

# Matchborough First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132821
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	316028
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Matchborough Way Matchborough East Redditch B98 0GD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 883880
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 883888

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Matchborough moved into new premises in 2003, providing it with good quality accommodation and grounds for the pupils. The school has leased a woodland and stream from the local council, which is known as the Forest School. There is an onsite nursery. There are two area units at the school catering for pupils from Redditch: a 10-place speech and language unit and an 8-place nursery for children with special needs, known as Nursery Plus. The number of pupils at the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The headteacher has been in post for a year and the two assistant headteachers for six months.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which is improving. Its key strength is the very clear vision of the headteacher, who has put many good new procedures in place over the past year. These are helping academic and personal standards to rise. As a result of the new systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils, their personal development and well-being are good, and evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils behave well and relationships are positive. They enjoy their learning and, as a result, attendance is improving and is now average. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through the many activities that promote caring attitudes and a clear awareness of different cultures and lifestyles.

Standards are below average on entry to the school. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. Pupils achieve better in mathematics than they do in reading and writing. Teaching has improved recently and is now satisfactory, and sometimes good. In mathematics, for example, standards are now average due to good teaching in the subject. Boys do not achieve as well as girls or as well as other boys nationally, particularly in writing. This is because the teaching of phonics is not always as accurate as it should be and because many boys, as well as girls, do not do enough writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the area speech and language unit and those in the Nursery Plus, achieve well because of the good support provided for them.

The satisfactory curriculum provides many good opportunities for pupils to explore the world around them and contributes particularly well to their cultural experiences..Pupils are very well cared for. Systems to keep them safe are robust. Academic guidance is good in English and mathematics, and assessment is beginning to inform teachers about how well their pupils are doing in those subjects. These new procedures are not embedded in other subjects and therefore do not yet enable the school to set priorities for future learning as clearly as they should.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. New teachers, leaders and systems introduced over the past year have not yet had time to make a positive impact on provision and standards. The strong new leadership team has begun to monitor academic and personal achievements rigorously. As a result, leaders know what they need to do to improve. However, the school now needs to embed the new systems, particularly the assessment procedures, fully into the daily work of the school. The governing body is helpful but as yet does not sufficiently challenge leaders about the school's work. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory, with some good features. The accommodation and resources are exceptionally good and significantly enhance the provision. Children benefit from a good range of activities that help them to improve their personal development and well-being. They learn to work and play together well. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in Reception where tasks are well matched to individual needs and abilities. A good new phonics programme is helping to improve literacy skills but at times activities do not enable pupils to link sounds and letters well enough. Occasionally tasks for the youngest children are over-prescriptive and do not enable them to make decisions for

themselves. Teachers know children well and take good care of them, which leads to good relationships and positive behaviour.

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

- Raise standards across the school, and particularly in English, to ensure that all pupils, especially boys, make better progress in their writing.
- Make better use of assessment information to record progress in all subjects so that teachers can plan the next steps in learning and leaders can identify priorities for further development.
- Make governors more effective in accounting for the quality of provision and standards achieved.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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**

Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is below average overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2. As a result, standards are still below average at the end of Key Stage 1. In the 2007 assessments, at the end of Year 2, standards were below average in reading and writing but they rose in mathematics and matched the national average. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make similar progress, also achieving well in mathematics and making satisfactory progress in English and science. Boys across the school do not achieve as well as girls or as well as other boys nationally, particularly in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the speech and language unit and those in the Nursery Plus, achieve their targets because of skilled teaching and the good additional support that is provided for them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables pupils across the school to develop effective personal skills. As a result, they behave well in and around the school and enjoy their lessons. This is evident in their improving attendance, which is now broadly average. The school has achieved the Healthy School status, which acknowledges the way pupils choose healthy snacks and healthy lunches. They know how important it is to keep fit and would like to see more physical activities and clubs at the school. Pupils know about keeping safe and benefit from the school's good approach to personal, social and health education, assemblies and class discussions, which openly helps to resolve conflict. The school council is active and has been instrumental in supporting the use of friendship seats at playtimes to ensure that all pupils have a friend to play with. Pupils are regularly involved in charity fundraising events and show good understanding of local and distant cultures; for example, even the youngest children talk knowledgeably about the way people in Africa live. Pupils have recently collected enough money to install a water tap at a school in Ghana. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Lessons are well planned and resources are used appropriately to keep pupils interested. Interactive whiteboards, for example, are effectively used in teaching new skills and in involving pupils in their own learning, particularly in mathematics. Good mathematical demonstrations and practical numeracy tasks are helping standards to rise across the school. Teaching in literacy is less successful because not all teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, particularly in the teaching of phonics. This sometimes results in pupils being unsure about what is expected of them. Occasionally not enough is done to provide practical and visual activities that may help to include boys, for example in reading and writing activities. Not all pupils do enough writing. Teaching assistants are used well, particularly to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, resulting in their good achievement. Teaching in the speech and language unit and in Nursery Plus is good, enabling these groups of pupils to achieve well.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is effective in helping pupils to enjoy their education. The good mathematics programme is enabling standards to rise and is helping all pupils to improve their numeracy skills. The programme to improve literacy skills is satisfactory but does not always provide well enough for improving writing skills. Provision meets national requirements, and the Chinese and Mandarin clubs show it is responsive to local needs. There are good links across subjects with carefully chosen themes, which link learning in one subject to that in others by giving pupils planned opportunities to apply their learning to different situations. The current theme of Africa shows this to be working well. The Forest School also links learning well over many subjects and is very popular with pupils. Provision for those in the area units is good.

