



St Matthew's CofE Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104000
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277047
Inspection dates 10 January 2006 to 11 January 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Windmill Lane
School category	Community		Smethwick
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B66 3LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5581651
Number on roll	226	Fax number	0121 5582713
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Revd Pamela Nicholson
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Breedon

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Matthew's Church of England Junior and Infant school is an average-sized primary school in Smethwick. Its pupils come from very diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. Just over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and 51 pupils have English as an additional language, 21 of whom are currently at the early stages of learning English. In addition, 38% of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence supports the school's view that it provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Standards are well below average; nonetheless, all pupils, make at least satisfactory progress. When the children join the nursery they have exceptionally low attainment, especially in their language skills. The teaching enables children, including those who are at an early stage of learning English, to make a sound start. However, the school does not make sure that all staff in the rest of the school are fully aware of how to meet the specific linguistic needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The pupils make slow but steady progress at Key Stage 1 but their writing development lags behind their reading and mathematics. Overall progress quickens in Years 3 to 6 where the pupils make good gains because the quality of teaching is stronger than at Key Stage 1. The pupils' good attitudes and positive social skills, including a keen awareness of others, stand them in good stead for their future economic well-being, even though their literacy and numeracy skills are not so well developed. The effective leadership of the headteacher is the key to the school's improving performance. Based upon a clear understanding of the school and where it needs to go next, the headteacher is taking steps to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of the middle managers, which are at present underdeveloped. The school has responded well to most of the key issues from its previous inspection report. It is well placed to make further improvement and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards by ensuring that all pupils receive more teaching of good quality so that they can make better progress in English, particularly in writing
- ensure that the specific linguistic needs of all pupils who have English as an additional language are met by providing relevant training for all staff
- improve the skills of the middle managers in the monitoring of teaching and learning and assessing the effectiveness of their actions on raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from their exceptionally low starting point but the standards they reach at the end of the Reception year are still below what is expected for their age. All pupils including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6. However, there is a dip in performance at Key Stage 1 where standards have been exceptionally low for the last three years; this is due in some part to the pupils' slow progress in developing language skills. In 2005, the results achieved by pupils in Year 2 showed some improvement in reading, but standards were well below average in mathematics and exceptionally low in writing. The pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing because there are insufficient

opportunities for them to write at length. The pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 make stronger progress, especially in mathematics, where pupils make good gains and generally meet challenging targets. Nevertheless, the pupils are still not reaching standards high enough for future access to a broad range of education and later employment opportunities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school successfully promotes the pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Most pupils attend well. Absence rates fall slightly below the national average but they have improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of effective monitoring procedures introduced by the school. The pupils' moral development is good and is reflected in their good behaviour around the school; even the youngest children know right from wrong. The pupils' attitudes to work and each other are good and are seen in their enthusiasm in the classrooms and their well-sustained collaborative learning. All children have a good knowledge of the types of food which are good for them and those which are not; one pupil in the Foundation Stage said that he liked eating carrots because he would grow big and strong. The pupils' views are appropriately sought by the school on a range of issues. They do not hesitate in expressing these; during the inspection a small group of pupils expressed their dissatisfaction with facilities that are available to them in the playground to occupy them at lunchtimes. Appropriate actions are taken so the pupils know what they need to do to stay safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features seen during the inspection, especially in Key Stage 2. Teaching has been less effective in Key Stage 1. Here the teaching does not build well enough on what the pupils already know and does not always take sufficient account of individual learning needs. As a result the pace of learning is often slow, especially in English, where children are not given enough challenging work to promote rapid gains. Where the teaching is good, teachers have a detailed knowledge of what the pupils already know. The higher-attaining pupils and those with additional needs are supported well and given appropriate levels of challenge. The teachers assess the pupils' work carefully and regularly, so that they are well placed to plan effectively for pupils of all abilities by knowing what they need to learn next. However, the support for pupils speaking English as an additional language has weaknesses because the teachers do not make the best use of information about these pupils' specific needs. Learning is enhanced by a good level of resources for information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching in this subject is a significant strength, although in some lessons the use of ICT is superfluous and does not enhance pupils' learning. Marking of children's work is accurate and regular and

is focused on their individual targets, and provides them with information on how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning because they are well informed and usefully employed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with some good elements to enrich pupils' experiences, including residential visits. An exciting mathematics garden further enhances the provision. This is a stimulating area in which pupils can engage in a wide range of mathematical activities. As a result of effective support programmes for pupils in Years 5 and 6, standards in mathematics have risen recently and are now much closer to the national expectations. The ICT curriculum has improved and is a developing strength. However, more could be done to support learning across the curriculum. For example, in science pupils are not given data-logging experience using ICT and they have no opportunity to use sensing devices to detect temperature changes when carrying out experiments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, pupils are well cared for and regularly reminded about the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and staying safe. As a result, their self-esteem is high and they feel safe and have confidence in their teachers. Procedures for child protection are robust and the school takes health and safety issues seriously. Most parents are confident that their children are cared for well. Pupils express a similar view. Good behaviour management systems result in good relationships throughout the school. A system of targets in English and mathematics provides pupils with an appropriate focus on what to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although the headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, provides good leadership and gives a very clear direction for the staff to follow. He has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses which is based partly on canvassing the views of staff, pupils and parents and is underpinned by a strong programme of monitoring and evaluation. Senior managers regularly observe their colleagues and give feedback on the quality of teaching. ICT is used effectively in a number of aspects of management, such as planning, assessment and communication between staff. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, with effective systems in place to track pupils' progress. However, this information is not used explicitly enough in the teaching and learning evident in the classrooms, especially in the assessment information for pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school improvement plan demonstrates the school is taking appropriate actions to remove the cause of its weaknesses. The impact has been shown in the

improvement in standards in mathematics. The headteacher and the staff have enthusiastically embraced the workforce remodelling agenda and have developed a staffing structure that is beginning to impact on standards. However, the skills of new middle managers are underdeveloped. They are not confident in judging teaching and learning in the classroom, so cannot evaluate how effective actions taken have been. The school is very well regarded by the local community. A committed governing body supports the school. However, governors are less adept at challenging the school to raise standards. There are strong partnerships formed with support agencies that help and support the children.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	No
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Matthew's Church of England Junior and Infant School Windmill Lane Smethwick B66 3LX

11 January 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly towards us during our recent visit to your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk to you and your teachers about how well you are doing. We thought you would like to know what we have said about your school.

You behave well and you are kind and considerate to each other. In lessons we think you listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and you try hard. You have told us you feel safe and secure. We think you know the importance of staying healthy and taking regular exercise. Your teachers look after you well and listen to what you have to say. They work hard to help you learn.

We have asked the teachers to look more closely at how they teach English because it is important that you make better progress in this subject. The inspectors have also asked your teachers to think about how they can give better support in lessons to those of you who speak languages other than English. Finally, we have recommended that the teachers who are in charge of each subject should develop ways of checking how well you are learning.

Thank you for making us feel very welcome and we wish you well in the future.

Jacqueline Wordsworth Her Majesty's Inspector