

Mattishall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132213
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	315970
Inspection dates	15–16 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Page
Headteacher	Mrs Maxine Wood
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Dereham Road Mattishall Dereham Norfolk NR20 3AA
Telephone number	01362 858451
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few from other different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. A very small proportion of the pupils do not speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who need additional support is slightly above that found nationally. A higher than usual number have a statement of educational need. The average level of development for children starting at the school is usually below national expectations in most respects.

The school has a Sportsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has undergone a lot of change. At the last inspection, it was divided across two sites, and there were issues about the attitudes and behaviour of the children and the school's relationship with parents that needed to be improved. The school is now united, and the refurbishment of the building is almost complete. Parents think that this is now a better school. A high proportion, almost 70% responded to the inspection questionnaire. The great majority are now very positive. 'Since the school has amalgamated onto one site the atmosphere and organisation has improved significantly,' wrote one parent. Another said, 'I find the children to be polite, well behaved and motivated.' The inspectors agree with the parents' views. The children's attitudes, their behaviour in class and around school are now excellent. The children not only take responsibility for their own actions, but the older children are actively involved in caring for the younger ones.

The school admits children into Reception from a number of different pre-school providers. They settle quickly into school, but the evidence available to the school about what each child needs to support their development is unclear. Two forms of assessment are used, but the outcomes are at times unclear. From the tasks and activities that the children have undertaken it is clear that their progress is satisfactory, but staff believe that creating a more reliable system is a priority.

There is a trend of improving standards in the results for the end of Year 6 assessments. These are now above those found nationally in English and science, but below in mathematics. The rate of improvement is accelerating, but the picture is uneven across the school, with children progressing at different rates in different subjects. Children in the current Year 6 are now making good progress in both English and mathematics. This is because the headteacher has wisely allowed teachers of the two classes of oldest children to teach to their strengths.

The staff use a range of assessments and systems for recording the outcomes. This makes it complex for teachers to track the development of children's skills and explains some of the uneven progress in the younger classes. The children are very positive about the feedback they get from teachers about their work, and whilst oral feedback in lessons is good, teachers' marking is inconsistent. It is best in English where teachers often explain what the children need to do to attain the next steps in their learning, but is less effective in other subjects, such as mathematics where work is usually just marked right or wrong.

The leadership of the school has sensibly focused on establishing good quality relationships within the school and with parents and this is beginning to pay off. All staff work hard and make a very effective team. The children enjoy being at school and the older ones in particular recognise that it has improved. With this solid foundation, the school is satisfactorily placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start school with levels of skills and development that looks to be below national expectations in most respects. The headteacher is concerned that the evidence is unreliable and the staff are carefully building a detailed record of each child's development. This, along with the activities the children have completed, shows they are making satisfactory progress. The satisfactory curriculum ensures there is a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks

for the children in a well-structured indoor learning environment. At present, access to the outside area is limited for safety reasons concerning the building work, but the teacher has ambitious plans for the development of this area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine teachers' marking, especially in mathematics, to help children to understand what they need to do to attain higher standards.
- Refine the system for recording assessment across the school to allow teachers to develop a more accurate picture of children's progress.
- Ensure teachers have an accurate picture of children's attainment on entry to school in order to plan more activities that meet individual needs.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children leave at the end of Year 6, the standards they attain are now above those expected in English and science, although they are below in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below national expectations. Evidence from teachers' assessments show that children in the current Year 6 are making good progress in both English and mathematics. The assessments for Year 2 show that children are making particularly good progress in mathematics, but not with their writing. Children who need extra support with their learning, and those who are learning English as a second language are progressing in line with their peers. Children's achievement is satisfactory, because despite some good areas, it is uneven overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children feel valued and, as a result, they have good attitudes to work and are eager to learn. Attendance is good. Children's behaviour is outstanding and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Children respect each other and adults in school and work extremely well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make the most of the many cultural opportunities on offer. Children have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, although some do not always apply this knowledge to their after-school snacks and lunch boxes. They enjoy the many sporting activities and have first aid training to cope with emergencies. They say they feel safe and well cared for. Children take their responsibilities seriously. They readily contribute to the community within and outside school and are proud of their success in improving the environment and recycling. They develop satisfactory skills to prepare them for their futures but have limited opportunities to take responsibility for improving their own learning in some areas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are very good relationships between adults and children which generate a good climate for learning. All adults are consistent in their expectations of good behaviour so children know

exactly what is expected of them. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to make learning interesting and fun and ask questions that encourage pupils to think for themselves. In some cases, children's work is not organised, so it is difficult to see how it has improved. Although teachers give good oral guidance in their lessons, there are some weaknesses in the way they mark children's work, especially in mathematics. They give insufficient written guidance on how children can improve their work. This hinders them from taking responsibility for improving their work themselves and from understanding the next steps they need to take.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers have worked hard to adapt the curriculum to make it relevant and interesting. They have wholeheartedly embraced the concepts outlined in guidance to ensure children know how to keep healthy, stay safe, develop good personal and social skills and enjoy what they learn. Good use of the locality, visits and visitors enrich children's learning. A diverse range of additional activities offers opportunities for children to extend their many interests. The school building is now spacious and attractive and the outside continues to be developed to enhance learning. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science satisfactorily meets government requirements. However, because systems for tracking children's progress are variable and complex, teachers find it difficult to inform their planning to enable all children to make more rapid progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Child protection procedures are well established and rigorously maintained. The systems to check and promote pupils' academic progress are less effective.

Children have general targets for English and mathematics, but there are no specific targets for individual children, apart from those who have been identified as having specific learning difficulties. These pupils get good support from the skilful teaching assistants. Their support enables these children to achieve as well as their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully led the establishment of the new school. The good quality of the relationships in the school reflects her caring, nurturing style. Everyone, from the children, the staff and the governors, has a clear voice in the development of the school. The creation of a good quality environment has been a long and demanding one, which is still not complete. To some degree, it has deflected the leadership from the academic priorities which are now well established as the focus of the school's self-evaluation. Staff recognise that they have to streamline their monitoring systems in order to accelerate the pace of children's progress. Governors are well informed, very supportive and bring a range of skills and knowledge that strengthens and extends their work in monitoring and developing the school.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	1
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	2
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	3
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

17 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Mattishall Primary School, Dereham NR20 3AA

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. I would like to share with you what we found when we spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

We think your school is developing satisfactorily. We were impressed with the new building and the grounds. We were particularly pleased to see how well you behaved in class and around school. We thought that the example the older pupils set was especially important. We could see that you all get along together and we were very pleased to see you looking after and playing with the younger ones. We were delighted that you have so many opportunities to take part in sports and other activities. No wonder you told us that you enjoyed school so much.

When we watched your lessons and looked at your work, we could see that you are working hard, and that your teachers and teaching assistants work really hard too. Even so, we have asked your teachers to improve the way they mark your work. We think that the way they mark your English is good, but we would like them to develop something similar for mathematics. That way, you could be more involved in improving your own work.

Whilst discussing your achievements with your teachers and the staff, we could see that they have some great ideas about helping you to progress with your work. To make these even better, we asked them to try to find ways in which they can improve the way they know how well you are learning and your progress. We want them to make it is easier for them to pick out who is doing well, who needs extra help and where extra work is needed. We think this will help you reach even higher standards.

Finally, we think that Mrs Wood is right to be concerned that the information your school is able to build up about you when you start in Reception is not always accurate or helpful. We would like your teachers to get help and support to make the systems work really well in the future.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown

Lead inspector