

Inspection of St Matthew's Primary School

Wenlock Street, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 0NJ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils get off to an excellent start at St Matthew's Primary School. They respond well to teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve and settle quickly. This means behaviour in class is calm and pupils can focus on learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and sports activities. They are enthusiastic about taking part in sports competitions and singing in the choir. Pupils are extremely proud to represent their school.

Trips and activities broaden pupils' horizons and develop aspirations about places they may visit or what job they might do in the future. Pupils take responsibility seriously and like being a 'young leader' to prepare activities at break times, or being part of the 'Eco Team'.

Pupils learn to be honest and respectful citizens in their school community. From very early on, pupils learn how to keep safe online and keep physically fit and healthy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from time in The Meadow and take part in school life, as well as working well alongside their peers. Pupils are happy at school. They know that adults will listen and support them. Parents speak highly of the support from staff at the school.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It sets out what children will learn from Reception to Year 6. Lessons are well structured, and teachers present information clearly so that pupils learn key information and find this enjoyable. There is a sharp focus on vocabulary in all lessons because for many pupils English is not their first language. In some subjects, such as mathematics, pupils benefit from approaches that help them structure their thinking and recording. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding of new concepts before moving on to the next topic. Pupils can then use what they have learned in other areas of the curriculum, for instance in computing. This means pupils learn well. In some subjects, pupils do not revisit what they have learned across the year. This means that they are less confident in remembering key knowledge once they have moved on to a new topic.

Pupils develop a real enjoyment for reading. They talk excitedly about books they read from the '100 Book Club Challenge'. There is a clear structure and sequence to the teaching of phonics. This begins from children's second week of Reception. Pupils in the early stages of reading are supported consistently well. They read books every day that are matched closely to the sounds that they know. This means that pupils become confident, fluent readers. Staff are quick to identify pupils who are less fluent readers or in the early stages of language development. They establish the most appropriate help for pupils, providing a programme of additional support in The Beehive language base or extra reading sessions so that pupils catch up well.

The school is extremely ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make sure that work is adapted to meet pupils' individual needs so that they access learning with their peers. The Meadow Class provides a calm haven for pupils, where teaching helps pupils catch up and make progress in line with their individual plans.

Children in Reception are warmly welcomed so that they settle quickly into school life and are keen to learn. Adults systematically teach children how to use the wide range of materials and equipment available so they very quickly become independent, confident and curious learners. The development of children's communication and language skills is a priority. Adults help children to explore their ideas and thinking without putting limits on their learning. This means children learn new words and scientific facts in a meaningful way. Children persevere at tasks that support their physical development. Children remember what they have learned well because they have time to practise what they have been taught. This prepares them well for Year 1.

The school's 'Happy Centred School' approach helps pupils develop resilience and learn how to cope with setbacks. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument. This develops character and broadens their talents. Pupils confidently know the school's rules and talk clearly about caring for the school environment and each other. Pupils have less understanding of the benefit their activity has on the wider community or what more they could do to contribute to society beyond school.

The school has a positive culture of professional development so that all pupils are well supported to achieve their best. Every effort is made to support pupils maximise their attendance at school and benefit from the wide range of clubs and trips available.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils do not confidently remember the key knowledge that has been taught. This uncertainty means that they will not be able to integrate learning into larger ideas as they progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils' understanding across all subjects is checked as rigorously as it is in mathematics and reading. The school should make certain that pupils have sufficient time to revisit and consistently integrate new knowledge into wider learning.
- Pupils understanding of how to make a tangible contribution to the wider community is limited. This means pupils' development of active citizenship to bring about positive changes in the wider community is less developed. The

school should extend the meaningful opportunities that pupils have to be responsible active citizens and help them understand how their contributions can positively impact on society.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109552
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10268186
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	821
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tina Edwards
Headteacher	Jane Thomas
Website	www.stmatthewsluton.com/
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 July 2019

Information about this school

- This school does not use any alternative provision.
- This school manages a behaviour support unit called Next Steps that serves nine schools in Luton as part of the Central Area Partnership.
- This school has an additional class called The Meadow. This provides space for pupils that have an education, health and care plan. The class provides curriculum support in a small group setting.
- This school provides a six to eight-week English language programme for pupils and families in The Beehive.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, computing and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

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