

St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116899
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	348906
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Buxton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Morecroft
Headteacher	Claire Davies
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
School address	Cromwell Road Malvern Link Worcestershire
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by eight teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, the former Chair and the newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils, a small number of parents, and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including progress and attendance data, policy documents and reports.

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

- the effectiveness of actions taken to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards
- the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and the impact on pupils' development
- the success of leaders' actions to raise pupils' attendance levels.

Information about the school

This school is slightly smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and only a very few are learning English as an additional language. About a quarter of pupils have special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, which is slightly higher than average. St Matthias has Healthy Schools status. When the school was inspected in January 2009, it was judged to require special measures. Since then, there have been a number of changes including the appointment of a new headteacher and assistant headteacher. Subsequently, the school was visited by Ofsted on four occasions.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. This is because St Matthias is a rapidly improving school. There is a strong momentum of change and staff morale is high. The headteacher has galvanised the staff into a strong team focused on raising standards. Working together they have improved the quality of teaching across the school, strengthened the use of assessment data, improved standards of pupil behaviour and, importantly, raised the standards pupils achieve so that they now better capitalise on the good start they get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Year 6 results in 2009 were significantly below average in mathematics and lower than average in English and science. This year's picture is much more positive. Standards have risen and the underachievement of previous years is quickly being eradicated. Pupils' attainment is now broadly average. This improvement is replicated across the school, with pupils in all year groups making better progress and attaining higher standards than previously. However, despite these overall improvements, standards in writing and mathematics have not risen as quickly as in reading and, although the rate at which boys make progress has improved, it is not as fast as that of the girls.

Pupils' higher standards are the result of the school's successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, there are many more good lessons being taught than was the case, earlier in the year. Teachers are making clear their expectations but recognise that more could be done to ensure pupils know exactly what is expected of them. There is much greater emphasis on planning lessons that focus on pupils' interests and experiences and providing practical opportunities for pupils to learn. Pupils enjoy this approach to learning and are keen to get involved. As a result, teachers are planning to revise the curriculum and increase the opportunities for pupils to use their skills practically.

The changes introduced to improve the school's effectiveness have brought success and a confidence that more can be achieved. They show the school's good capacity for continued improvement. The school's leaders already have clear ideas for further development, but these have not been shared more widely and the school's improvement plan is still in the early stages of construction.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment further, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that

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by the end of Year 6 it exceeds the national average by:

- raising teachers' expectations of all pupils
- increasing the rate at which boys make progress.
- Refine the curriculum to provide greater opportunities for pupils to apply their transferable skills to practical situations.
- Involve all partners in developing the school's improvement plan and identify quantifiable success criteria that focus sharply on improving pupils' outcomes.
- 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**

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are clearly evident in lessons. Behaviour is good and pupils listen carefully to instructions. The quality and presentation of pupils' work are good. Pupils enjoy school and are clearly motivated to do well. Attendance levels, although average, have improved over the year and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. Pupils are making good progress in lessons, learning new skills and improving their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils learned quickly how to use their prior knowledge of measuring the length and width of rectangles to calculate the area of increasingly complex compound shapes. These improvements have resulted in pupils making faster rate of progress this year than previously and making up ground. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is satisfactory overall and broadly in line with national expectations. However, there is variation across the school, with girls in some classes making better progress than boys and reaching slightly higher standards. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar rates of progress to other pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and fairly. They get on well together and relationships are good across the school. Pupils were particularly enthused by the opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles through participating in the community Malvern in Bloom project. They talk excitedly about their experience of growing vegetables and herbs, improving the school grounds by building a new pond and the importance of recycling. The pupils' hard work resulted in the school being awarded Healthy Schools status in June 2010.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are used very effectively to develop pupils' awareness of emotions and feelings. For instance, a Year 3 and 4 assembly focused on the importance of friendship, with pupils listening with rapt attention to each other as they discussed their friends' special qualities. It ended with a pupil reading their poem that cleverly linked everyday friendship with the school's pen friends in Tanzania. Pupils are also developing a good awareness of cultural identity. Not only are they increasingly familiar with different world religions and their beliefs, but pupils enjoy learning about British culture and traditions through first hand experience of Maypole dancing and their excellent hand-bell performance of Bobby

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Shafto.

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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved considerably over the past year and is now good. Teachers are increasingly using their assessments of pupils' prior learning to plan and deliver lessons that address misconceptions and extend pupils' understanding. By also taking account of pupils' interests, lessons are seen as fun and pupils enjoy the experience. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high, ensuring that time is used very effectively to achieve the lesson's objectives. Relationships are strong and pupils respond quickly and sensibly to instructions. Teachers are growing in confidence with their use of information and communication technology (ICT) to present information and demonstrate ideas and strategies. A particularly strong feature is the use of visualisers, which project images onto a screen. Teachers often use them to highlight examples of pupils' work and to promote discussion through the use individual and paired assessment. In younger classes, children used the technology to look in detail at objects. For example, in the Reception class, children used it to project images of fruit

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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so that they could look closely at the detail in preparation for drawing. Support staff contribute well to the good quality of teaching. They are informed well about their role in the lesson and provide focused support for individual and groups of pupils.

The quality of teachers' marking continues to improve. Their comments make clear how pupils' work could be developed and pupils often reply to teachers' questions with further explanation as to their thinking.

