

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102592
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	323663
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Roberts
Headteacher	Miss Pam Dryden
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 March 2006
School address	Langley Road Surbiton KT6 6LW
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans (IEPs) of a number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings, minutes of parents' meetings and just over 80 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels (including governors) on improving standards
- pupils' progress during Key Stage 2
- boys' progress throughout the school
- the key factors underpinning each *Every child matters* outcome achieved by pupils.

Information about the school

St. Matthew's is a Church of England aided school which admits up to 45 pupils each year into the two Reception classes which form the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The headteacher has been in post since the beginning of the summer term 2008. The school is situated in a residential area of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Most of the minority ethnic pupils are from white groups which have their heritage outside the United Kingdom. Around 20% of pupils from various year groups leave or join the school during the course of a year. This turnover is higher than many schools experience. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is as expected for children of four years of age.

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	309	Above average
Free school meals	14%	Above average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	21%	Above average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	25%	Above average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	15%	Above average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	0.7%	Below average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St. Matthew's is a well led and effective school. Pupils achieve well in lessons and across different subjects. Their love of learning is encapsulated by a Year 5 pupil who, during an outstanding French lesson, exclaimed to her friend: 'This is so much fun!' Academically, the strongest progress is made by pupils in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. Progress slows slightly in lower Key Stage 2, because teaching here does not consistently make the same highly positive impact on learning seen in other years. Nevertheless, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages by the time they leave the school, and there is evidence from the school's good tracking of pupils' attainment and progress that standards are rising.

Recently, girls have tended to outperform boys at this school. The school has taken a number of actions to eliminate this disparity. In the classroom, HMI noted that there is now very little difference in the progress made by boys and girls, but some boys are still reticent in volunteering answers or opinions in whole class sessions. The curriculum is satisfactory, but the school has not yet rigorously planned its teaching of topics to make sure that, year on year, pupils progressively develop skills and understanding in subjects beyond English and mathematics.

Children in the EYFS are well taught and get off to a flying start, developing their confidence and abilities in a stimulating environment. Children learn new sounds at an appropriate rate, but their phonic knowledge is not consolidated and built upon daily, and links between reading and writing are not sufficiently explicit during these sessions. In addition, book resources to support the development of children's early reading and phonic skills are not extensive enough.

Behaviour is good overall, and the care and support provided for pupils is strong. For example, 'Crystal Kids', the 'wrap around' care managed by the school staff, provides a warm, nurturing and engaging environment for all pupils who attend.

Senior leaders' clear sighted evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development are coupled with a strong analysis of data. Sharp improvement plans address pertinent priorities and the school's actions, for example, to improve boys' performance and provide focused interventions for those pupils at risk of underachieving, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress for the following groups:
 - Pupils in lower Key Stage 2, by improving teaching so that 95% of it is good or better by the end of the summer term 2009.
 - Boys, by involving them more consistently in whole class learning
 - Younger pupils, by ensuring that they receive a daily session of high quality phonics which underlines clear links between reading and writing, and is supported by appropriate, largely phonically decodable texts.

- Build a stimulating curriculum, which is underpinned by rigorous planning for progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

2

Pupils achieve well in the classroom and enjoy their learning across subjects. They are generally enthused by their learning. The school has already begun to take action to attempt to speed boys' progress, and work in pupils' exercise books demonstrates that many activities are judiciously chosen to inspire boys and get the best from them. Pupils relish regular opportunities to discuss their thinking and respond well to challenging questions, although boys tend to be more reticent in volunteering to answer questions in whole class sessions. Overall, pupils are hardworking and productive during lessons, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress, because the school is tailoring work more specifically to their needs. In 2008, Key Stage 1 results were very high, particularly for girls and pupils who speak English as an additional language. This reflects the strong teaching in Years 1 and 2. Unvalidated test results for those pupils who left Year 6 in 2008 show that a very high percentage of pupils made two National Curriculum levels of progress during their Key Stage 2 years to attain standards that were broadly average by the time they left. Again, girls did better than boys. School data show, however, that during Key Stage 2, the best progress is made during the final two years because of teaching that is consistently good or better.

Overall, pupils behave well in and out of lessons, and have a clear understanding of school rules and rewards. They feel safe, and agree that limited incidences of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. One or two pupils perceive that, when they do complain, they are occasionally treated as if at fault. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle, and have ready access to water during the day. School meals are nutritious and well balanced. A significant amount of pupils take part in after school sports clubs, but opportunities for really sustained vigorous activity to build pupils' stamina are lacking during some physical education lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and their views are heard and acted upon by the school. In the wider community, they work hard to raise money for charitable causes. Their sense of their own faith culture is good, but their understanding of what it means to be British in an increasingly

diverse society is less well developed. The standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and French, ensures that pupils are prepared well for their transition to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

Teaching is typically good. It is thoughtfully planned to provide a range of activities and tasks which are well geared to the various needs of pupils with differing abilities so pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge which informs their clear instruction to pupils. Effective questioning strategies on the part of most staff keep pupils alert and learning, but in all but the best lessons, girls volunteer more answers than boys. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support learning when pupils are working in groups or individually, but they are sometimes less well used to support and focus pupils during whole class teaching. In lower Key Stage 2, the range of strategies used by teachers to keep pupils interested and enjoying learning is narrower than that observed in most other classes and, at times, pupils' attention drifts because of inexact or overlong instruction.

