

St Matthew's Bloxam CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130883
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315644
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Farnell
Headteacher	Jerry Baily
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Webb Ellis Road Rugby CV22 7AU
Telephone number	01788 542610
Fax number	01788 542610

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector investigated the following issues: achievement and standards in writing; the quality of teaching; broadening pupils' multi-cultural awareness; and, the academic guidance provided to pupils. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and its own assessment records, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of 47 parent questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not examined in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as recorded in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and, where appropriate, these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

While the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to that seen nationally, the number is increasing quite quickly, with many starting the school later in the year. An acting headteacher was covering the maternity leave of the headteacher during the inspection and a new deputy headteacher is to take up her position in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils and this judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Through a period of some turbulence in the leadership of the school, the school has maintained its good work. This has been achieved through having clear structures in place that have enabled the incoming leadership to take over with little disruption. The pupils' good attendance is a reflection of their enjoyment of school. Pupils say they enjoy school 'because there are lots of interesting things to do and teachers make lessons fun'. The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views about the quality of education provided. The comments of one parent were typical when remarking, 'I am so pleased I chose the school because my children are so happy and doing so well.'

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, attain standards that are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Over the past four years, standards have been consistently well above average and, while national test results were not as good in 2007, the pupils make good progress from their below average starting points. However, the school has rightly recognised the need to accelerate pupils' progress in writing throughout the school, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Children enter the school with skills that are below those seen nationally, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Whilst they get a good start in the Nursery, writing skills have not progressed as quickly as they should in Years 1 and 2. However, through the improved use of information about pupils' progress to set even more precisely tailored work in lessons, the school is addressing this issue well. Teaching and learning are good because there are high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In the Nursery, children are provided with a good range of learning experiences that help them to settle well and to develop good independence. While teaching is good overall, there are examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers generally make good use of the wealth of assessment information to plan lessons for pupils of different abilities. In the best lessons, very good use is made of different stimuli to motivate pupils. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher produced 'real snow', providing a good foundation for the pupils' poems on snow and winter. Occasionally, a small number of pupils do not do as well as they should in writing because a few teachers place an over reliance on worksheets. This inhibits the opportunities for pupils to write at length and there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills in other subjects. Whilst the pupils' work is marked regularly, occasionally it does not identify how individuals might improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, with teaching assistants supporting those where the need is greatest and where they can have the most impact. Many parents commented on the good quality of support for these pupils.

Pupils are well looked after in all aspects of school life. They are happy, feel safe and are at ease in approaching staff should they have a problem. Those pupils new to the school and the increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well supported, enabling them to settle quickly to school life. Procedures to look after pupils and to keep them safe are well developed and safeguarding measures are rigorous and robust. The school has good procedures for tracking how well the pupils are performing. This information is used systematically to identify where pupils are not doing as well as they should and to identify where additional support needs to be targeted. The school's investment in training is enabling it to provide good support for teachers to accelerate the pupils' progress in writing. All pupils have targets and most know what they are. However, the school recognises these targets are

not referenced as effectively as they could be when teachers mark work, to ensure that pupils know how to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in the good range of sporting and physical activities during lunchtimes and after school. This participation, together with their good awareness of eating well and how to keep safe, helps them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The staff in the Nursery work hard to develop the children's independence and this good foundation enables pupils to make particularly good progress in this aspect throughout the school. Older pupils are keen to talk about the opportunities they have to act as buddies to younger pupils, the 'friendship stop', and how their involvement on the school council has led to improvements to the play areas. Pupils acquire many good skills that will serve them well in later life. For example, their organisation of fund raising activities during the Christmas Fayre and their involvement in the interview process for a new headteacher and deputy. Their literacy and numeracy skills and good social skills prepare them well for the future. The school works hard to raise pupils' awareness of life in a multi-cultural society. It is becoming usefully involved in a local scheme to enable pupils to become more aware of the increasingly diverse range of cultures within the community.

Governors have become much more involved in school, enabling them to keep a close check on the progress being made. Regular discussions take place with senior staff and subject leaders, providing governors with an opportunity to challenge the school to improve further. The leadership is providing a good steer and, in the absence of the substantive headteacher, the acting headteacher is providing good, experienced leadership. There are good self assessment systems in place that are based securely on the monitoring of pupils' progress, regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and support to rectify weaknesses. The leadership team knows exactly where the strengths in teaching and learning lie and this is helping it to disseminate good practice. The school has also recognised the importance of ensuring all staff take responsibility for raising standards and is working hard to enable this to happen. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make a very good start in the Nursery because staff have a strong understanding of the developmental needs of young children. Home visits by the staff ensure children are well prepared for starting school, enabling them to settle quickly into school routines. Good emphasis is placed on developing the children's basic skills, but there is also plenty of opportunity to widen their experiences through physical and creative activities. The children's confidence improves through well structured opportunities for developing language skills. For example, children love being able to use the microphone when taking part in singing activities. Good progress is maintained throughout the Reception class, although a significant minority do not attain the levels expected for their age on entry to Year 1, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The opportunity for outdoor play activity is inhibited in inclement weather due to the limited space available. The school is rightly considering how this space can be improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length and give them more opportunities to write extensively in different subject areas.

- Ensure the marking of pupils' work is more closely linked to the pupils' individual targets.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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?	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	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?	2

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

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School, Rugby, VV22 7AU

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. Your school is providing a good education for you and I am pleased you enjoy your work.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- ?
- The good progress you make in your learning so that you do well in the national tests at the end of Year 6. ?
- Your good behaviour and enjoyment of lessons and other activities. ?
- The good range of activities that you all undertake. ?
- Your efforts to keep fit and well through taking part in sport and by eating healthily. ?
- The good teaching and support you get from adults in the school. ?
- The way staff care for and look after you.

This is what the school needs to do to make it even better.

- ?
- Help all of you, particularly some of the younger pupils, to make better progress with your writing. ?
- Help the teachers to make better use of marking so that it helps you to reach your targets.

You can do your bit to help by really trying hard with your writing. I wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping me with my work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead inspector