The curriculum is being increasingly enhanced through making greater use of links between subjects and the involvement of visitors and off-site visits, such as the Year 2 involvement in the Malvern writing project. This particular initiative involved the pupils in joining with other schools to celebrate their work at the local library. As a result of the very positive responses from both pupils and parents, the school is now looking for further opportunities to extend this style of learning.

The school cares well for its pupils. Efforts to improve pupils' attendance have proved successful. The involvement of external agencies provides additional support and guidance as needed. The use of intervention strategies has helped those pupils needing additional help to make the progress expected. The school also pays close attention to its most vulnerable pupils. The impact of the school's work is seen through pupils' positive attitudes to school and the parents' growing confidence that the school has, as a parent put it, 'Turned a corner'.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders have worked together successfully to bring about the rapid improvements in the school and in pupils' achievement. The headteacher provides good leadership that has been influential in promoting the school's development. She has created a strong team spirit and sense of purpose, focused on transforming the school. She has been very successful having brought the school out of a category of concern and, at the same time, overseeing a major building project that will open in September 2010.

Supported by the local authority, the school has developed its capability to monitor and evaluate the impact of its work on pupils' outcomes. The focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning has proved successful. Senior leaders are growing in confidence as they make judgements that are increasingly accurate. They have also implemented other strategies, such as regular opportunities to monitor the quality and level of pupils'

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work, to identify what needs to improve. As part of their goal of strengthening the school's leadership further, the governing body has approved plans to introduce a new staffing structure for the start of the autumn term.

The governing body is playing an increasingly active role in the school's development. It has ensured that all the statutory responsibilities are met and it is taking greater ownership for shaping the school's future. Over the last year, it has taken greater responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are in place and working as expected. It has prepared a strategy that sets out how the school can play its role promoting community cohesion. Although this plan is at an early stage of implementation, the governing body's analysis of the school's relationship within the community shows a growing awareness of how the school can contribute to promoting cohesion between all sectors of society. To promote equality of opportunity the school is taking greater account of information about the performance of different groups of pupils. The analysis of attainment data is helping to identify where differences exist, such as the fact that, in some year groups, boys are making slower progress than girls. The school's leaders have worked hard to promote productive links with parents and carers. There are regular communications about events and changes taking place at the school. Parents and carers are surveyed annually to ascertain their views about the effectiveness and impact of the school's work. The information gathered is used to inform the school's decision-making process. The regular and informative reports about pupils' progress, and the opportunities for parents and carers to meet with staff, help to ensure that they are informed and enabled to support their children's learning and development.

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	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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage team work closely with parents and carers to ensure children settle quickly in to school routines. When starting in the Nursery, children's skills and experiences are often below those expected. The learning provision is planned and organised carefully to provide a stimulating and lively environment. A wide variety of activities ensure that all children benefit from well-structured learning programmes. Children flow freely between the indoor and outdoor areas, enabling them to benefit from the rich and well planned outdoor space. During the inspection, children were observed using the role play garage area to dispense 'fuel' and 'service cars' as they developed their number skills. Teachers make good use of a vast array of resources to stimulate children's engagement. ICT is used particularly well by older children to support their development. Play is used as an important focus for learning and the children enjoy sharing resources and developing social skills. All children feel safe and well supported. Good attention is given to helping them learn about eating healthy food and the importance of regular exercise as part of developing a healthy lifestyle.

The leadership monitor and record the children's development carefully. Their attention to detail ensures that they have a clear understanding of children's progress and where further work is needed. Analysis of attainment data is used to identify areas for further development. This responsive tracking of children's development enables them to make good progress, ensuring that they are well prepared for the start of Key Stage 1.

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

Although no questionnaires were circulated to parents and carers during this inspection, the school provided an analysis of its most recent parental survey, carried out in April 2010. Of those parents who responded, a very large majority said that their child enjoyed being at the school and had made good progress. A small minority said that behaviour was a problem and that bullying existed. These concerns were investigated fully during the inspection by observing pupils at break times and by talking with pupils and staff. Pupils made it very clear that bullying was not a problem because supervision levels were good and the Year 5 pupils, acting as play pals, helped pupils to play together sensibly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthias CofE Primary School, Malvern, WR14 1NA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. You may remember that we spent a lot of time in your classrooms to see what you were learning. We also looked at your work books and talked with some of you to find out what you thought about being at St Matthias. Many of you told us how proud you are of your school. You also told us that you are pleased with the changes that have taken place and that the school has improved. We agree with you that the school is much better now than it was at this time last year. We judge it to be satisfactory and improving rapidly.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

Children joining the Early Years Foundation classes settle quickly into the school's routines.

You feel safe and well cared for.

You get on well together and enjoy the friendships you have developed.

You enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school.

Teaching is good.

You are making more progress now than was the case last year.

You like practical activities in lessons, because they are fun and help you to learn.

To help the school improve we have suggested the following ways it could do even better.

We have asked the teachers to help you reach higher levels in writing and, mathematics.

We have suggested that the curriculum should be made even better by providing you with greater opportunities to use your skills in practical situations.

We have asked the leaders to put together a plan to improve the school so that you will make faster progress every year.

We have taken away many good memories of your school and hope that you achieve all your ambitions that you told us about.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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