well. Low-level disruption is rare. When it does occur, it tends to be because the quality of teaching is not good enough and the pupils' needs are not being met. As a result, pupils lose focus on their work and it is not completed to a high standard.
- Attendance is in line with national levels. However, there are some pupils who are regularly late for school or persistently absent. Leaders need to take further action to address these issues.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards in English and mathematics at key stages 1 and 2 are too low. Since the last inspection, overall attainment at key stage 2 has been significantly below the national average.
- For several years, pupils have not made enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have failed to address this year on year. Pupils are not helped to catch up quickly enough. The progress pupils have made over time is inadequate.
- Pupils' outcomes over time at key stage 1 have been too low in reading, writing and mathematics. Mathematics improved in 2017 by 10% but remained below the national average. There was little improvement in writing, and outcomes in reading fell in 2017.
- Pupils' progress and achievement at the end of key stage 2 have been poor. Only a third of pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017. The school sits in the bottom 20% of all schools for progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for their move to secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 is in line with the national average. This has been sustained over the last three years. However, pupils do not achieve well in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2 because they do not have the appropriate skills and knowledge to comprehend fully what they are reading.
- Outcomes in mathematics are of particular concern, especially in key stage 2. Over the last two years, the proportion of pupils achieving at the expected level was well below the national standard. Very few pupils achieved greater depth in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. The progress of current pupils is not yet strong and varies across the school. Pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- Progress in writing for current pupils is limited and not consistent across the school. Too few pupils are reaching the standards expected. The school's assessment information and pupils' books show that standards in writing have declined again this year for some pupils.

- Different groups of pupils make inconsistent progress, including the most able and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Low expectations result in a lack of challenge and progress slows. Significantly few pupils achieve at the higher standard at the end of key stage 1, although, in 2017, more pupils reached the higher standard by the end of key stage 2.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are particularly poor. Over the last two years, they made significantly less progress than other pupils in the school and when compared to other pupils nationally. Very few disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standards in reading and mathematics. Too few disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards or achieve the depth of learning that they are capable of.
- The school's assessment information shows that the progress of current pupils has been too slow. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils across the school are achieving lower standards than might be expected in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The provision and outcomes in the early years are better than in the rest of the school and are improving. The majority of pupils start school with skills that are below those which are typical for their age. Many pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties which hinder their progress. Over the last four years, the proportion of pupils who leave Reception with a good level of development has increased steadily. However, it still remains below the national average.
- The learning environment has been improved and developed recently. It now provides children with easy access to a wider range of activities inside and out. The range and quality of activities available to the children, particularly when working without an adult, vary. Some activities lack a clear purpose and do not build on prior learning. As a result, children do not fully develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning as well as they could.
- Adults interact with children and know when to intervene. They ask questions to check what the child is doing or to help them complete an activity. However, not all adults' interactions are effective in challenging children's thinking. As a result, children do not make connections and build on what they already know as quickly as they might.
- Phonics is taught well in Reception. Adults make learning letters and sounds fun. They model clearly for the children and have high expectations. Children listen carefully to the sounds and blend together words with two syllables. They begin to use their knowledge of the different sounds when writing independently.
- Leadership of the early years is developing. However, recent changes in working practices are yet to have an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Adults work with children to develop their physical and fine motor skills effectively. Children are encouraged to climb and balance in the outside area and use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors with increasing care. For example, children carefully cut round pictures of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' when sequencing the story. However, incorrect letter formation is not picked up routinely. This limits children's progress in writing fluently.

- The majority of children concentrate for lengthy periods of time. Sometimes they become deeply engrossed, for example when exploring different bubbles and how they are made. Children ask questions of each other and of the adults working with them. They are curious and want to find out more.
- Relationships are very positive. Adults ensure that children are safe and well looked after. Parents say that their children are happy and enjoy the range of interesting activities. The majority of children cooperate and take turns. Most children are kind to each other. Adults encourage children to try and do their best. Children quickly respond to this approach and grow in confidence.

School details

Unique reference number	137185
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10042910

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Helen Yorke
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Cullerne
Telephone number	01684 574 984
Website	www.stmatthiasceprimary.co.uk/
Email address	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school became a stand-alone academy converter in 2011.
- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities requiring support is well above that seen in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.

- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2017. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school was identified as meeting the coasting criteria in 2016 and 2017.
- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2018. She had been the acting headteacher since September 2017.
- New English and SEN leaders were appointed in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector spoke with six members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from different curriculum areas.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. A group of pupils accompanied the inspector on a learning walk around the school. Pupils read to an inspector. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, during an assembly, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- The inspector talked to parents before school on both days of the inspection. The inspector also considered the 32 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 20 responses to the free-text service.
- The inspector noted the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Malam

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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