

St Matthew's CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105709
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	308927
Inspection date	14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Last
Headteacher	Mrs P Shepherd
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Chadderton Hall Road Chadderton Oldham Lancashire OL9 9BN
Telephone number	0161 6249829
Fax number	0161 6249829

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching, the Foundation Stage (Reception) and leadership and management. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are above average. There has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher since the last inspection. The school has gained the Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Matthew's provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Strong leadership and management coupled with extremely good quality teaching result in pupils' high levels of achievement and standards that have been well above average since the last inspection. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future education. This is because of their superb personal development and their great enjoyment of learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents and pupils are proud of the school. Parental comments praise all aspects of the school's work reflecting on the advantages to their children. A typical remark included, 'St Matthew's is a wonderful school that inspires children to enjoy learning.'

Pupils achieve exceptionally well throughout the school because teaching is consistently good or better. All groups of pupils are inspired by an extremely well thought out curriculum that captures their interest. Wonderful relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff help lessons to move at a fast pace. Pupils behave superbly and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Subjects are skilfully linked with a strong emphasis on developing basic skills in English and mathematics. Learning is enjoyable and purposeful. As pupils stated, 'Lessons are fun.' Information and communication technology is used very effectively to aid teaching and learning. Discussions are encouraged and pupils' responses to questions are valued. Very detailed assessment of pupils' progress enables staff to plan precisely the next steps in pupils' learning. High calibre teaching assistants are used most effectively to push on pupils' learning, particularly those who are identified with learning difficulties or those at risk of underachieving. Marking of pupils' work is thorough, although its quality varies between classes. Some teachers' comments are too complimentary and do not explain how pupils can improve. Others' comments dwell too keenly on how work can be improved and do not praise effort sufficiently. Vibrant displays celebrate pupils' work and classrooms are attractive and stimulating.

The reason for the undoubted success of the school can be attributed to the first-rate leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governors. The major strengths in all aspects in the school's work reported at the last inspection have been maintained and built upon. Staff and governors work extremely well together and this benefits the pupils. Links with parents, other schools, the local church and the community are strong. Systems to check pupils' progress are very thorough and used very effectively to set targets for pupils and to highlight where additional help is needed. Managers at all levels meet the high expectations set for them to be accountable for pupils' standards and achievements. The professional development of all staff is given a high profile. The school has a deep understanding of its strengths and areas for development, though its view of itself is rather modest because it is always seeking to improve. St Matthew's many exceptional strengths and its track record over numerous years provides it with a superb capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership, provision and standards achieved are outstanding in the Reception class. Children enter the school from a very wide range of pre-school providers. Overall, standards on entry are above what is expected for children of this age, although children's personal, social and emotional development is similar. The Foundation Stage is very well organised and provides children with a stimulating range of activities in all areas of their learning, both indoors and

outdoors. Children quickly settle into school routines and parents are actively involved in their children's learning. High quality teaching and an interesting curriculum help the children to make speedy progress. Members of staff check children's attainment in great detail and match future learning extremely well to individuals' needs. By the end of Reception, standards are well above expectations for children of this age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the marking of work provides pupils with clearer details of how well they have done and what they must do to improve further.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 enjoyed the day I spent in your school. It was a privilege to inspect St Matthew's as it provides you with an outstanding education. This is because it is led and managed exceptionally well by your headteacher and deputy headteacher. They are helped really well by the other staff and the governors. Your parents are very pleased that you make exceptionally good progress during the time you are at St Matthew's.

I was very impressed by your superb behaviour and how interested you were in your lessons. You told me that you enjoy being at school, feel safe and are proud of your school. Your attendance is really good - so keep it up. Staff look after you extremely well and I was pleased that you all get on so well together. The standard of your work by the time you leave Year 2 is high. This is because you are taught so well and you make really quick progress in your learning. Your school knows what it must do to continue to improve. However, I have asked the teachers when they mark your work to give you clearer comments of how well you have done and what you must do to improve further.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I know that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.