

# St Matthew's CofE Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104000
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	323941
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	241
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Bristow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deb Foster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Windmill Lane Smethwick B66 3LX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 581651
<b>Fax number</b>	01215 582713

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Matthew's is an average size primary school. Pupils come from a relatively disadvantaged background and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. One third of pupils are from White British families and the same proportion have Caribbean heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Pupil mobility is high, with a large number of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the start of the academic year. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language at home is above the national average and half of them are the early stages of learning English. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery with part-time and full-time places and a Reception class. The headteacher has been in post for four terms.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Matthew's is a satisfactory school. Although standards are very low, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is also satisfactory. The school is fast improving under the good leadership of the headteacher, whose unrelenting drive to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, is shared enthusiastically by staff. As a result, the school has successfully tackled its recent history of underachievement and weak teaching. Progress is accelerating and standards are rising as pupils catch up on missed work.

Pupils' positive attitudes reflect these improvements and their personal development is good. They thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers, especially their success in lessons. Pupils feel very safe in school and take great care to ensure the safety of others. They behave well and are polite to each other and to adults and are growing into mature young people.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are many signs that it is improving. Teachers share lesson objectives well so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to succeed. Pupils find their work interesting and relevant and they are keen to learn. In most lessons, pupils are stretched by their work but occasionally the level of challenge drops and their progress slows. This happens, for example, when the teacher talks for too long and pupils' learning becomes too passive. The satisfactory curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, for example through lively assemblies. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good range of indoor learning resources but those outdoors are not sufficient to ensure good progress in all aspects of their learning. Pupils receive a good standard of care. They can confidently share their problems with an adult, knowing their concerns will be quickly and effectively resolved. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who do not speak English as their first language at home receive sympathetic and effective support. The school uses a wide range of outside agencies well to support pupils' welfare and learning. Pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work. They are less clear about the targets they are expected to reach by the end of the year. This means they are unable to take enough responsibility for their own learning and care, guidance and support overall is satisfactory.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typically, one parent wrote, 'I am very happy with the progress my child is making. The school has a happy, welcoming atmosphere.' Another said, 'There is a commitment from all staff to ensure top standards for all pupils regardless of background.'

The headteacher receives able support from her deputy headteacher. Leadership and management overall is satisfactory because some middle leaders are new in post and are not yet taking full responsibility for standards and improvements in the areas for which they are accountable. This, together with the recent record of improvements, shows the school has a satisfactory capacity to become better.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children really enjoy learning in the safe and lively atmosphere in the Nursery and Reception. Children enter the Nursery with skills and experiences well below those expected for their age. Although they reach levels below the national average by the time they start Year 1, they make satisfactory progress. Children's personal development is good. They behave well, readily take

turns and share toys and learning materials. Children are keen to take responsibility, for example by registering themselves as present. Children are very well cared for and the warm supportive relationships with adults help them to feel confident and safe. Parents appreciate the measures taken that enable children to settle quickly into school routines and the regular updates they receive about their child's progress.

Teachers plan a good range of exciting indoor activities that promote children's learning well. There is appropriate emphasis on developing children's language and number skills. For example, the children's speaking and calculating skills are developed well in the supermarket role-play area. Children have ready access to the secure outdoor area and many choose to work there. Here, learning is satisfactory rather than good because the outside area is under resourced and does not offer the same level of challenge as indoors. It caters for children's physical development well but other aspects of learning, such as reading, writing and calculating, are less well provided for. Staff use regular assessment effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Planning does not always take sufficient account of the shortfalls in outdoor resources. Staff receive regular training to update their Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills.

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

- Raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring pupils are challenged well throughout their lessons so that they make better progress.
- Improve resources for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable them to make good progress in the outdoor learning area.
- Inform pupils of the targets they are to reach by the end of the year so that they can measure their progress towards them and take more responsibility for their learning.
- Ensure middle leaders take full responsibility for standards and improvements in the areas for which they are accountable.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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**

Pupils' achievement, including for those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory. Children's skills and experiences on entry to the Nursery are well below those expected for their age. The children make satisfactory progress overall, in the Nursery and Reception classes to reach below average standards by the time they start Year 1. Pupil progress is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 5 and is accelerating. Progress is good in Year 6. Standards are rising rapidly; however, they are well below average in English and mathematics because pupils are catching up on work missed from previous years.

