

# St Matthews CofE (A) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124346
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	314897
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	100
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Gunn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Albert Griffin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Lightwood Road Rough Close Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7NE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 394890
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 394890

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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: provision and achievement in science, the impact of the school on pupils' personal development, and how well the school meets the needs of more able pupils in writing. Evidence was gathered from parents' questionnaires, discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. 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

Attainment on entry varies, but in the last two years, most children have been working within the levels expected for their age when they start school in the Reception Year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are from White British families. Only a few pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to this good school and consequently attendance is high. As one parent said, 'My daughter is really enjoying school and often gets upset because she can't go to school at the weekend.' Friendly members of staff provide excellent pastoral care, keeping pupils safe and well and making them feel part of one big happy family. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is exemplary and their very positive attitudes support them well in their learning. Pupils are polite and are exceptionally good at taking social responsibility and contributing to the community. For example, older pupils are very knowledgeable about first aid and road safety and help younger pupils to feel and stay safe at playtimes. They show their understanding of their moral obligation towards others by organising various events to raise funds for charity, including sponsoring a child in Bangladesh.

Teachers' good management of behaviour, use of praise and clear explanations help pupils to listen carefully and achieve well. Children make a good start in the Reception Year, especially in learning to read. Good teaching continues in the rest of the school, leading to good progress and above average standards by the end of Year 6. The school sets and achieves challenging targets and monitors pupils' progress well. In 2007, Year 6 was an especially able year group and consequently standards were exceptionally high. Science is a particular strength every year because teachers share their extensive subject knowledge with the pupils, ask probing questions and make lessons interesting by including demonstrations and practical activities. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils were very enthusiastic about their entertaining investigation into the eating preferences of snails, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed testing the effect exercise has on their hearts. Standards in writing lag slightly behind those in reading, especially up to the end of Year 2. This is because teachers do not always expect enough from the most able pupils or involve them enough in their learning by indicating clearly on their work what they need to do to improve. Progress in writing picks up from Year 3 onwards, where recent strategies to improve writing are proving to be more effective. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. They ensure that specific individual targets are closely monitored, enabling these pupils to make good progress.

An interesting and varied curriculum, including many additional activities, visits and visitors, meets the needs of pupils well. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to make healthy choices and pupils gleefully extol the merits of healthy food and frequent exercise. For example, pupils eat healthy snacks and typically say 'raisins make you strong and healthy'. Pupils take part in different sporting activities, including canoeing in Year 5, and are especially successful at playing rounders. The school is aware that opportunities to help pupils learn about life in a multicultural society are only satisfactory and has clear plans to work with other schools to broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils' good basic skills, positive relationships with others and involvement in successful business enterprise schemes prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their education and later life.

The headteacher, other teachers and the governing body work together well as a committed and successful team, ensuring that the school continues to improve and pupils receive a good education. There is a clear and shared sense of purpose and the school's good capacity to improve is evident in the successful way that pupils' information and communication technology skills and creativity have developed since the last inspection.

The school has an excellent partnership with others. It works very productively with the church, ensuring pupils develop their spiritual awareness successfully. For example, pupils participate enthusiastically in acts of worship by writing their own prayers and singing heartily. The school works very closely with parents supporting the pupils' academic and pastoral needs especially well. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'St Matthews is a lovely school. It brings out the best in children.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for children in the Reception Year is good. Members of staff provide sensitive support, enabling children to do well in all areas of learning. By the time children start in Year 1, most are working securely within the levels expected for their age, with a good proportion working beyond them. Children work together amicably and enjoy the interesting activities provided indoors. For example, they learn to count while decorating biscuits with faces, and develop their knowledge of language well in the interesting role play activities linked to 'baby's party'. Outdoor provision is underdeveloped. The area designated for outdoor work is not easily accessible to the classroom and, because it is small, children are not able to extend their independence by choosing when they would like to work outside.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the writing of more able pupils up to the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that children in the Reception Year can choose to work outside.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of various cultures.



## 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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	2
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?	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?	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>	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



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Matthews CofE (A) Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 7NE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your work with me. I am pleased that you enjoy coming to this good school.

Here are some other things about your school.

- You make good progress, especially in science.
- You behave very sensibly and take responsibility well. I am particularly impressed with the way you support a child in Bangladesh.
- Teaching is good and your teachers help you to learn quickly by making lessons interesting.
- You study a wide range of topics and I am pleased that you learn the importance of staying safe and healthy so well. I was impressed with the way so many of you enjoy eating fruit at playtime.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and look after you well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working together well to make your school even better.
- Your parents and carers are delighted that you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Help those of you who are quick at learning to do better writing by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that children in the Reception Year can choose to work outside.
- Increase opportunities for you to learn about various cultures.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector

17 October 2007



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