

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122764
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340210
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Martin
Headteacher	Miss Wendy Ramshaw
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector spent half of the time observing pupils' learning, visited 6 lessons or parts of lessons and saw all 3 classroom teachers teach. In addition he observed learning in one intervention group where pupils received extra help to support their specific needs. The inspector held meetings with staff, a group of pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and parents. He looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 21 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of action to raise attainment in English and mathematics
- how well the school matches teaching and the curriculum to the wide range of abilities and needs in the three mixed-age classes
- how effectively the school monitors and evaluates school performance, linked to action to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is a very small school which draws pupils from a mixed rural catchment. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are eligible for free schools meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special education needs. The school has gained recognition for its work in several areas, including the national Healthy Schools, Activemark and Investors in People awards.

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

This is a good and improving school. There are outstanding strengths in the school's partnerships with parents and partner institutions in supporting pupils' good learning and progress. Parents strongly agree. As one wrote: 'The school has excellent parent-teacher relationships. You can approach any member of staff at any time if your child is having a problem and it is dealt with straight away.' Because all staff are highly committed to pupils' well-being and personal development, pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong and very evident in the daily life of the school. They behave well and are thoughtful and caring to each other. Pupils willingly accept the many opportunities to take responsibility and they make excellent contributions to the school and community.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and settle quickly into the day-to-day life of the school. They make good progress and enjoy the range of activities on offer. While the indoor teaching areas are resourced well to meet children's needs, the accommodation does not allow direct access to the outdoor area and staff recognise the need to provide more planned opportunities for children to extend their learning outdoors. Pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress throughout the school and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Because of effective action to raise standards in English and mathematics, attainment has risen over the last four years. However, attainment in science is lagging behind that in English and mathematics. Harmonious relationships between adults and pupils are a major strength and underpin successful teaching and learning. The great majority of lessons are well paced with good use being made of teaching assistants and appropriate attention paid to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' personal development progresses well through the school. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and fitness to their health and take full advantage of the additional activities, sports and clubs provided. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is good because, in addition to their excellent attendance and good progress in the development of basic skills, they acquire good team-working skills and demonstrate an increasing capacity to work independently.

The headteacher provides highly effective and well focused leadership. Successful teamwork between staff and governors underpin the school's improvement since the time of the last inspection. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified because the school has effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. These give the school good capacity for continued improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in science by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Enhance provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by extending the use of the outdoor area to support the development of children's skills across all areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the school with skills and understanding that vary considerably from year to year. They range from lower than expected to consistent with those expected for their age. All groups of pupils achieve good outcomes. Although year groups of pupils are small and data need to be viewed with caution the general rising trend in the Year 6 over recent years reflects the successful action taken to tackle weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Although a dip in the 2009 test results interrupted this year-on-year rise, classroom observations show that most of the current Year 6 are already working within or beyond the levels expected of 11-year-olds in English, and mathematics. Standards pupils reach in science are below those in English and mathematics, largely because of weaknesses in scientific enquiry. Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) are very good, and the quality of the art work around the school is impressive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are provided with effective support.

Pupils' love of school is clearly reflected in their good behaviour and regular attendance, which is much better than found nationally. They are keen to take on the many responsibilities available to them and the 'play and learning' (PAL) groups provide useful opportunities for pupils to express their views. Excellent relationships are a feature of all aspects of school life. Examples of this include the way that all pupils socialise at lunchtimes when Reception children are looked after by older pupils and happily included in the conversations on their mixed-age lunch tables. Observations of vulnerable pupils, such as those with learning or social and emotional difficulties, show that they are exceptionally well cared for. They are helped to develop independence and to play a full part in the life of the school. Pupils report that instances of bullying are extremely rare. They say that they fully trust the adults in the school and know that someone will help them if the need arises.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A common feature of all lessons is good class management. This is based on strong relationships between adults and pupils, and promotes consistently good behaviour. Teachers encourage pupils to talk to a partner about their ideas and pupils enthusiastically exchange their views before sharing them with the rest of the class. Occasionally, introductions and explanations are overlong and learning slows in consequence. Teaching assistants are used effectively to give individual support where necessary. The ongoing assessment of pupils' learning is very effective and learning activities are generally well matched to pupils' ability to learn. Teachers know precisely how well their pupils are doing and explain to pupils exactly what they need to learn next. This is supported by the exemplary written guidance given to pupils on improvement through the marking of their work.

