

St Matthew's CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112308
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	348945
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Angela Milner 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Baxter
Headteacher	Mrs Lindsey Martin
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
School address	Westnewton Wigton Cumbria CA7 3NT
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. When St Matthew's was inspected in January 2009 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an adequate standard of education and the person's responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school termly to check and report on its progress. This inspection was the fourth monitoring visit. During the course of the visit, the inspector judged that the school was at least satisfactory in all areas and also judged that leaders were demonstrating capacity to secure further improvement. As a result, the visit was deemed to be a section 5 inspection.

The inspector visited 10 lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, scrutinised documents and pupils' work. A joint observation of a lesson was conducted with the acting headteacher. The inspector met with pupils, the acting headteacher, other members of staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Discussions were also held with the National Leader of Education from the partnership support school and representatives of the local authority. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work in lessons and around the school were also observed. There were no Ofsted questionnaires for parents and carers as this was a scheduled monitoring visit. The school's own surveys provided information on parental views of the school.

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

- pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science
- the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning
- the use of target-setting, marking and tracking documentation
- the curriculum and how well it meets the needs and interests of pupils
- the capacity of leadership and management at all levels to sustain improvements made since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

There are currently 23 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, but a lower proportion than is typical have a statement of special educational needs. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. A lower proportion of pupils than is usual is known to be eligible for free school meals.

The acting headteacher and higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) were seconded from the partnership support school in September 2009. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed to a full-time post in Key Stage 2. From September 2010, under a partnership agreement, the National Leader in Education from the partnership support school will become the executive head. A teacher from the school will act as assistant headteacher and pupils will be taught by two teachers and two teaching assistants.

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

3

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.

St Matthew's C of E School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Leaders and managers are now demonstrating satisfactory capacity to make further improvements and there is evidence that this capacity is increasing because of the focused drive for improvement and the school's careful leadership and management of teaching and learning. Increased capacity can also be seen in the improvements to the curriculum and in the accurate use of robust assessment and tracking systems. These have been used to identify underachievement and to plan structured activities that are better matched to pupils' learning needs and, as a consequence, to raise attainment. The acting headteacher has been instrumental in evaluating the school accurately and tackling weaknesses. She has prioritised actions and with the support of colleagues, from the support school and the local authority, taken the school forward. The learning environment has been enhanced to create a positive and purposeful climate for learning. A 'can do' culture, based on mutual trust and respect has been established throughout the school. Very positive relationships exist between all adults and pupils. Expectations have been raised and staff have worked collaboratively to share best practice, undertake staff development and ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently satisfactory and increasingly good. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have been correctly identified and appropriate support has ensured that they now make satisfactory progress in line with other pupils. Good care, guidance and very effective classroom support from teachers and teaching assistants support the needs of all pupils well. As a result, all pupils now make at least satisfactory progress.

Attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has risen and is broadly average. Leaders and managers are striving to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in both classes. They are aware that teachers and teaching assistants need to continue to share best practice and consistently provide activities which meet the precise needs of pupils, enabling them to reach their potential. Pupils' attainment in other subjects is still, however, held back by the legacy of under-achievement in the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). There is also scope to involve parents and carers more in supporting pupils' learning at home. For example, by encouraging more of them to regularly read with their children and help them with homework tasks. Although the school has rightly focused on improving provision in English, mathematics and science, enhancements have been made to the curriculum to ensure that it is now satisfactory. Pupils enjoy a more interesting and balanced curriculum which allows them

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to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of a broader range of subjects and of cultural diversity. It includes a number of useful opportunities to meet visitors in school and engage in interesting visits outside school. Pupils enjoy a variety of practical activities designed to make learning meaningful and fun. They are particularly appreciative of the increased number of extra-curricular activities including sport, cookery and gardening.

The quality of leadership and management has strengthened. The governing body now holds the school to account and staff and governors have a better understanding of data. Robust assessment in English and mathematics and the introduction of detailed tracking systems have enabled the school to effectively monitor pupils' progress and attainment and to identify and take action to begin to eradicate the legacy of underachievement. Monitoring in other subjects is less advanced. More effective use has been made of target setting to engage pupils in their own learning. Plans for improvement have been regularly monitored and led to systematic improvements to the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes. Pupils demonstrate more positive attitudes to learning and good levels of behaviour and attendance in addition to the improvements to their attainment and progress. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and say they feel safe and well cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding age-related expectations, by:
 - sharing best practice in teaching and learning to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - ensuring that teachers consistently make use of assessments in all subjects to provide activities which meet the precise needs of pupils and enable them to reach their potential
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across a range of subjects
 - involving parents and carers in supporting their children's learning by regularly reading with their children and helping them with homework tasks.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Outcomes for all groups of learners have improved significantly since the school was placed in special measures. This is due to improvements in the quality of teaching; the provision of a more varied curriculum and the use of detailed tracking systems which enable pupils' progress to be accurately measured. Assessment information is now used effectively by staff to plan appropriate learning activities. Targeted group work is being

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used well to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, a number of specific intervention programmes have been used to successfully accelerate individual pupils' basic skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Pupils' overall progress has improved significantly. All pupils now make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are now accurately identified and appropriately supported.

