

St Matthew's School, Westminster

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101138
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	307598
Inspection date	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Philip Chester
Headteacher	Ms Nicola Cottier
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	16-18 Old Pye Street London SW1P 2DG
Telephone number	020 7641 5110
Fax number	020 7641 5116

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Introduction

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

HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated achievement and standards, personal development and well-being of pupils, the quality of provision and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data, the school's own records, policies, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires.

Description of the school

St Matthew's is a smaller than average primary school situated in the centre of London. The majority of pupils live in social housing, with a number of families in temporary housing or emergency accommodation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The school population is ethnically diverse. A very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language; this is very high compared to the national average.

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 with some outstanding features. Pupils in this school are happy, settled and develop the confidence and personal skills to succeed when they move on. A positive atmosphere permeates the whole school and parents appreciate and value the way the school nurtures pupils and enables them to make good progress. As one parent commented, 'My children love their school and enjoy every aspect'.

Achievement is good and standards are in line with national averages. Senior leaders assess that when pupils join the school, their developmental levels are well below those normally found in children of this age. Children are given a stimulating start to their education in the Foundation Stage, being able to take part in a variety of practical and creative activities. By the end of the Reception year, their progress is good, and improving.

In 2007, pupils performed below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in the assessments in Year 2. This was partly due to pupils joining the school at a late stage. Nevertheless, determined action has been taken to enhance pupils' skills, particularly in reading and writing. As a result, current school analyses show that progress has accelerated and is now good. Pupils in Year 2 are on track to meet challenging targets in 2008. There is no substantial difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make good progress. This good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and pupils attain standards in line with national averages. The school provides well for pupils newly arrived at the school. These pupils are carefully integrated into the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes outstanding. Good lessons are exemplified by well thought out resources and planning is securely based on pupils' targets for improvement that are challenging and reviewed frequently. This results in pupils making good progress in learning as the work is matched well to their needs. Lessons proceed at an appropriate pace and include a variety of teaching styles. Particularly good use is made of paired discussion, to break up whole-class sessions and to give all the pupils the opportunity to articulate their thoughts. Teaching assistants are briefed well and make a valuable contribution, giving particular support to pupils with learning difficulties. However, on some occasions, particularly in whole-class sessions, their skills are sometimes under-used. Marking in books is regular and encouraging. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own work and they know their targets in literacy and mathematics.

Overall, the school provides a good curriculum. It is significantly enhanced by a good range of clubs and by visits and visitors coming into the school. For example, Year 4 and Year 6 pupils' work on developing visual literacy has helped pupils develop their creative skills, and made a strong contribution to enriching their language skills. The school has plans to increase the provision of interactive white-boards across the school to further improve teaching and learning and enrich the curriculum. A well planned personal, social and health education programme promotes healthy lifestyles and safety effectively. This contributes very well to pupils' personal development.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The outstanding provision is apparent through the warm, friendly, family atmosphere in which all individuals are made to feel important. The very good monitoring of pupil's academic and personal progress means that staff have a deep insight into the needs of all individuals and provide very specific, high quality support and guidance where needed. The school draws very extensively upon outside agencies to enhance

this support where needed. Pupils respond extremely well to the school's provision. They make excellent progress in developing independence, initiative, responsibility and co-operation. They thoroughly enjoy school life, are very well behaved and enthusiastic about their work. Attendance for the last reporting year was below national averages and is an on-going focus for the school, although there are early signs of improvement. The school has worked very hard on this issue and the work of the learning mentor and school home liaison officer are particularly commendable. Parents now need to play their part in ensuring that their children attend regularly.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff show high levels of commitment and competence in meeting individual needs. They create a safe and supportive environment where pupils develop confidence and self-esteem. The school has an accurate and consistent approach to assessment. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and action is taken to tackle any underachievement. The establishment of a new assessment tool in autumn 2007 has aided this. Child protection procedures are in place. Health and safety procedures receive close attention.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership; her open management style has cultivated the teamwork, which is a strength of the school. The head and deputy headteacher have created a very positive and inclusive ethos. They lead the school well and have a real vision for its continuing development. Because of their leadership, there is a clear, shared philosophy behind everything that is done and pupils benefit from consistent provision, for instance, in teaching methods and the curriculum. The headteacher and deputy are supported well by a committed and motivated senior leadership team. The school has effective monitoring and evaluation processes, which provide it with a detailed and comprehensive picture of the full range of its provision and standards. The school uses this information effectively and has very good capacity to continue to improve further.

Middle managers provide good leadership. The quality of teaching is monitored and strengths and weaknesses have been identified accurately. Steps are already being taken to further support and develop practice. Governors fulfil their duties well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are not complacent about the school's well-deserved reputation in the community and work hard to support it.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the school, many do not have the skills usually expected of their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. They settle well into the Nursery class and enjoy a good range of provision across all six areas of learning. Teaching is good, with a mix of activities led by adults and opportunities for children to make their own choices. Most make good progress so that, by the time they leave the Reception class, they achieve levels that are in line with those expected for their age and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- Work with parents and outside agencies to continue to improve attendance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Matthew's School, Westminster, London, SW1P 2DG

Thank you for your very warm welcome when I visited your school and for talking to me about your work and what you do. I very much enjoyed my visit. You clearly enjoy what you do. I was very impressed by your attentiveness in class and your very good behaviour and hard work in lessons. I particularly enjoyed listening to your beautiful singing during Mass.

The staff take very good care of you and you clearly understand the importance of keeping yourselves safe and how to live healthily. The teachers work hard so that you make good progress. I was very impressed with the improvements that have been made in your progress. The school arranges some interesting visits for you to help your learning and I know many of you were looking forward to the visits planned for the day after the inspection. Your headteacher is doing a very good job in leading the school forward. As a result of the staff and governors' efforts, the school has improved greatly in the last three years.

There is little that needs to change in your school, but I have agreed with your headteacher that teachers carry on with the plans they have to help you to do even better in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. You and your parents can help them in this by continuing to work hard and making sure you all attend school regularly.

I wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to work hard to achieve your ambitions.

With very best wishes,

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector