

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119505
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	358569
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

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	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edwin Sowerbutts
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Smith
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons which were taught by 10 teachers and held meetings with staff; groups of pupils; seven members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents and procedures including the school's development plan; assessment data; pupils' work; and school policies. Inspectors took into account the views of parents expressed in the 145 returned questionnaires and the views of staff and pupils when they met them and read their questionnaire responses.

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

- The achievement of different groups of pupils, particularly White British pupils.
- The quality of teachers' lesson-planning to determine whether each group of pupils is supported and challenged.
- The quality and effectiveness of the school's community cohesion policies to determine the quality of pupils' cultural development.

Information about the school

St Matthew's is a good school. The majority of its features are outstanding. Pupils make outstanding progress from their generally low starting points because of good teaching, and excellent care, guidance and support. Adults provide personalised teaching to ensure each pupil builds on his/her skills and understanding. Adults work successfully to break down any barriers to pupils' learning. As a result, all groups of pupils attain above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils' standards in speaking, however, are not as high as they could be, because some opportunities are lost to extend pupils' vocabulary. In some lessons, pupils give only one-word answers and adults miss chances to make pupils explain their thinking, ideas and reasoning. Some of the activities in lessons constrain and hinder pupils, for example they are sometimes asked to complete low-level worksheets instead of problem-solving or purposeful activities. This is why teaching is good, rather than outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well. The gap between their attainment and their peers narrows rapidly because of good teaching and targeted, tailor-made support.

Pupils behave impeccably and this creates an excellent environment for learning to take place. In each class there is an atmosphere of willingness and eagerness to learn. Pupils' excellent behaviour has a positive impact on their feelings of safety. All groups and heritages of pupils were sure they felt very safe. It was impressive how pupils with different language backgrounds, genders, ages and/or faiths mixed and socialised together. All groups of pupils commented that bullying including name-calling and homophobia did not exist at St Matthew's and this was because of the atmosphere of respect for each other and celebration of people's differences. Pupils have an excellent understanding of a range of faiths, ethnicities and cultures. This is because senior leaders work exceptionally well with partners such as the church; several mosques and local special, community and high schools. As a consequence, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' attendance, taking into account days lost because of religious observance, is below the national average. One of the major reasons for this is the amount of extended stays abroad.

Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in pupils' achievement, the quality of lessons and the effectiveness and the quality of the curriculum. Almost every feature of the school has improved. This track record is the result of impressive leadership of the school. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses; clear and calm determination to continue improving, and to deploy resources to gain the best value for money. As a consequence the school's capacity to improve is outstanding. The reason why the overall effectiveness of the school is not yet outstanding is because the quality and effectiveness of the school's curriculum and teaching and learning are not yet outstanding.

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

1

Main findings

St Matthew's is a good school. The majority of its features are outstanding. Pupils make outstanding progress from their generally low starting points because of good teaching, and excellent care, guidance and support. Adults provide personalised teaching to ensure each pupil builds on his/her skills and understanding. Adults work successfully to break down any barriers to pupils' learning. As a result, all groups of pupils attain above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils' standards in speaking, however, are not as high as they could be, because some opportunities are lost to extend pupils' vocabulary. In some lessons, pupils give only one-word answers and adults miss chances to make pupils explain their thinking, ideas and reasoning. Some of the activities in lessons constrain and hinder pupils, for example they are sometimes asked to complete low-level worksheets instead of problem-solving or purposeful activities. This is why teaching is good, rather than outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well. The gap between their attainment and their peers narrows rapidly because of good teaching and targeted, tailor-made support.

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Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in pupils' achievement, the quality of lessons and the effectiveness and the quality of the curriculum. Almost every feature of the school has improved. This track record is the result of impressive leadership of the school. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses; clear and calm determination to continue improving, and to deploy resources to gain the best value for money. As a consequence the school's capacity to improve is outstanding. The reason why the overall effectiveness of the school is not yet outstanding is because the quality and effectiveness of the school's curriculum and teaching and learning are not yet outstanding.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in speaking and listening by:
 - maximising opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their reasoning in problem-solving and purposeful activities frequently
 - using opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary.
- Increase pupils' attendance to around the national average by 2012 by:
 - reducing the amount of extended holidays in term time
 - working closely with parents and carers, the community and the local authority.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Outcomes for groups of pupils are outstanding. In lessons, all groups are keen to learn, are responsive and learn new skills and knowledge at a rapid pace. All groups make at least good progress, but many groups, such as those from Pakistani or Indian heritages, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and girls, make outstanding progress. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the school was asked to improve girls' achievement. Occasionally, in a few lessons, the very small number of pupils with a White British heritage are not as involved in their learning as they could be and so do not make as rapid progress as other groups. When they leave Year 6, pupils attain above average standards, particularly in mathematics and science. The standard of pupils' work is also strong in subjects such as music and art. Inspectors were, for example, particularly impressed by pupils' Van Gogh style paintings after they worked with a visiting art teacher from a secondary school.