Raising attainment strategies are proving effective in all three core subjects. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, work in pupils' books and an analysis of school data, indicates that attainment is broadly average and the pattern of rising attainment will be reflected by Year 6 pupils in 2010. The school's data indicates that it will meet its challenging targets in 2010. The focus on reading, writing and mathematics and on a higher profile for investigative activities in science has shown great benefits but the school knows more work is needed to ensure that all pupils continue to reach or exceed national age-related expectations.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They say that 'learning is fun.' Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive relationships with staff, each other and work and play well together. Pupils have been actively involved in devising and reviewing the school's code of conduct. A number of pupils now act as play leaders around the school. There is a strong sense of community within the school. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in a range of local community activities and raise money for a number of charities. They demonstrate a satisfactory level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance remains above the national average and pupils display good working habits and positive attitudes to learning. However, the legacy of low levels of pupils' basic skills means that pupils' economic well-being remains only satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and say they feel safe, supported and well cared for by all of the adults in school.

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

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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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning has improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. Staff development and effective team teaching has enhanced teachers' and teaching assistants' assessment skills and they now use these skills to constantly check on pupils' learning. They successfully identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and generally ensure work is appropriately planned to offer the necessary support and challenge. Pupils are constantly regrouped to ensure the needs of different age groups within the two classes are met. In all lessons where teaching is good or better, pupils make good progress in their learning. Inconsistencies in the pace and match of some lessons means it remains satisfactory overall. This is confirmed by the school's and the local authority's own monitoring. The school is aware of what needs to continue to be consistently done if attainment is to reach or exceed national age-related expectations for all pupils. Pupils know their learning targets. Regular marking is undertaken and detailed feedback is provided to pupils on what they have learned and what they need to do to improve.

Pupils are more interested in, and enthused by the broader curriculum provided. They have responded positively to the opportunities to work collaboratively and increasingly independently as well as to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across a range of subjects. The school now provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is increasingly meeting the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and helping them to gain a broader understanding of diversity in British society. Significant improvements have been made to the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum. A detailed review of the curriculum has taken place and a four-year cycle of appropriate subject focused topics has been developed for delivery across both classes from September 2010.

The school provides good care, guidance and support in the school. It has worked effectively to support more vulnerable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have well constructed education plans that help them to learn at an appropriate level and receive necessary support. Arrangements to support pupils' transitions into and out of the school in the Reception Year and Year 6 are good and parents and carers are supportive of the school. There is, however, scope to involve parents and carers more in supporting pupils' learning at home.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
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?

Effective monitoring and self-evaluation mean the school now accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses and knows where its priorities for action lie. Consequently, leadership and management at all levels, including that of the governing body has strengthened. Governors ensure that their statutory duties are met and are increasingly challenging as well as supporting the work of the school. Leaders and managers have correctly focused on the most important weaknesses and have improved the quality of teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management from inadequate to satisfactory and the quality of care, guidance and support from inadequate to good. These significant steps forward have been made by fostering a culture of high expectations, team work and working to a common purpose. As a result, staff have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their age phases and within their areas of curricular responsibility and are determined to work together to improve the school further.

Effective arrangements are in place for the school's engagement with parents and carers. Parents and carers express confidence in the school, the positive impact recent changes have had on their children's attitudes and progress and the arrangements in place for its future. The school makes effective use of partnerships to promote learning and well-being through the local small schools' cluster and the local sports partnership. These partnerships support the school and the National Leader of Education, together with the local authority, have provided invaluable support and guidance to the school and will continue to do so in a less intensive way under the new partnership arrangements in place from September 2010.

Well documented arrangements are in place to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The school meets all the requirements for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment and has clear policies and procedures in relation to equality and discrimination. The school has satisfactory plans in place to promote community cohesion.

Improvements made to the areas of weakness since the last report and to pupils' outcomes demonstrate the school has the capacity to sustain improvement and that it provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills and abilities which are either in line with or below those expected for their age. The progress they make in their learning and development is at least satisfactory and for some children it is good. Children are happy, well cared for and enjoy what they are doing. There are good relationships between the children and the adults who care for them. The outdoor environment has been improved since the last inspection and effective use is made of this area for adult-led activities with the teaching assistant. Work is planned to ensure it covers all of the required areas of learning and effective assessments are made of the children's development and learning. There are currently limited opportunities for children to work independently and initiate their own play-related learning both indoors and out. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers were invited to provide comments to a school questionnaire earlier in the summer term. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and many commented on how safe their children felt at school.

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 this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's CE Primary School, Cumbria, CA7 3NT

Congratulations! Your school no longer requires special measures. It is much improved and now provides you with a satisfactory education. The school takes good care of you and you get the help and support you need to help you to learn. This is because teaching is better than when inspectors came to the school in January 2009. Well done to Mrs Martin and your teachers and teaching assistants too! Getting a school out of special measures takes a great deal of hard work. You are all now making better progress in English, mathematics and science and reaching the standards that other pupils in other schools are reaching. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have made learning more interesting and involved you more in your own learning.

As you know, I have been visiting St Matthew's over the last four terms to assess the progress it is making. Mrs Martin, the staff and governors know what needs to be done to continually improve your school and are working very hard to make it even better, with less help from other schools and the local authority.

To help your school become even better I have asked governors and staff to continue to ensure you do as well as you can in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests. I agreed with the school that this should be done by ensuring that teachers share what they do well with each other and by teachers checking more carefully on how well you are learning to ensure you do as well as you can. I have also asked the teachers to give you plenty of opportunities to practise your improving literacy, numeracy and ICT skills when you are studying other subjects and for your parents and carers to get more involved in reading with you and helping you with homework tasks.

You should be very proud of the part you have played in helping to improve your school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Milner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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