Pupils enjoy taking part in sporting competitions against other local schools but the range of lunchtime and after-school clubs is limited and does not fully cater for the interests of all pupils. The school is aware of this situation and is already working to provide additional activities in the summer term.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Provision for the health, safety and well-being of pupils is rigorous. Pupils say they like being at school, 'because everyone is so nice and it is easy to make friends'. Pupils are well cared for by the whole school community. Since the recent introduction of the tracking system, pupils receive good support for learning, particularly in English and mathematics, and are now able to judge their own progress against their literacy and numeracy targets. The school has not yet implemented this system fully and there is limited information about achievement in other subjects. Teachers are beginning to use assessment to set priorities and targets in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with additional needs are well supported and the precise targets in their individual education plans help them to make good progress.

The good progress made by pupils in the Nursery Plus and the speech and language unit is testament to the regular and effective help of the speech therapist and the assistant.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and has put in place many new and good procedures to bring about improvements. These are just beginning to have an impact on personal and academic standards, as, for example, in mathematics. Recent restructuring of staff and new senior managers has had a positive impact on provision resulting in a knowledgeable senior leadership team who are beginning to influence the work of the school. Formal procedures for self-evaluation are improving and, given time, should accurately inform the school about how well it is doing. Leaders are beginning to monitor the provision more thoroughly and this has helped the school to set challenging targets, although some targets are too challenging for a few pupils. Monitoring has also enabled the school to identify the areas that require development and staff have already begun to put procedures in place to improve standards in writing. Governors are supportive but do not yet challenge the school or hold it to account for its decisions. Parents are pleased with the school; a very small minority expressed some concerns about behaviour but new policies have helped behaviour to improve in all areas so that it is now good.

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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?	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 <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	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	3
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	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	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	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

27 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Matchborough First School, Redditch B98 0GD

Thank you for your help during our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about the things you do at school. You told us that you enjoy school and we noticed that your attendance is improving. This letter is to tell you about some of the other things we found out about your school.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You behave well and show good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. You bring lots of fruit to eat and told us that you like to keep fit. You are safe and secure at school. You are very caring for others and we were impressed with your knowledge of Africa and the way you are trying to help some of the children who live there by providing water taps for them.

Your teachers look after you well. They provide satisfactory activities for you so that you make satisfactory gains in learning. You are doing better in mathematics than in English and boys do not do quite as well as girls, particularly in writing. Your activities keep you interested and you particularly benefit from the Forest School. Those of you who are in the speech and language unit or the Nursery Plus do well in your learning. Teachers check your learning in English and mathematics so that they can set your targets. They do not check your work in other subjects quite so well.

Leaders keep you safe and secure. They manage the school in a satisfactory way. The governors of the school are keen to help you but they could do a bit more to make sure that you improve your skills. We are asking the school to do three things to help you do even better in your work.

- Help you improve your writing by increasing the opportunities you have to write.
- Make sure that your work is marked regularly and that teachers plan new work more accurately to your individual needs.
- Ensure that governors monitor the work of the school and hold it to greater account.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Denise Morris Lead Inspector