

Inspection of a good school: St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Cottenham Park Road, London SW20 0SX

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St Matthew's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school where leaders have established a strong sense of community. Pupils and staff typically spoke about feeling part of 'one big St Matthew's family'. Pupils are happy to attend this nurturing school. They are safe and well cared for by staff.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. They rise to the high expectations set by staff, both for their academic work and for their conduct. Pupils feel motivated to try their best. They like getting 'house points' or being awarded with 'The Very Good Manners Cup'. Pupils who are 'faith champions' reward fellow pupils for demonstrating the school's values, such as joy and peace.

Pupils support each other and know the importance of being kind. Older pupils go out of their way to help younger ones and pupils who are new to the school. Staff are quick to sort out any rare occurrences of bullying.

Staff take every chance to get pupils out exploring the wider world. They organise a wealth of educational outings for all pupils to enhance their learning. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the different experiences on offer. These include residential trips for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and visits to museums and places of interest.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Their timetable includes lessons in music, computing and French, for example. Leaders keep the curriculum under review to ensure it meets the needs of their pupils. Pupils achieve high standards in their academic studies, as shown in the school's 2022 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.

The curriculum is well thought out in most subject areas. Typically, leaders sequence learning well. They consider how pupils' skills and knowledge develop, from early years to Year 6. For example, children in Nursery and Reception looked at different types of

animals, such as reptiles. In Year 1, pupils learned about classifications of animals in science. In Year 2, pupils built on this by comparing young and adult animals. In some subjects, the curriculum is less well developed. At times, leaders have not identified the specific knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Learning does not clearly build on what has been taught before.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They check that pupils understand what has been taught. Teachers are skilled in identifying and addressing misconceptions. They find out what pupils know and plug any gaps in knowledge. Pupils spoke of how much they like their learning because teachers make it fun and interesting. In Reception, for example, children enjoyed counting and adding blocks up to seven. They were keen to share their learning through a song. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils get on with their work without disruption.

Leaders identify accurately pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that staff know the individual needs of pupils and use effective strategies to support pupils with SEND. This includes, for example, careful deployment of support staff and well-chosen resources. Teachers help pupils who speak English as an additional language, teaching them essential vocabulary and using translation devices when necessary.

Reading has a high profile. Pupils enjoy reading every day in class and in events such as 'Book Week'. Pupils in Year 6 like reading with their 'buddy' in Reception. Staff follow a structured phonics programme to teach early reading. They check pupils' phonic knowledge carefully. Staff support weaker readers across the school to help these pupils to catch up quickly. On occasion, staff do not follow precisely the school's approach to teaching phonics. This leads to a few inconsistencies in how phonics is taught.

Leaders are committed to pupils' wider development. Pupils have various opportunities to develop leadership skills. They take on roles including sports leaders and 'eco-warriors'. Through 'mix-up days' and 'house' events, pupils are used to working together, such as to organise fundraising events. Pupils discuss topical and moral issues regularly. This helps them to prepare for the annual house debating competition. For example, pupils respond to questions posed about news events, giving their views on issues such as freedom of speech and gender equality. Leaders offer a range of extra-curricular clubs, such as sewing and chess. Pupils are rightly proud of their success in various sports tournaments.

The governing body members are dedicated leaders who work closely with the school's leadership team. They have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Staff morale is high. Staff are well supported by leaders. They said that leaders are considerate of workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff understand their responsibilities for safeguarding. Staff receive regular training to keep them up to date with statutory guidance. Staff know their pupils

well. They are vigilant to any changes in pupils' behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is at risk. Staff record concerns and seek advice from leaders. Leaders follow up any concerns promptly and take appropriate action. They ensure that all required pre-recruitment checks on staff are completed.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are encouraged, for example, to stay safe online and are taught the importance of a balanced diet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not as well developed in some subjects as it is in others. Where this is the case, leaders have not considered as precisely the component knowledge that teachers need to teach and the sequence of pupils' learning. Pupils do not build up a depth of knowledge in these subjects as securely over time. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop these areas of the curriculum.
- On occasion, staff do not follow fully leaders' planned approach to teaching phonics. This leads to a few inconsistencies in how the phonics programme is delivered. Leaders should ensure that all staff follow consistently the school's approach to teaching phonics and are supported to be confident in teaching the phonics programme as planned.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	102664
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10268878
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Broad
Headteacher	Gary Quinn
Website	www.st-matthews.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Church of England ethos. The school's last section 48 inspection was in October 2015.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. Discussions were held with various groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their

learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read.

- The inspector spoke to leaders and pupils about other curriculum areas. The inspector reviewed curriculum documentation for history, computing and French and visited some lessons in mathematics and English.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked at the record of staff suitability checks. She met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding and sampled other documentation. The inspector talked to pupils and staff about the safeguarding arrangements in the school.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views, Ofsted Parent View, and to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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