

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102664
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	286453
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Bartlett
Headteacher	Ms Mary Jane Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003
School address	Cottenham Park Road London SW20 0SX
Telephone number	020 8947 7227
Fax number	020 8947 8612

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Matthew's is a one-form entry primary school with a maintained nursery. Pupils attend the school from a wide area. Many are from advantaged backgrounds with few known to be eligible for free school meals. A higher than average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average although more pupils than in most schools have statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Matthew's is a good school. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, the school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Where necessary, it draws on its good links with other agencies to ensure pupils' well-being and safety. Parents are also encouraged to play a full part in supporting their children's learning. There is an outstanding level of personal development that contributes to good academic achievement.

Very good provision for personal and social development in the Foundation Stage, starting in the Nursery, encourages children to develop outstanding patterns of behaviour. They become confident in their approach to school and develop very positive attitudes to learning. One parent commented, 'My child, in the short time being here, has grown in confidence and her overall development from week to week surprises us'. Pupils enjoy lessons and the opportunities offered through a good, very well enriched curriculum. They recognise the importance of a healthy diet and the need to keep fit. The vast majority are very keen to take part in the excellent range of sporting activities offered both before and after school. Pupils also benefit from the well equipped outside play areas, which encourage them to be active, to look out for each other and think about their own safety. They are keen to take on responsibilities. The school council greatly appreciated that its suggestions for improvement in dining arrangements were taken on board. There are now colourful table cloths, chilled water is served with meals and music is played.

Progress is good throughout the school as a result of good teaching. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children's achievement in the different areas of learning is above average, with some exceeding the expected learning goals. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards are generally well above average, with particular strengths in reading and science. The very high proportion of more able pupils maintains very high standards throughout Years 3 to 6. In recent years, in Year 6, there has been a significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, some with statements. Some of these have joined the school since the start of Year 3. They have been fully integrated and welcomed into the life of the school by staff and pupils alike, and have also achieved well, due to the very good support they receive.

The headteacher, very well supported by her deputy, has developed a leadership team that has grown in strength. Consequently, considerable improvement has been made in pupils' achievements in writing. A current focus on mathematics is well planned to bring about further improvements in this subject.

The school uses its assessment information well to group pupils in lessons. In English, particularly good use is made of this information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and to set targets for them to aim for. Pupils understand that these targets are designed to help them improve their work. This has been a key factor in recent improvements in writing. However, the school recognises that in mathematics assessment information is not yet being fully used in this way so that progress for some pupils is slowed.

The school is accurate in the evaluation of its performance. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils now make good progress and achieve well above average standards. This shows that there is good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make fuller use of assessment, particularly in mathematics, to identify what pupils need to learn next, so that all are fully challenged in their work and have targets to aim for.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average and achievement is good. Children enter the school with an above average level of skills. They make consistently good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Progress overall in Years 3 to 6 is also good, but has been variable across these years. Close monitoring of teaching and learning is now resulting in more consistent progress. Particular success in reading has been helped by a wide range of good reading materials and time set aside each day for reading, drawing on the support of parents and community volunteers. A strong emphasis on investigative work in science has made this a particularly enjoyable and challenging subject and led to significantly high standards. The science coordinator has also been quick to identify any weaknesses. She has worked closely with the mathematics coordinator to remedy a weakness in data handling.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They greatly enjoy school, which is reflected in their well above average attendance. Of particular enjoyment are the trips and residential visits, which add interest to pupils' learning. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They work and play very well together, showing strong care for each other. Pupils feel secure in a safe, supportive environment where they know they can seek help and advice. They have an extremely good understanding of healthy lifestyles and know about nutrition and the importance of being physically active, recognised by the Active Mark award. Pupils thrive and gain confidence as they take on responsibilities around the school and learn to consider the needs of others in the wider community. There is very good involvement in charity fund-raising, often initiated by the pupils themselves. Pupils in Year 5 take part in a Micro Society project, meeting with a member of parliament, and gain insight into the workings of society. Given the standards they achieve and this level of personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, enabling pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Very good relationships encourage pupils in their eagerness to learn. In the Foundation Stage, the very warm relationships ensure that children develop the confidence to choose from a wide range of well-organised activities. Lessons are well prepared so that the pace of lessons is generally brisk. This engages pupils well in their learning so that they complete their tasks enthusiastically. Most teachers consistently provide a level of challenge which enables all groups of pupils to succeed. This is especially the case in English where assessment procedures are very well developed, enabling teachers to carefully plan tasks that fully challenge all pupils.

However, this is not the case in mathematics. Teachers use a good range of techniques to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. ICT equipment, such as interactive whiteboards and laptops, is used to good effect. There is some inconsistency in marking between classes. The best practice shows pupils how well they have done and how they could further improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the learning needs of all pupils. The school is working on the planning for mathematics so that it contains more opportunities for investigation and problem solving, identified as particular weaknesses. Work in the Foundation Stage is very well planned, with full attention paid to all areas of learning. The school provides a creative approach to learning through combining different subjects. This enables pupils to use and develop their different subject skills in more interesting and purposeful situations. The books of older, more able pupils especially, show that literacy and ICT skills have been used very well to create thoughtful, well researched topic work. There is a wide range of well-attended clubs, including many sporting activities. The curriculum is further enriched with trips and residential visits which are linked to pupils' current areas of learning. There are many visitors to the school and special events such as Book Week; pupils take part in local musical festivals, community events and school productions. They enjoy these activities which make a very good contribution to their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. There are very clear procedures for health and safety. The welfare of all pupils is a consideration for all staff. Policies and procedures to protect pupils are made clear to all staff and are carefully implemented. Staff know the pupils very well. Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties, and those at an early stage of English acquisition, are identified at an early stage. Very good support is provided for them. Through knowing what they need to achieve in lessons and opportunities to talk about their work with teachers and with each other, pupils become aware of how well they are doing and how they could make their work even better. Good use is made of individual targets in English to guide pupils in their learning. The school acknowledges that this practice should be extended to mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed well both in their personal development and academic learning. The school's performance is evaluated well and appropriate areas for improvement clearly identified and acted upon. The school development plan is a successful tool for improvement. However, it does not show clearly enough how the success of its actions is to be measured, especially in relation to achievement and standards. Regular classroom observations and work sampling recognise strengths in teaching and learning. They also bring about improvements by showing teachers how their practice could be further improved. Governors are well involved in the life and work of the school and have a good understanding of its performance. They are becoming more involved in the school's strategic planning for the future. The school has very good links with parents.

They are encouraged to take a full part in their children's learning and make a very good contribution to the life and work of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. St Matthew's is a good school.

We liked these things the most

- You all enjoy school and are very keen to learn.
- Children have a really wonderful time in the Nursery and Reception class and quickly settle into school.
- You do very well in English, mathematics and science and make very good use of computers. Targets have helped you to improve your writing.
- You have many exciting and enjoyable things to do both in and out of lessons. We liked all of the things to keep you active at playtimes.
- The school is extremely caring and looks after you well.
- You understand the importance of taking plenty of exercise and eating the right things. Will you be first again in the fun run that the school organises?
- You behave extremely well and want to do your best in lessons.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could be better. It's much nicer to have table cloths and chilled water to drink with your lunch.
- Your headteacher and deputy do a good job.

We have asked the school to work on these things now.

- Carefully check how well you are each doing in mathematics so that challenging work can be planned for all of you
- As in writing, provide you with targets to aim for in mathematics so that your work gets even better.

Thank you again
Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell
Lead Inspector