Standards in English are rising because pupils' use of vocabulary to express their views is rapidly improving. The many opportunities for pupils to talk to each other in lessons are helping them construct interesting sentences. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to put their ideas down on paper in longer pieces of writing. The appealing new library books are used well and are making an important contribution to the improvement in standards of reading. There have been good gains in mathematics. Pupils' skills in drawing and interpreting graphs

are now broadly average, as is their speed of mental calculations. Using their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems remains a weakness for many pupils. Standards are broadly average in science and in information and communication technology.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They reflect maturely on their feelings. Pupils' clear understanding of right and wrong underpins their good behaviour, although occasionally they become restless when the teacher talks for too long. Pupils work well in groups and readily help each other. They are keen to share each other's customs and religious festivals, which means they have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of British culture.

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and most try their best to eat healthy food and take plenty of exercise. Pupils are very safe because the school deals quickly and effectively with the very rare cases of bullying. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when crossing the road but are less clear about how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils are keen to take responsibility in school as monitors or as members of the school council. They are proud of the way they have helped the school improve the lunches and playground facilities. They collect generously for charity and are starting to participate in more local events. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school, especially the praise they receive for high quality work, and the good attendance of most pupils reflects this. However, attendance overall is satisfactory rather than good because a small but significant number of pupils take long holidays in term time. Although standards are low, pupils' positive attitudes and their many opportunities to work in teams and to undertake enterprise means their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships in lessons are positive and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers make good use of computers and other resources to engage pupils and this adds to their enjoyment of learning. Teachers use assessments well to plan work that matches the needs of pupils and this is helping to accelerate progress. Sometimes, progress slows when the teacher takes too long to explain tasks or when pupils are not given enough time to work things out for themselves. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and those who do not speak English as their first language at home. For example, before science lessons begin, they ensure pupils know the meaning of technical words they will encounter in class.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides good support for pupils' personal development through, for example, health and physical education lessons. The school's efforts to make the curriculum more appealing and relevant are showing signs of success, especially for the boys. Their rate of progress has quickened markedly because they find their work interesting and engaging. Many of the school's computers are old and this means pupils are not always able to use up-to-date

software. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work in English and practise problem solving in mathematics. There is a satisfactory range of clubs that are very popular. Regular trips out of school widen pupils' horizons and raise their aspirations.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff use their detailed knowledge of pupils and children well to provide them with a good standard of pastoral care. Pupils with learning difficulties have learning programmes that match their needs appropriately. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English receive good support, especially from staff who speak their home language. The procedures to settle pupils who arrive during the academic year are effective. An example of the school's good use of outside agencies is its close cooperation with attendance officers to persuade parents not to take their children on holiday during term time. Child protection arrangements and health and safety procedures are robust and regularly updated.

Marking and other feedback provides pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work and meet their short-term goals. Pupils are not as secure in their knowledge of the levels they should reach in English, mathematics and science tests. This means that many of them are not able to measure the rate of their progress and take full responsibility for their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and her deputy headteacher ensures that the school has a largely accurate overview of its strengths and areas for development. Targets are challenging, and improvement plans are appropriate and effective. Some middle leaders are having a positive impact in raising standards. For example, their training has sharpened staff's skills in teaching graphs in mathematics and experiments in science. However, this is not a consistent picture because some are new and are not yet fully checking standards and promoting improvements in their areas of responsibility. The school has effective procedures to check pupils' progress and to provide extra help for those who fall behind so that they can catch up. The school has made a satisfactory start in its promotion of community cohesion. For example, it has had success in bringing parents from minority ethnic backgrounds together to discuss how they can contribute to their children's education. It is starting to develop links with schools overseas.

The governors work hard on behalf of the school. They are well informed about most aspects of school, although their understanding of data is still developing. They are not afraid to ask questions or hold the school to account.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

6 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's CofE Junior and Infant School, Smethwick, B66 3LX

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think St Matthew's is a satisfactory school. We also think it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a sound start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Satisfactory teaching helps you make sound progress in your lessons.
- Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave very well and most of you attend very regularly.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits out of school that you enjoy.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- You have a sound understanding of how you can improve your work.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do four things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers keep you working hard in lessons.
- Improve the resources in the outdoor area for children in the Nursery and Reception.
- Tell you your targets, especially in English, mathematics and science, so that you can check your own progress in meeting them.
- Make sure the headteacher gets plenty of help from all the other leaders to check how well you are learning.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well, trying your best in lessons and attending regularly.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector