

Inspection of St Matthew's CofE Primary School and Nursery

Ivy House Road, Bradford BD5 8FG

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

There has been significant disruption to leadership and staffing in this school since the last inspection. Five different headteachers have led the school over the last five years. This disruption has had a negative impact on the quality of education, which worries some parents and carers. Some of their concerns are justified.

Leaders have very recently introduced a new curriculum in many subjects, including history and physical education. Leaders have ambitious plans, but these curriculum changes are too recent to have had a substantial impact yet. Teachers' implementation of the new curriculum plans is inconsistent, so leaders' ambition is not fully realised.

Some aspects of the school's work remain good. These include pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils behave well at breaktimes and lunchtime. There is very little bullying. Pupils are confident that staff will help pupils to resolve any friendship issues quickly.

Pupils are rightly proud of their inclusive school ethos. The whole school community warmly welcomed large groups of pupils who were Afghan refugees. Some bilingual staff successfully helped these pupils to feel at home by speaking to them in Pashto.

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

Governors recognise that turbulent leadership has been stressful for staff. Some leaders have shouldered a heavy workload, covering absent leaders' responsibilities. However, recently introduced curriculum plans have reduced teachers' workload. Teachers appreciate this.

The curriculum for early reading was introduced in 2021. This is fully embedded. There is inconsistency in the implementation of the curriculum for early reading in Reception Year. However, key stage 1 teachers implement the curriculum consistently well. They provide suitable books for pupils to read in school and at home. This is successfully building key stage 1 pupils' confidence and fluency when they are reading.

Senior leaders have begun training new subject leaders. This is starting to improve some subject leaders' skills. Not all subject leaders have had the opportunity to undertake their training yet. Leaders are determined to ensure that every subject is led equally well.

Even in those subjects where leadership is stronger, teachers' implementation of the new curriculum plans is variable. Some teachers lack subject knowledge. Some teachers do not know how to adapt curriculum plans successfully to match the needs of all pupils. Assessment information is not used consistently well to identify pupils' next learning steps. This is slowing pupils' progress.

Teachers' expectations are often too low. Teachers frequently set work that is too easy. In a small proportion of lessons pupils become bored and lose interest, leading to some low-level disruption. This disrupts learning for other pupils. However, this is not typical. In most lessons, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.

Teachers are much more successful when adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils were completing written work naming different body parts. An adaptation to the lesson was made to enable pupils to make a human shape out of play dough, naming the body parts verbally, rather than in writing. The teaching assistant questioned the pupils skilfully. Using questioning effectively to check the understanding of pupils with SEND is typical in all lessons in Years 1 to 6. Adults' questioning is less effective in the early years. Staff frequently miss opportunities to develop children's communication and language skills.

There had been no leader in the early years from September 2022 until three weeks ago. Leaders have provided inexperienced or temporary teachers in Nursery and Reception with insufficient guidance. Staff in Nursery and Reception do not understand well enough how young children learn. They do not provide enticing activities to engage children's interests. Adult-led activities lack focus, slowing children's progress. As a result, children are not well prepared for Year 1. By the end of Reception, children cannot communicate as well as they should. The attainment and progress of children in the early years is low and children are underachieving considerably.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is an area of strength. Pupils respect people of different faiths and cultures. Staff contribute well to developing good character in every pupil. Pupils' moral education is enhanced when they discuss cultural differences worldwide in ethical debates. For example, Year 6 pupils can present reasoned arguments about whether it is right that in some countries girls are not allowed to go to school, if that is the rule of law in their country. Staff implement the curriculum for pupils' wider development consistently well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make all the necessary safeguarding checks when recruiting staff.

Designated safeguarding leaders work well with other professionals to keep pupils safe.

Leaders identify pupils who need additional nurture provision. This high-quality intervention supports pupils' good mental health effectively.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about risks, including from gaming on the internet. West Yorkshire police officers reminded Year 6 pupils that they should be aged 13 or above to use certain social media platforms.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The knowledge and skills of early years practitioners are variable and often poor. Staff have a poor understanding of the areas of learning they teach. As a result, children are underachieving, and their attainment is low. Leaders should provide training to ensure that all early years teachers and teaching assistants can implement a suitably ambitious early years curriculum effectively.
- The early years curriculum long-term planning is out of date, poorly designed and lacking in detail. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are unclear what children will learn. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans are updated to reflect increased ambition, including the necessary detail to guide practitioners effectively. Leaders should assess children's progress against curriculum objectives to identify children's individual learning needs precisely.
- Some middle leaders lack the leadership skills or subject knowledge that they need to monitor the quality of curriculum implementation in their subjects effectively. As a result, they cannot challenge or support teachers well enough. This diminishes the impact of the ambitious curriculum intent. Leaders should provide the training necessary to enable every middle leader to lead their subjects consistently well.
- Some teachers lack subject knowledge in foundation subjects. They do not always provide activities or resources that reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study. Teachers do not use assessments in foundation subjects well enough to ensure that they provide pupils with sufficient challenge. As a result, pupils are underachieving in foundation subjects. Leaders should train teachers to improve their subject knowledge so that their expectations are higher, allowing pupils to develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and achieve well in all subjects.

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	107303
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10255699
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rosalind Garside
Headteacher	Paul Urry
Website	www.stmatthewsprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to leadership since the last inspection. Five different interim or substantive headteachers have led the school since 2018.
- The local authority designated this school as 'causing concern' in 2021. The local authority has provided intensive support since then.
- The current part-time headteacher was appointed in November 2022 until August 2023. Governors intend to extend this arrangement until August 2024.
- Governors are meeting regularly with the diocese and the local authority to agree a long-term strategic plan to establish permanent leadership arrangements.
- A part-time early years leader was appointed, and started in post three weeks before this inspection. The early years leader has been appointed on a 0.6 contract.
- There are three early career teachers (ECT). Leaders follow the ECT induction programme offered by the Ambition Institute accredited provider.
- The school does not use alternative provision. When the school used alternative provision previously, leaders selected a registered local authority alternative provision.

- St Matthew's is a voluntary controlled school with a Christian character. The Diocese of Leeds completed a section 48 inspection at the time of the last inspection. Section 48 reinspection dates have been delayed following COVID restrictions.
- This school is much larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met the deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator. The part-time headteacher met the lead inspector remotely by video conference.
- A remote meeting was held with a group of governors that included the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Leeds.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and phonics, mathematics, science, history, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- All three inspectors visited early years separately, in addition to their deep dive visits to the early years. Inspectors visited Nursery and Reception and evaluated learning indoors and in the outdoor provision. The lead inspector met the early years leader, who was supported in that meeting by the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with senior staff who lead the wider curriculum, including the leaders of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated at breakfast club, in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtime.
- The school business manager and senior safeguarding leaders met the inspector to discuss recruitment and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors reviewed Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and survey responses from staff and pupils. Inspectors spoke to several parents before the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Stout

Ofsted Inspector

Rowena Sykes

Ofsted Inspector

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