

Inspection of St Matthew's Primary School

19 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 2LD

Inspection dates: 11–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

St Matthew's is a large school in the heart of Cambridge. It takes full advantage of all that the city offers. Leaders want pupils to achieve as well as possible. Most pupils do well and some pupils achieve very high standards.

Parents have a key role at St Matthew's. For example, the school collects information about parents' skills and work experience. Staff search the database to find parents who are able to help with topics that pupils are learning about. This adds greatly to the quality of education provided.

Pupils told us that there is little bullying at the school. A very large number of parents responded to Parent View. Almost all of them said their children are happy and safe, and that they would recommend the school to others. Pupils behave well and work hard.

Pupils are given exceptional opportunities to develop their interests. For example, 'the rainbow group' was set up because pupils had a particular interest in equality issues. This group has a positive impact on the life of the school. Pupils are given ways to take responsibility. For example, the 'young interpreters' use their own language skills to help pupils who are new to speaking English.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has an interesting and exciting curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning about a wide range of topics. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Delivery of the curriculum is generally strong. Where there have been issues, leaders have acted to improve teaching. Teaching staff make learning 'come alive'. Staff take pupils on trips and bring visitors into school. These activities bring topics to life and help pupils to remember what they have learned.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum and is prioritised by leaders. Children get off to a prompt start with learning phonics in the early years. This momentum is maintained as they move into key stage 1. Pupils become competent readers and develop a love of books.

Another key aspect of the curriculum is the development of vocabulary. Staff take opportunities, wherever they can, to broaden pupils' knowledge of words and their meanings. The school's focus on developing vocabulary is beginning to make a difference to pupils' writing, which is generally strong across the school. Some pupils' work is of a very high quality. However, there is some variability in the quality of pupils' written work. Some pupils do not present their work as neatly as they could.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well. There is strong provision to meet pupils' broader needs. For example, an increasing number of pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders have made sure that there is strong provision to help them.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders and staff go 'above and beyond' to provide pupils with a broad range of opportunities. 'Super Saturdays' are an example of this. Staff take pupils and their families to interesting places such as the city's museums.

The school offers a wide range of clubs before, during and after school. For example, there are sports, from netball and football to ultimate frisbee and yoga. There is also a wide range of other clubs such as card games, chess, French and choir. Almost all pupils take part in at least one club.

The school has been recognised for its work helping pupils to understand LGBT issues. This is done in a thoughtful and age-appropriate way. Pupils are taught sensitively that there are different types of families and that all are equally valuable.

Staff expect pupils to behave well and are skilled in ensuring that they do. Classrooms are calm and orderly places where pupils are able to learn well. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other. There is some boisterousness as pupils move about the corridors and staircases. This does not cause a danger but does not reflect the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour that are evident in classrooms.

The early years curriculum is exceptionally well thought out and implemented. It ensures that children become curious learners who achieve very well. The children are fascinated by the world around them. The development of language skills is seen as paramount and is a key aspect of the curriculum. This means that children's communication skills develop greatly during their time in the early years classes. Children learn to play well together and to follow school routines. Children are prepared particularly well for moving on to Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school is a kind and caring place. Pupils say that staff listen and will always help them. Staff have been trained to recognise possible signs of abuse and neglect. They report their concerns promptly to the designated leaders. Leaders take prompt and appropriate action, when necessary, to protect pupils. All necessary checks are carried out before anyone is allowed to work with pupils in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There has been a very small amount of weaker teaching over time, and some improvements in the curriculum are relatively new. As a result, pupils' work is not consistently of a high quality across the curriculum. Some pupils' writing, although good, could not be considered high quality, particularly in terms of presentation. Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils' work across the curriculum is of a consistently high quality.
- At times, some pupils are boisterous and noisy as they move about the school. Leaders and governors should ensure that the same very high expectations of pupils' behaviour in classrooms are also applied in the corridors and stairwells.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110750
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10121489
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	675
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Deborah Lucarelli and Rosa Mottershead
Headteacher	Anthony Davies
Website	www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school has grown in size since the previous inspection. It now has three classes in each year group and is larger than the average-sized primary school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with: the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other leaders; teachers and pupils; and a group of governors. We spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, we: checked the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks; met the school's designated safeguarding leads; spoke with staff and pupils; and checked the school's child protection records.
- We observed and talked to pupils during their breaktimes and as they moved about the school.
- We considered a range of school documents.

- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. We also considered 252 responses to Parent View and four letters from parents.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, writing, history and science. We met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their work, spoke to teachers, and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Vicky Parsey	Ofsted Inspector
Ashley Best-White	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Titus	Ofsted Inspector

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