

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124783
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	340653
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Pierce
Headteacher	Sue Todd
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time observing learning in 18 lessons. All 16 teachers were observed and meetings were held with pupils, representative governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, assessment data, a range of school records and policies. They analysed the responses from 112 parents' questionnaires.

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

- the standards attained and progress made across the school with particular reference to writing
- how well teachers use assessment to meet the needs of all groups of pupils when planning lessons
- how effectively leaders and managers provide direction and manage change
- the outcomes and the quality of provision indoors and outside for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St Matthew's is a large primary school with high levels of pupil mobility. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is high, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. There are broadly average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend Reception classes. The headteacher has been in post for just under a year. While the deputy headteacher is seconded to another post, two acting deputies have been appointed from within the school. The school has been awarded the Healthy School, Eco School (bronze) and Active Mark awards.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Matthew's provides a satisfactory quality of education. Some aspects of pupils' outcomes, particularly those where they learn to think of and care for others and take responsibility for their actions, are outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their readiness to take on responsibility within the school community, and their involvement in decision making are all outstanding. For example, pupils readily express well-considered views and happily volunteer to run charitable events such as the school fete.

Children have a good start to school in Reception. They enter with skills that are below average and make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, their skills are at levels expected for their age. However, pupils' progress throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are average for pupils' age, and progress in writing is particularly variable across the school. The main reason for this is that too much teaching is no better than satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and some lessons are good which result in pupils making good gains in their learning. However, this is not always the case. Too often, lessons are planned which do not meet the needs of all pupils in the class precisely enough. While pupils have specific targets to build up their skills, not all teachers refer to these with sufficient regularity when marking work. Nevertheless, teachers use a great deal of thought when planning lessons to ensure that they are interesting and capture the pupils' imagination. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and a particular feature of this is the mutual respect between pupils and staff. The curriculum is good and supplemented by a wide range of extra activities in which pupils take part enthusiastically. These benefit their personal development greatly.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. Pupils from all groups, including those in challenging circumstances, benefit from well-planned and consistent systems that support their well-being effectively. The headteacher, supported by the deputies and governors, is committed to raising standards. Recent work has already had a significant impact in improving all stakeholders' understanding of the importance of personal development and links with the local and wider community. Lines of responsibility for distributing leadership and management through the school are being effectively established. As yet, however, all staff are not regularly and systematically involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work, and so the school self-evaluation process and school improvement are both satisfactory overall. However, the senior leaders and managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governance is satisfactory as governors are insufficiently involved in first-hand monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. These factors,

together with satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and well-focused plans for the future indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards overall and improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that work is always set at precisely the right level for all pupils in the class, so that it follows on smoothly from what each pupil has already learned
 - ensure that teachers' marking and feedback is more consistently focused on acknowledging the progress pupils have made towards the specific targets they have been set.
- Ensure that the ambitious vision for improvement of senior staff is secured by:
 - involving all staff and governors in regular and robust monitoring of all aspects of the school's work
 - involving teachers and other members of the school community in the regular review of the school's progress towards its targets and the adjustments that need to be made from time to time.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Observation of work in books and of pupils' learning in lessons confirms their satisfactory academic progress throughout the school. Although progress in writing is satisfactory, it is more inconsistent than progress in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers. For all pupils, progress in science is better than in other subjects although standards attained are average overall.

Staff genuinely care about their pupils. Relationships are good between adults and pupils, which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to their lessons. They enjoy school and most attend regularly. However the persistent absence of a very small minority results in overall attendance being average. Pupils say that they know who to go to if they need any help. They have a good understanding about healthy eating and how to keep fit and mostly put this knowledge into practice. The range of physical and creative activities during and after school is popular with pupils. They show a great deal of interest in the world around them, their place within it and their relationships with others. Pupils' knowledge and awareness of local issues is extremely good. They work exceptionally well together in the school and local community. Their excellent behaviour is well regarded in the locality. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding and, as a result, they show great willingness to reflect on their experiences. They demonstrate real respect for the feelings of others, for example showing care and compassion for friends who are upset. Pupils are very thoughtful and their levels of tolerance and

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consideration for the beliefs and views of others are exceptional.

In view of pupils' satisfactory numeracy and literacy skills and developing responsibility for their learning, they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education and future lives and well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Staff have high expectations of good behaviour. Routines are very well established which encourage a strong work ethic. Pupils settle quickly, are eager to get on with their tasks and pay attention to what they are told. Teachers have no difficulty in engaging pupils in their lessons because they are all exceptionally well behaved, have outstanding attitudes and are enthusiastic about learning. Teachers plan their lessons well to interest pupils and to grip their imagination. All staff know the pupils well and many lessons are planned with pupils' exact needs in mind. However, this is not always the case. Not all lessons take enough regard of previous assessment information to plan the precise next steps for each pupil to take. Sometimes teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high or, in some cases, they are too challenging. In such lessons, pupils do not make the

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

progress of which they are capable. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. It is often good and tells pupils clearly how successful they have been in moving towards their individual targets and what they should do next to improve their skills. However, some marking is too brief and expects too little, while at other times too many points for improvement are raised.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides stimulating learning opportunities. The underlying strength is the way in which the school responds to the changing needs of the local community. The school has very successfully adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of its ethnically diverse pupil group. Good support is provided for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English to help them extend their vocabulary and develop their confidence. There is a clear focus on developing essential key skills within a highly supportive environment. This emphasis is coupled with the need to give rich new experiences and broaden pupils' horizons and understanding. There is a good range of enrichment activities for all pupils, including visits, visitors, and special events. These are beneficial in encouraging social skills and emotional development.