In all classes, pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics is assessed by teachers each term. The school uses this information effectively to check that pupils are not falling behind, and to put in place effective intervention strategies if necessary. Of their personal learning targets, one pupil said: 'they really do help with my learning'. A small number of parents noted that the school does not keep them well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors agree that, despite improvements last summer, there is too little detail within annual reports about pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to National Curriculum levels, and that reports do not specify clearly the next steps that pupils

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

need to take to improve their work.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements in terms of content but the school has not yet rigorously planned its teaching of topics so that, year on year, pupils progressively develop and build upon skills and understanding in subjects beyond English and mathematics.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively. The headteacher is a strong and purposeful leader who has an accurate view of the quality of teaching over time in each classroom, and is using this information to set targets for teachers in terms of maintaining high performance and improving practice. Other senior leaders carry out regular scrutinies of pupils' work from each class in English and mathematics, and provide written feedback to individual staff. These scrutinies are well focused, commenting on standards attained and progress made by pupils, as well as coverage of the curriculum and adherence to marking and target setting policy. The scrutinies largely tally with inspectors' findings, although there is some evidence to suggest that verdicts about standards and teachers' expectations are too generous in some areas.

The school's effective work to promote equalities is illustrated by the way it has tackled the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. The inspectors' observations in the classrooms and evaluations of pupils' work suggest efforts, for example, in adapting planning to encourage boys' writing are beginning to pay dividends. Recent work to improve the tracking of pupils' achievements over time has been very strong, and is providing senior leaders with a wealth of useful data which they are analysing accurately.

Governors provide good support and satisfactory challenge. The chair has a clear vision for developing the governing body's capability to demand greater information on teaching, learning and achievement across the school. The school improvement plan is a thoughtfully considered document, but does not contain annual targets for each year group of children in reading, writing and mathematics to enable governors to hold the school rigorously to account for its work. The school's relationship with parents and carers is good. Parents have an opportunity to raise more strategic concerns at the parents' council and minutes of these meetings suggest that, where appropriate, the school acts upon these.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school has made appropriate checks on all adults who work within the school, and maintains a rolling programme to ensure its

single central record of such checks is updated at the recommended intervals. Health and safety checks are strong, and risk assessments have involved parents of individual pupils who would otherwise be at danger of exclusion from some activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the EYFS (Reception classes) is good. Practitioners provide a well planned range of activities, effectively tailored to children of different abilities, and well balanced across all six early learning areas. Opportunities for role play are very effective in supporting children's communication and language skills as well as their personal, social and emotional development. Children were confident and very keen to talk to HMI about the work and play in which they were involved. At one point, two girls, dressed as police officers, decided to 'arrest' the inspector. The teacher made good use of this developing scenario, encouraging children to think about why they were taking the inspector to 'jail', and how they would measure how long he should stay there.

Behaviour is excellent. All groups of children play and learn well together. Staff capitalise on the majority of learning situations by asking well framed questions which encourage children to speak at length and use an increasingly complex vocabulary. For example, a teacher engaged a boy in a conversation about mathematical shapes. At the end of the conversation, he had learned and used the word 'quadrilateral'. The teaching of early reading is satisfactory. Children are learning new sounds and their link to letters at an appropriate pace, but their phonic knowledge is not consolidated and built upon daily, and links between reading and writing are not sufficiently explicit during these sessions. In addition, book resources to support the development of children's early reading and phonic skills are not extensive enough. Children enjoy a wide range of activities outdoors, and have access to this area for most of the day. In spite of this, the Reception classes adhere to a fairly rigid timetable for morning and afternoon breaks, which, on one occasion during the inspection, unnecessarily interrupted children's learning. Practitioners take good care of children, ensuring they are suitably dressed for specific activities and weathers. Assessment files demonstrate that regular high quality observations of children's learning across early learning areas take place regularly, informing the

planning of children's next steps in learning. This ensures that children make progress during their Reception year.

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?*	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?*	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?*	2
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	2

* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

Views of parents and carers

This was a short-notice inspection so parents were invited to respond to questionnaires to a very tight timescale, effectively overnight. In spite of this, just over 80 parents or carers returned questionnaires to HMI, which is around the usual number for this size of school. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. Parents regard this school as caring and supportive, and the staff as approachable. The majority of parental criticisms were offered constructively, and where HMI agree that these concerns are indeed issues, such issues appear as judgements in the body of the report. Parents may wish to know that there were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received by HMI.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Surbiton, KT6 6LW

Thank you so much for helping us when we came to inspect your school last week. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that your school is doing a good job and that you have a very good headteacher. This will not surprise you, as most of you, and your parents, think the same. These were the points we liked about your school.

- You enjoy your learning, are hardworking and make good progress in all subjects.
- You love discussing your work, although some boys don't contribute as much as girls in question and answer sessions.
- You behave well in class and around the school.
- Teaching is always good in most parts of the school.

Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to improve the school, and have already started to do this.

To help the school become even better, we have said that senior leaders should:

- improve teaching so that nearly all of it is good or better by the end of the Summer Term 2009
- make sure that boys take a greater part in asking and answering questions in class discussions
- make sure that reception children learn some sounds every day and have some new reading books so that they can use their sounds to read as quickly as possible
- build a really exciting and well planned curriculum for you, so you improve your skills in every subject year by year as you move through the school.

Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Bradley Simmons
Her Majesty's Inspector

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