

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115699
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	290304
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patsy Williams
Headteacher	Paul Weeks
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	Church Road Cainscross Stroud GL5 4JE
Telephone number	01453 764705
Fax number	01453 762033

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of mixed housing west of Stroud town centre. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities is broadly average. When children enter the Reception Year, their attainment is close to the level expected. The present headteacher has been in post since September 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 school. Strengths in the satisfactory care, guidance and support contribute much to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils say that they are sure that they have an adult to turn to should the need arise. Parents value the care provided especially at times when their child might need some extra personal support. Behaviour is good and almost all pupils enjoy school a lot. They are pleasant, courteous and friendly young people who get on well with others. Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make steady progress as they move up from their start in the Reception Year to the end of Year 6 because teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. While all groups of pupils move on at an acceptable rate, the most capable pupils are not consistently challenged, particularly in writing. There are some occasions when the lowest attaining pupils are not fully supported. Strengths in the curriculum include a good range of sports that help pupils to recognise the importance of regular exercise. Pupils have access to a satisfactory range of activities in addition to their daily lessons, for example in music and drama and through the nature club. These activities, and the teaching of French in Year 6 during the summer term, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have been hampered by a lack of up-to-date resources. Some important developments in resources have taken place this term with the result that, although ICT standards are below the level expected, pupils' current progress is satisfactory. The school has correctly identified that pupils do not use their ICT skills sufficiently in other subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has developed adequately since the last inspection, although its progress has not been consistent. The headteacher ensures that staff and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is making the necessary changes to move the school forward. Success is particularly evident in the action taken to rectify a dip in pupils' standards and achievement in English. Work has started on using assessment data to track pupils' performance, but this is at an early stage. At present, there is no sufficiently rigorous system through which pupils' attainment is monitored and their progress evaluated in the short term, for example over a term, and also in the longer term. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher is aware that it is important at this stage to take stock and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress of the important changes started in order to identify very precisely the next steps necessary. The pupils rightly identify that they want to play a real part in the school's development and to be both informed and consulted about changes being made. Based on its recent track record, the school has sound capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more capable pupils are consistently challenged, particularly in writing, and that the lowest attaining pupils are always fully supported.
- Raise standards in ICT and increase opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills in this area in their work across the curriculum.
- Carry out regular and frequent checks on pupils' attainment, carefully analysing their short-term gains and long-term progress.
- Evaluate the impact of new initiatives on pupils' progress, and ensure that pupils are involved and consulted, to identify the next steps in improving the school. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of

underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception Year and move into Year 1 with attainment close to the level expected for their age. Although standards are broadly average, fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher level for their age at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, not as many get to the higher level in writing as in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments in recent years has also highlighted some instances of underachievement among the lowest attaining pupils. The school has identified these shortcomings and is taking action to rectify them. It has been successful this year in ensuring that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make at least satisfactory progress in reading and writing. The school has also started to tackle weaknesses in pupils' competence in ICT, ensuring that their current progress is adequate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Significant strengths in moral, social and spiritual development are evident in pupils' good attitudes, behaviour, relationships, and awareness of the needs of others. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have the expected understanding for their age of how to stay safe and have a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy. They know the importance, for example, of eating healthily and their participation in sports is good. Pupils undertake responsibilities diligently and raise funds for charities. They are sensitive to the needs of others and show concern for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils do not, however, have the necessary opportunities to play a full part in helping the school to improve. Even so, the vast majority of pupils enjoy school a lot and this is reflected in the above average attendance rate. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Some good features of teaching are evident in all classes. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They give clear instructions and explanations. Relationships are positive, and teaching assistants are appropriately deployed. Some teaching is good, for example in English in Year 3. In this good teaching, there is a sharp focus on the full range of pupils' needs and expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are high. The main reason why teaching is not good is that it does not consistently challenge the more capable pupils, particularly in writing. The lowest attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are satisfactorily supported for most of the time. However, there is not always a close enough link between the activities that they do when taken out for intensively taught group sessions and the content of the class lessons to which they return. This can break up the continuity of their learning and means that they do not have the right support all of the time to do as well as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Satisfactory curriculum coverage ensures that all the recommended areas of learning are covered in the Reception Year and the required subjects are taught in Years 1 to 6. In the Reception Year, there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by adults and those that involve play and children working more independently. However, the range of learning opportunities for these young children is restricted by the lack of an outdoor area specifically for them. The school has well advanced plans to resolve this. There are examples of good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum and this aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. ICT skills are starting to be used across the subjects as teachers put into use the new laptop computers this term. Some pockets of good practice in the use of ICT are developing, for instance in Year 4. A satisfactory range of activities additional to daily lessons, such as clubs, visits and visitors, supports pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. There is particularly sensitive attention paid to the needs of pupils experiencing personal difficulties. Pupils with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of school life. Satisfactory support is given to pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils are confident that they are safe and secure at school. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety are satisfactory. Some of the older pupils say that they would like their views to be sought more. The school recognises that the school council needs developing to help all pupils have a real say in what happens in school. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There is some very helpful and thorough marking, for example in Years 3 and 6 in English, that gives pupils feedback on what they are doing well and clear guidance to help them to improve their performance. However, not all marking is evaluative and older pupils are not always clear about the standard of their work or how to move to the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has picked up after a dip in standards and achievement in English and is taking the right action to become more effective. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction and all the staff and governors are working with him to take effective action to improve the school. Staff report that a big change this year is that they now have a common goal. They are now working successfully as a team. Governors have become more informed and also better organised. They feel ready to develop their role in asking challenging questions, as well as in giving support, and recognise that this is the next stage in developing their effectiveness. The school recognises that to accelerate its pace of improvement it needs to implement rigorous systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress. At present, it is not able to use data well enough to evaluate how effectively teaching and the curriculum contribute to pupils' attainment and progress in each class and subject. This shortcoming also restricts the quality of teaching and academic guidance because there is insufficient information to show strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work. The school knows that it also needs to analyse the effectiveness

of initiatives on pupils' progress to make sure that its further goals and action are sharply focused and really effective.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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**

- 5 July 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Stroud, GL5 4JE Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and finding out about your school. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You are very polite and sensible. You behave well and get on well with each other. You know a lot about why it is important to eat healthily and to keep fit. It is good that so many of you take part in the extra sports activities. These activities and other opportunities such as the nature club and learning French in Year 6 help you to enjoy school. The adults look after you well. Your parents told us that they appreciate this and particularly the way in which you get extra personal support when you need it. You are making satisfactory progress because teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. There are good features to the teaching in all the classes. The headteacher and all the other adults are working to make improvements to the school and the opportunities you have. The new laptops are just one example. We have asked them to do some things in particular. These are things that they already knew were important and so they have already started on them! We have asked them to:
 - Make sure that you are all given just the right help to do as well as you can.
 - Give you more opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT) in your work in different subjects.
 - Carefully check on how well you are making progress.
 - See how well all the new developments are helping you so that they know exactly what is most important to do next. You can help to improve the school too. We have asked the adults to make sure that they ask you what you think of developments. Keep working hard! Yours faithfully Alison Grainger Lead inspector