

# St Matthew's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106337
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	309100
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Ashton

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev David Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kylie Spark
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Poplar Road Stretford Manchester Lancashire M32 9AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 8651284
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 8668041

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school in Trafford, to the south west of the city of Manchester. It serves a mixed area of private and council housing, with some social and economic disadvantage. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but around one pupil in four is from a minority ethnic group. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Matthew's Primary School provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils.

It has some good features. Chief among these are the good personal development and well-being of the pupils, the good quality care, support and guidance they receive and the well organised and determined leadership of the headteacher.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but better from the Nursery to the end of Key Stage 1 than it is across Key Stage 2. This matches the relative teaching strengths in the two halves of the school. Although some of the teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, it is weaker there than it is in the earlier years. This is generally because the work is not well enough matched to pupils' ages or abilities. The school recently improved standards in science and is now focusing on improving numeracy and literacy because recent national test results at the end of Year 6 were below average in these subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory overall although it lacks sufficient planned opportunities to extend the learning of the most able pupils. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress are particularly good.

Parents are very pleased with the school. This is clear from the large number of written comments they sent in to the inspectors. They stress in particular the school's strong ethos and social environment, the well rounded experience their children receive and, above all, the exceptionally good leadership of the headteacher. However, some also speak of the need for extra challenge for the more able pupils.

Pupils speak highly of the school. They say that they feel safer than they did last year since behaviour has improved and is now good, that they are able to play a full part in helping the school community and are aware of their own targets for improvement. Their enjoyment of school and sound preparation for the future are shown by above average attendance and satisfactory progress in the key areas of learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features, particularly the leadership of the headteacher, despite the excessive load of responsibilities she presently carries. Finances are prudently managed and in good order and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The leadership has demonstrated by the improvements it has brought about since the previous inspection that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve the school further. It is well aware that there is much still to do.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with below average levels of skill for their age. They get off to a swift start and make good progress because of good teaching. By the time they transfer to Year 1 most have reached their early learning goals. They make particularly good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. Children come to school happily, learn to follow routines and get along well with other children. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The indoor environment is attractive, well presented and promotes a good range of creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language. Currently, outdoor resources are limited and children therefore do not have a wide enough choice of stimulating and exciting outdoor learning experiences. The school has already made this a priority for improvement.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in Years 3 to 6, especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Match the work in class more closely to pupils' abilities in order to maximise their progress.

A small proportion of schools where 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

Achievement overall is satisfactory, better earlier on in the school than in Years 3 to 6. From below average standards on entry to the school, pupils make good progress until they reach the end of Year 2, by which time standards are broadly average. Progress then levels out and in some respects declines in Years 3 to 6. Those pupils who left Year 6 in 2007 achieved standards which were below the national average in all three core subjects. The main reasons for the below average results were a late influx of some new pupils but also some variability in the quality of teaching in the different key stages. Teaching lacks consistency in Years 3 to 6 and not enough of it is good. The progress made by different groups of pupils generally follows the pattern of achievement made by the rest of the class, but it varies from year group to year group. For example, in 2007, minority ethnic pupils outperformed White British pupils in Year 2. Boys outshine girls in some years but not in others. Higher-attaining pupils do not always make as much progress as they could because they are not always challenged sufficiently in some lessons.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The atmosphere around school is one of enjoyment and keenness. Typical comments from pupils are that they like the school because they get to learn new things, they like writing stories and enjoy the science investigations. They also say that they feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is mostly good except when pupils are not kept busy enough on appropriate tasks. Pupils relate well to one another and to adults and they have a good sense of right and wrong. Assemblies on themes such as 'anti bullying week' help to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council makes a successful contribution to the school's work by, for example, leading improvements in the playground. The Healthy Schools award reflects pupils' success in their pursuit of a more healthy lifestyle. The buddy system helps pupils to sort out problems at playtimes. Pupils are adequately prepared to develop workplace and other skills, not only through acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy, but also through the emphasis placed on skills in decision-making and communication. Attendance has improved and is good but the punctuality of a small group of children remains a concern.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Much of the teaching and learning is good, especially in Years 2 and 6, but it is not consistent across the school. The better teaching has pace and keeps pupils fully occupied with interesting tasks which challenge them all and never go on for too long. In these lessons pupils learn well because they have to think and they have talking partners on whom to try ideas out. Elsewhere, however, too much time is spent on some activities and pupils are expected to sit around listening to the teacher or to a small group of other pupils for too long. The result is that they become restless and misbehave because they are bored. The teaching of science is a developing strength, reflecting the recent whole-school focus on developing the investigative side of the subject. Pupils' written work is conscientiously marked, with helpful teacher comments that point out what the pupils need to do to improve. The system whereby pupils then give written responses to those teacher comments is working well. Teaching assistants and volunteer helpers are an invaluable resource and are used to good effect in the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning, including for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the more able pupils have insufficient opportunities to extend their learning both within and beyond the classroom. Pupils are taught about other cultures and beliefs through lessons, visits and visitors and this helps them prepare for life in a multicultural society. Partnerships with local secondary schools add satisfactory value to pupils' learning experiences and their personal development. The curriculum provides children with an adequate range of sporting and craft activities and there is a satisfactory choice of out-of-school events. Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory and improving.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Systems for safeguarding pupils are well organised and meet current government guidelines. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The school has improved its systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, enabling teachers to have a clear understanding of pupils' achievement. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets in literacy and numeracy. This helps them to take the next steps in their learning. Good relationships with parents encourage them to become partners in their children's education and, as a result, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is a considerable strength of the school. She commands enormous respect from everyone connected with the school and is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and an able coordinator of the Foundation Stage. Because of the recent

loss of valuable staff expertise owing to promotion, the headteacher currently carries too high a load of curricular responsibilities. These need to be distributed more equitably so that she can concentrate more strategically on how the school can challenge higher attainers more effectively. School improvement planning is rightly focused upon improving standards and promoting the well-being of every child in the school. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and especially the quality of its teaching and learning are extremely thorough and accurate. Self-evaluation is detailed and useful but a little overgenerous. Governors are well informed and well led. They challenge as well as support the school in a very positive way.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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**

We really enjoyed visiting your school recently. A very special thank you must go to those children who gave up part of their lunch break to talk to us.

You told us many good things about the school and how happy you are there. So did your parents when a group of them talked to us and in the letters they sent us. We agree with you that you are all well looked after and kept safe in school, and that your progress is well monitored as you move through the school.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to stretch and challenge some of you more, in order to raise the standard of your work, especially in literacy and numeracy.

You can play your part in this by always working as hard as we saw you doing, and by persuading your parents to make sure that you always come to school on time. This has been a problem for some of you for too long.

Best wishes to you all for the future.