

# St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107336
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	287803
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Justine Conlon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Bellwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2002
<b>School address</b>	Saffron Drive Allerton Bradford West Yorkshire BD15 7NE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 541737
<b>Fax number</b>	01274 496152

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area of some social and economic deprivation. Boys outnumber girls by almost three to two. A rapidly rising number of pupils, now almost a quarter of the school population, are of a south-east Asian background and speak English as an additional language. Several pupils from eastern Europe are at the early stages of learning English. A new headteacher has been in post since Easter 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school which gives satisfactory value for money. It has overcome significant issues and is moving forward. Clear-sighted leadership by the new headteacher has successfully focused the school on raising standards and improving the rate at which pupils learn. Children enter the school with standards that are below those normally expected for their age. Because provision in the Foundation Stage is good, children make sure and steady progress during their time there. This quality of provision extends into Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average and show a consistently rising trend. The headteacher has taken decisive and effective action to ensure that the same quality of provision is now available for all pupils from Years 3 to 6. It will take some time before the improved quality of teaching shows its full effect on the standards pupils reach at the end of Year 6. However, school data and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that achievement is now satisfactory overall and standards are broadly average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because all the adults in the school care deeply about each pupil as an individual. Pupils say they feel safe because they know who to turn to in times of trouble. They say they enjoy being in school and like the fair treatment they receive. This shows itself through their politeness and good behaviour, both in class and around the school. Parents are pleased with the way the school helps to build the confidence and self-esteem of their children. The quality of teaching is good because teachers' planning is consistent, and the work set meets the needs of the pupils well. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of modern information and communication technology to make lessons more interesting. This results in good learning. Rigorous monitoring by the headteacher, often followed by direct action, is ensuring that lessons in Years 3 to 6 offer consistent challenge to help pupils do their best; this is helping to improve the rate at which pupils learn. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Teachers do not make enough use of taking previous learning from one subject area and using it to spark enthusiasm in another. When they do, pupils make quite startling progress. For example, Year 2 pupils are studying, through science and geography, how electricity is generated and arrives in the home. They are then independently describing its effects using 'Big Writing'. This thematic approach to learning, which 'makes learning fun because we can touch it', is not used commonly by all classes. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The energetic and knowledgeable headteacher has the achievement of pupils at the front of her very clear vision for the school. Since her recent appointment she has correctly identified and addressed issues requiring urgent attention. Changes are checked and measured closely, and are already having a noticeable effect. Their full effect has yet to be demonstrated. There is a good team spirit within the school and all teachers are now looking to improve. For these reasons, the school has good capacity to carry through further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

From their below average start points pupils quickly catch up and move forward. This is because teaching and resources are good in the Foundation Stage, and equally good in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards are above average. This

has been the case for several years. At the end of Year 6 in 2006, standards were below average. For this group of pupils, this represented inadequate achievement through Key Stage 2. Because the new headteacher took rapid, direct and well judged actions immediately after her appointment, this situation has been transformed. The issues that held back the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been successfully tackled. A range of convincing evidence shows that pupils from Years 3 to 6 are now making satisfactory progress. No group of pupils underachieves.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; they have positive attitudes to learning and to each other, and really enjoy their school. For example, one pupil said: 'Teachers make lessons fun.' Pupils show mutual respect and know the difference between right and wrong. The school's behaviour and rewards system motivates them so that they behave well and are courteous and friendly towards others. They understand that they are at school to learn. Attendance is broadly average and the school does all it can to raise it. Pupils say they feel safe because the teachers look after them. They speak with clarity about the food they eat and the exercise they take to keep them healthy. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to school life, for example through an effective school council. Council representatives learn to listen to others and to discuss a point constructively. They present their requests and submissions regularly for consideration. Older pupils show responsibility and develop their social skills and relationships well through undertaking tasks such as supporting younger children at lunchtime and playtime.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers manage their classes well. Pupils listen closely to instructions and guidance from their teachers. This keeps them focused on the objectives of the lesson, and leads directly to good learning. Because pupils behave well and can be trusted, teachers often set tasks for them to complete independently. Pupils value these opportunities, work well, and make good progress. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning by supporting individuals and small groups and ensuring their steady progress. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of information about what pupils know and understand to plan the next stages of learning more accurately. New strategies to encourage pupils to evaluate their own progress are also having a positive impact on learning. Occasional loss of pace in lessons, usually caused by teachers explaining in too much detail, slows the rate at which pupils learn. Staff work together well, and have embraced change with enthusiasm and determination.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Current priorities are correctly focused on reading, writing, and number work. But there are as yet few examples of lessons which join all three of these skills together in order to help pupils make greater sense of their learning. The well organised programme of intensive support in sounds is beginning to show results through improvements in reading and writing. The school

gives good support for pupils' personal, social and health education. This is shown by their good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are addressed successfully, as are the specific needs of those who speak English as an additional language. This helps them to learn at the same rate as their classmates. Pupils are appreciative of the range of out-of-school clubs and activities which enrich their learning. A Year 6 residential, and other visits, extend pupils' experiences and support their developing independence and maturity.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good quality care, guidance and support are provided to meet pupils' diverse needs. The school is a welcoming environment in which all pupils are valued and their achievements are celebrated. Procedures for child protection are effective and understood by all who work in the school. There are good induction arrangements for children starting in Nursery so they settle quickly to new or unfamiliar routines. Year 6 pupils are supported individually to make the transfer to the next stage of their education as smooth as possible. Clearly focused individual education plans and well trained teaching assistants help those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make the same progress as their peers. Good assessment procedures keep teachers, parents and pupils up to date on what pupils know and can do. Teachers are making better use this information to set work which stretches pupils, and this is leading to improved achievement in Years 3 to 6. Informative marking of their work lets pupils know clearly what they have to do next to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has taken decisive action to tackle the weaknesses which led to the school's earlier underachievement in Key Stage 2. Changes in the deployment of teachers, and very close checking on planning, have resulted in significant improvements to the quality of learning. This has raised achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2, boosted staff morale, and increased parents' confidence in the school. However, there remains a significant way to go. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a positive and strong team spirit, but they personally hold too many key responsibilities. The school development plan accurately identifies areas of its work that the school needs to improve, but its formal self-evaluation does not show the same degree of clarity. Good teamwork between the headteacher and the new chair of governors has helped to keep governors, many of whom are relatively new to the governing body, informed and abreast of developments.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

As you know, we visited your school recently to see how everything is getting on. We really enjoyed our visit because you were so polite and well behaved, and made us feel really welcome.

We found that St Matthews is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Here are the main things that helped us to come to this decision.

- The headteacher has very quickly made some really important changes that can already be seen to be having a good effect on how you learn, particularly those of you in Years 3 to 6.
- All the adults in the school look after you very well. They make sure you are safe and happy, and get the things you need.
- The quality of teaching in the classrooms has improved because the teachers now keep a very close check on the progress you are making, and they use the information to decide what to teach you next.

Many good things are happening, but a lot of them have only very recently begun.

We have also identified some things the school should do to help you to learn even more.

- Everybody in the school needs to pay close attention to helping you to get better in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Subjects could be taught in a more 'joined up' way, so that you can use what you already know to help you to learn in a more interesting way.

This will not be achieved without your help, so you will need to work even harder than you do now. However, we saw that you really enjoyed lessons in which you were asked to think for yourselves and to work independently, so we don't think you will mind if this happens more often.