The school offers a good curriculum that is well matched to the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. There is a strong focus on acquiring basic skills in literacy and ICT, balanced with other subjects. The curriculum is increasingly planned around topics that make meaningful links between subjects. This is particularly strong in the way pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are developed in all subjects. Staff recognise that there is a need to develop the science curriculum to match the good provision in other areas. Pupils benefit from a well-planned range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and the arts. These are well attended. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity of experiencing residential visits. These enhance the development of their confidence and self-esteem. The quality of care, guidance and support is a major strength, and there are many striking examples of the way the school helps pupils to

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overcome significant barriers to their learning. Excellent attention is given to supporting pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to promoting their well-being.

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 school's improvement owes much to the clarity of vision of the headteacher. With the full support of all staff and an effective governing body, she is at the heart of a school in which pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. Underpinning the successful action taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection is the effective monitoring of the work of the school and, in particular, the effective use of pupils' performance information to set targets and to track each pupil's progress. Leadership of individual subject areas is in a stage of development. Subject coordinators take their responsibilities very seriously. They recognise where there are gaps in their expertise and are keen to draw on best practice to develop their roles. Staff and governors provide excellent standards of care and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare, safety and security, including rigorous checks on all adults who work in the school. Staff work exceptionally well with outside agencies, families and carers to support pupils' progress. Pupils are well informed on many issues that help to promote community cohesion. The school is in the process of developing community cohesion further by extending links with schools in different social contexts. The school is increasingly successful in ensuring that all forms of inequality are tackled and in developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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	
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 skills when they enter the Reception Year vary significantly according to the nature and the very small size of each group. They make a good start to their education. The level of commitment and care shown by all school staff is evident in the way that children settle into the school so well and immediately begin to learn. This is particularly true of how well they mix with the older children in this class of four- to seven-year-olds. They make good progress because all adults enable children to build strong, positive relationships. Good arrangements exist to ensure the children's safety, health and well-being, and excellent links are established with parents from the outset. Although the classroom provides a stimulating learning environment and resources are used well, the building does not allow children to move freely between indoor and outdoor learning areas. As a result it is necessary to plan use of the outdoors into children's learning activities. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is firmly rooted in practical activities that appeal to children. Good leadership ensures that an appropriate range of stimulating activities are well matched to children's needs and development, and there is a good balance between activities that children choose for themselves and those directed by adults. Children's progress is assessed and recorded regularly, and the information used particularly effectively to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

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 majority of parents and carers returned questionnaires and are very happy with the school. All 13 questionnaire statements were unanimously approved or strongly approved. Parents and carers feel that their children greatly enjoy school, that they are

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safe and that they make good progress in learning. They believe that the school is well managed and that teaching is good. Typical of the comments received was 'We are very happy with every aspect of this school, it's friendly staff and children are always a pleasure'. Inspection findings firmly endorse parents' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthew's CofE 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 inspector received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 49 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	76	5	24	0	0	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)	16	76	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	76	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	95	1	5	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.



22 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Normanton-on-Trent, NG23 6RW

Following my visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you what I found. First I would like to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and making my visit one that I will remember for a long time. I have told your teachers how you were all really helpful and polite, and it was good to hear how much you enjoy school.

I agree with you and your parents that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. This is seen in the good progress that you make as you grow older and move through the school. Your good behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you are doing well, particularly in English and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better by strengthening your work in science.

There is a really friendly and positive atmosphere in the school and you are looked after exceptionally well. Children in Reception Year are welcomed into a friendly learning environment. We have asked Reception staff to provide more opportunities for the children to practise and develop their skills in the outdoor area. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences.

Your headteacher leads the school well and, together with staff and governors, makes sure that you make the most of your time at St Matthews. We know you will help by continuing to work as hard as you can in lessons and by always trying do your best. We hope you all continue to enjoy being at school.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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