

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107336
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	336872
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Cannice McGinn
Headteacher	Mrs Katy Cox
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine teachers and saw 13 lessons. Approximately 55% of inspection time was used to investigate pupils' learning. Meetings were held with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, policies and minutes, samples of pupils' work and the local authority's reports on the school's work, as well as scrutinising 69 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by all pupils and particularly those who speak English as an additional language
- the effectiveness of teaching in promoting pupils' progress, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- whether the role of middle managers has sufficient impact in improving the school's effectiveness.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. There is a majority of White British pupils. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds has increased over the past two years and there is a significant number in the school who speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Recent awards include the Activemark and Healthy Schools Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The impact of the headteacher's leadership over the past two years, and the dedicated work of governors and staff, has been enormous. Consequently, this has moved from a satisfactory to a good school. There have been significant improvements in key areas of the school's performance.

Improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that children are given a good start to their learning and development in Nursery and Reception classes from starting points which are well below typical expectations for their age. The progress they make, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, prepares them well for the following stages of learning. Good progress continues throughout the school due to teaching which is, in the main, consistently good and at times, outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the additional support they get is planned carefully and matched well to what they need to learn. Progress of those who speak English as an additional language is good, and sometimes exceptional, because of the level of care and support they receive. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved significantly and inspection evidence shows that sustained improvement is likely. Nevertheless, the school recognises that mathematics standards could improve further, especially for higher-attaining pupils, and that writing quality is not consistent, particularly when pupils write, for example, in topic books, which teachers do not always mark as rigorously as they might. Pupils are cared for and guided well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Leaders and managers at every level are clear about their roles in driving improvement and raising standards. Academic targets for the school were mostly met in the previous year. As result of incisive assessment and checking of progress, higher targets have been set for current groups of pupils. Since the last inspection governors have applied more rigour to their role. Governors not only challenge the school strongly but strive to meet its changing needs. While parents' and carers' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive, governors are aware of the need to encourage more active engagement with this group, especially with a view to raising attendance levels, which are currently below average. Astute staffing appointments have brought about very effective changes in leadership and a stronger teaching team. Standards have improved, the curriculum is strengthened and improvements to the building and resources have helped to secure the well-being of staff and pupils. Self-evaluation is thoughtful and accurate. This demonstrates well the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, by ensuring that they are always provided with sufficient challenge.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - ensuring that skills used in literacy lessons are equally applied when writing in other subjects
 - marking all writing with the same rigour and consistency.
- Raise attendance so that it matches at least the national average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning and, because of their outstanding behaviour and attitudes, they get the best out of their lessons. Hard work is expected and pupils rise to the challenges provided. Independent learning is promoted well in every classroom, whether in Year 1, where pupils improve language and number skills by playing in their 'jungle' role play area, or in Year 6, where pupils work effectively with partners to write poems packed with good ideas and well-chosen imagery. The consensus expressed among pupils is that lessons are 'enjoyable and fun' and all are keen to do well.

Progress has gathered a much better pace due to improved teaching, and is now good. The needs of the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are met very well both through the local authority's support and skilled intervention in school. Often pupils new to English make rapid progress through the early stages of speaking and reading. Most progress to the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. Learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also good. Teachers are quick to assess their particular difficulties and there is a wide range of support measures to call upon so that pupils are given the learning opportunities they need. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in English and mathematics and above average in science, representing good improvement and good achievement from their earlier starting points. School assessments and pupils' current work indicate that continued improvement is likely.

Pupils continually reflect on the impact that their actions might have on others. Excellent relationships and respect, particularly for others' varying cultural backgrounds, are deeply rooted in the school's values and amply demonstrated in pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils say that school is a very safe place to be. They vigorously challenge any notion of bullying or racism and are fully aware of what to look out for with regard to their own and others' safety. Parents' and carers' views about their children's safety and welfare in school are fully justified. The importance of a sensible diet is high on most pupils' personal agenda and a substantial majority take advantage of the healthy school lunches. However, there is scope for some to choose more thoughtfully what goes into their packed lunches. Pupils are very active. They enjoy the physical education lessons and the range of opportunities provided through after-school sports clubs. Despite the school's tireless efforts to engage parents and carers, attendance remains low. This is a limiting factor in pupils' development of skills they will need for the workplace.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons build well on pupils' previous learning because of teachers' good knowledge of pupils' varying abilities. Work is matched well to what different groups can do. Teaching assistants are well informed and their skilful management of groups makes a significant contribution to pupils' good learning. Resources are used well to help pupils learn, particularly electronic whiteboards, which add interest for pupils and bring lessons to life. Computers are also a feature of lessons and gave Year 6 pupils good opportunities to use their word processing skills to write their poetry. There is usually good pace to learning and good levels of challenge because of teachers' high expectations and good subject knowledge. As a result, pupils are motivated and engaged well in learning. Assessment is used well to identify targets for groups and individuals and most teachers check to see that these are being met in literacy and numeracy lessons. Some self-assessment by pupils in literacy, for example, is impressive and gives them a good understanding of their own progress and what to do next. Occasionally teaching is less effective because the first part of the lesson is not sufficiently challenging or not clearly enough explained because teachers do not question pupils rigorously enough to check

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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fully on their levels of understanding.

The curriculum is tailored well to the interests of pupils and enables them to achieve well. Important skills are woven well into planning so there is good emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. French is taught throughout Key Stage 2 giving added dimension to pupils' cultural awareness and enjoyment. There is a good range of activities to enrich learning in school as well as contributions to sports and the arts from neighbouring high schools. Visits to places of interest and residential visits broaden pupils' horizons and promote their personal skills and development well.

The school cares well for all of its pupils. Those who are new to the school, often unable to speak English, are warmly welcomed, settle in very well and quickly make progress. The progress of vulnerable pupils is checked frequently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. Pupils' social and moral guidance is rooted in the strong Christian values of the school and has an excellent impact on their personal development. Arrangements for pupils starting school and transferring to the next stages of education are good. Parents and carers are very happy with the information they receive about their children's progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's energetic and determined leadership and the support from the governing body have successfully guided the school through a period of rapid improvement. The opening up of training opportunities for all staff members, and the clearly shared vision for the school's future which has evolved, have raised expectations and established an ethos of teamwork and achievement. The school is ambitious for all pupils and works hard to ensure that each is given the opportunities and support needed to succeed. Safeguarding procedures are good. Well-developed and robust systems, clearly understood by all staff, are in place and used effectively to ensure pupils' well-being. Community cohesion is promoted well. In addition to strong links with schools locally, the school recognises and celebrates the cultural changes within its community. Activities such as the local Filipino Festival, for example, and pen-pal links with a school in Africa, provide important steps in developing cultural harmony and bringing communities together.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's knowledge and skills are well below the levels typically expected when they enter Nursery. Good leadership and well-managed provision ensures their good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage so that most are working within their early learning goals, and some are more advanced, by the end of Reception. Very good personal, social and emotional development is promoted across all areas of learning so that children become confident and cooperative learners.

There is a good focus on developing early reading and writing skills through teaching of letters and sounds. Teachers focus particularly well on those who speak English as an additional language. In one activity children were invited to retell the story of The Three Little Pigs and were given face masks to help them take on their roles and speak more confidently. Activities are planned well and based on regular assessment and review of children's progress. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. The outdoor classroom is used effectively, whatever the weather. During the inspection children happily practised writing letters in a large tray of foam while others dug in real snow to find penguins and polar bears. However, staff recognise the advantages that a better flow of activities between the two classes would bring to children's learning and development.

Provision for children's welfare is good. They arrive happily and are well cared for by staff. Parents and carers are welcomed into classrooms and are increasingly using the opportunities available to share information with staff and contribute to children's learning and development.

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

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The views expressed by parents and carers about all aspects of the school's provision are overwhelmingly positive. Some recognise, and comment on, the improvements which have taken place. No significant concerns were expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	78	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	77	15	22	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	67	23	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	65	22	32	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	65	24	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	57	29	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	62	25	36	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	58	28	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	61	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	59	22	32	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	48	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	65	22	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	71	20	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Bradford, BD15 7NE

Thank you so much for the warm and kindly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. Several things impressed us. For example, your politeness and good manners, your outstanding behaviour and the way you enjoy your lessons and work hard. You told us that St Matthews is a 'safe and friendly' school and we entirely agree with you. However, we were disappointed that your attendance is low.

Attendance is very important and you should always try very hard to come to school every day.

St Matthew's is a good school. Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start. You all make good progress because your teachers work hard and make your lessons fun. The standards you reach in English and mathematics have improved but there is still room for you to push them higher. All of the grown-ups in school take good care of you so you feel safe and learn well

Your teachers, school governors, parents and carers, and you also, I'm sure, are very proud of you school and want it to be even better. To help that happen I have asked your teachers and governors to do three things. The first is to help you to reach higher standards in mathematics. The second is to make sure that the writing you do in your topic work, and other subjects, is as good as the writing you do in your literacy lessons. Finally, and this is very important, they need to raise your attendance so that it matches that of most other schools in the country. Of course, you must continue to work hard, enjoy school and do all you can to help these improvements to take place.

Good luck to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead inspector

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