Good arrangements provide support and care for pupils and help them develop and learn. Parents and carers receive good quality and timely advice on how best to support their children's learning. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to effectively meet the needs of pupils and their families. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the care and support pupils receive. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those in challenging circumstances, are supported well. The range of support programmes, and some skilled work by teaching assistants, helps these identified pupils make progress in line with their peers. A range of strategies are successfully used to encourage and reward good school attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 new headteacher has established very good working relationships with the two acting deputy headteachers and they have made clear plans to address the identified areas of weakness. The senior managers are committed to driving improvement forward in the school and to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is a comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress, which is used well to group them

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

for English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6. However this data is not used in a consistently effective way by all staff when planning lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leadership team are rigorous and accurate, and underpin suitable strategies for improvement.

Governors visit the school regularly. The headteacher keeps them well informed of developments and they hold the school to account for pupils' outcomes adequately. Governors take the pupils' welfare very seriously. All statutory safeguarding requirements are in place and safeguarding is effective. Governors are highly committed to the school and are very supportive. However, they are over-reliant on the headteacher to provide them with evaluations of different aspects of school and the basic draft of school development planning which limits their first-hand contribution. Governors manage the budget well and there are no major shortcomings in the management or use of resources.

The school takes full account of parents' and carers' views and has made good progress in improving communication and engaging them in their children's learning. For example, there is a suggestion box in the lobby and the headteacher is regularly on the playground in the mornings. Significant numbers of parents and carers regularly attend meetings and workshops to develop their skills and learn how to support their children's learning.

The contribution to community cohesion is addressed well within and around the school and further afield. Pupils from many different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. Discrimination is tackled exceedingly effectively and the school works as a homogenous community. However the analysis of the impact of these excellent links on the school's work is at an early stage.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children settle happily into the Reception classes and make a good start to their education. Standards on entry are below those expected overall. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills that are average for their age. Children quickly become confident about class routines which encourage them to be independent. Adults are very supportive and encouraging. Children are motivated by the good use of praise for their efforts and share and engage well with their peers. They are looked after with great care. There are positive relationships with parents who are well informed about what their child will experience and learn through weekly newsletters and notice boards. Parents and carers are encouraged to share their children's out of school successes by putting them up on the 'wow' board. By the end of the Reception year, most children reach standards that are expected for their age. Their personal, social and physical development are strengths. Transition arrangements from Reception to Year 1 are good and this helps to ensure that children settle quickly.

Teaching is good. Adults make regular observations of what children can do and planning takes good account of their interests and needs. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Children enjoy selecting their own activities and are given opportunities to make their own choices across the areas of learning. However, sometimes these activities do not provide enough challenge for all children. Adults encourage children to develop their vocabulary, for example, by joining in with their role-play in the hospital corner. Adults work effectively as a team, and are well led by the coordinator. The school recognises that the outdoor learning environment needs improvement and has begun to address this.

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

Parents and carers are generally very appreciative of the school and its work. Many take advantage of the opportunity to come into school and work with their children or undertake training. A significant minority expressed the view that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. However, during the inspection behaviour was exemplary. Pupils said they felt safe and that they were confident anyone who

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

misbehaved would be dealt with fairly so that it did not happen again. In all other respects, the inspection findings supported the 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 Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 351 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	54	49	44	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	50	50	45	4	4	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	54	40	36	8	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	46	53	47	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	51	48	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	39	56	50	10	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	44	58	52	3	3	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)	31	28	63	56	5	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	37	58	52	12	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	33	51	46	17	15	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	34	55	49	13	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	46	46	41	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	49	43	38	12	11	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.

17–18 March 2010

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.



19 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich, IP1 2AX

Thank you for making us so welcome and for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. I want to thank all of you for giving up time to talk to us. St Matthew's is a satisfactory school and it has a number of outstanding features. One of them is your excellent behaviour and another is the way you help each other and take responsibility, such as looking after each other. You have a really good range of clubs and enjoy a lot of exciting and interesting things to do. You do a lot for your school and local community. The youngest children, in Reception, make good progress and have a good start to their school life.

Your teachers have been working hard with you, your parents and the governors to make your school even better. The headteacher and staff are now going to help you make more progress in your writing. I have asked teachers to tell you more clearly what you need to do next when you hand in work. I have also asked them to make sure that all teachers and governors help the headteacher and staff to know exactly how well the school is improving. They are now all going to help to check and review how things are going.

You can all do your bit by making sure that you carry on working as hard as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector

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