There is very little difference between the groups of pupils in terms of other outcomes. All pupils contribute excellently to the school and local community. Each pupil is expected to take on a monitor or job role within the school during the year. Year 6 read frequently to younger pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage; Year 2 pupils host a fortnightly visit by pupils from a local special school and all pupils contribute suggestions which are taken by the elected class representative to the fortnightly school council meeting. Teachers take time to ensure assemblies and lessons are accessible to pupils of different faiths and beliefs. All pupils know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. A higher than average proportion of pupils take a healthy school meal and most pupils are active at break times making good use of play equipment.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors judged the quality of teaching they observed during the inspection as good overall with some being outstanding. Adults have very strong relationships with pupils. They treat pupils with the utmost respect and kindness but they also set high expectations of achievement and do not accept low levels of performance. A real strength is the way in which teachers and teaching assistants personalise their teaching to different individuals and groups. They demonstrate the right way to do the work and ensure that every lesson is visual and has a high proportion of physical resources. This enables pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language and boys, to make rapid progress and understand what is being taught. Teachers monitor pupils' learning during lessons well. There are some missed opportunities in lessons and in the marking of books to provide pupils with precise guidance on what they need to do next to improve their work.

In some lessons, other than English and mathematics, the learning activities are not as challenging as they could be. This is because in some instances pupils complete low-level worksheets which only require pupils to write a few words or colour in a picture. The curriculum is good. It has been adapted very well to meet the needs of the pupils at St Matthew's. Enrichment activities, such as termly trips, an extensive range of visitors, theme weeks and opportunities to perform, are outstanding. During a theme linked to the world cup, for example, pupils had the opportunity to create a dance and dress up and learn in depth about cultures in different countries. There are some missed opportunities

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for pupils to use and develop their skills in problem- solving and in using information and communication technology.

Adults' care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding, particularly the pastoral care. Transitions between the year groups and between schools are strong. Links with other agencies are effective in raising pupils' confidence and their levels of achievement, particularly those pupils who are looked after by the local authority and those with complex learning needs. Teachers ensure pupils with speech and visual impairment are able to achieve highly by analysing each individual's needs and tailoring a programme of support aimed at extending their skills and understanding.

The breakfast-club provides a healthy start for pupils although only a very small number attend. The club promotes the school's ethos well and has an appropriate range of activities.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body has ensured that safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met. These have been a high priority particularly during the extensive building work in the last year. The governing body with senior leaders have also successfully and smoothly managed the federation with Brunel Nursery School. It has made a good start in ensuring the necessary policies and procedures are in place. For example, it has in place a good community cohesion policy and action plan which reflect the context of the school and its community. These need to be developed further to ensure all strands of community cohesion are covered. The governing body has also appointed and deployed staff and other resources very well to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has overseen the building work and the federation successfully, whilst further improving the school and strengthening leadership and management at all levels. Subject leaders, for example, have an excellent knowledge of standards, strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and they have taken action to improve them further. The headteacher has also successfully established, with a hardworking and dedicated staff, an inclusive, welcoming school in which all parents and pupils are welcomed and feel included. Equal opportunities for pupils and their families are actively promoted and are outstanding because there are very few differences between the outcomes for the groups of pupils present in the school.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding that are well-below those typical for children of this age, particularly in calculating with numbers, with reading, writing and speaking. Due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching and excellent care and guidance they make rapid progress. Inspectors observed this during the inspection when the teachers worked exceptionally well with their classes demonstrating with visual and other resources how to count and add up to ten. One class watched captivated as the teacher calculated sheep on the interactive whiteboard. Another class handled model sheep and animals on the carpet area. Children joined in counting and doing simple calculations using animals and made good progress in their skills. When the children then started on their independent activities, there was a very good range of activities on computers and across all the areas of learning, which enabled them to continue calculating and counting.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent and this leads to children's outstanding outcomes. They behave and socialise very well, they are happy and involved and are confident and independent learners. A real strength is the teaching to individuals and groups. One of the teaching assistants for example, worked extremely well with a group at an early stage of learning to speak English. She taught them in their home language but then prompted them to speak and phrase sentences in English and to develop their speaking skills. In a very few situations with other adults, opportunities were missed to extend children's one word answers into more complex phrases and sentences. The outdoor provision is well-resourced and managed overall. Opportunities are sometimes missed, however, to improve the activities even more, particularly outdoors, to ensure children build on their existing skills and knowledge.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Over half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is a higher response than in most schools. It represents around 80% of families. All those responding agreed they are happy with their child's experience at St Matthew's, their children enjoy school and that the teaching is good. Almost all agreed the school keeps the children safe, it is led and managed well, staff take on parents' and carers' suggestions and their children are making enough progress. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed the school meets their children's needs, deal with unacceptable behaviour and help children to lead a healthy lifestyle. A few disagreed that the school helps parents and carers to support their children's learning. Inspectors took this into account and graded this aspect of the school as good, rather than outstanding, because there is still some work to be done to enable parents to be involved fully in their children's learning.

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 Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

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

The inspection team received 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 266 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	47	76	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	54	64	44	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	49	68	47	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	41	83	57	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	46	78	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	44	68	47	10	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	41	75	52	5	3	3	2
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)	55	38	72	50	5	3	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	32	85	59	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	39	80	55	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	29	91	63	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	46	68	47	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	51	70	48	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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Blackburn, BB1 1DF

It was a pleasure to meet and speak with you during the inspection when I and my colleagues came to inspect your school. Some of you attached messages to the questionnaires you completed. One comment I think sums up most of your views 'Dear inspectors, my school doesn't feel like one it just feels as though I'm learning at a really fun and kind place.' We agreed and judged yours to be a good school with many features that are outstanding.

You make outstanding progress and all of the staff care, support and guide you excellently. You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and we judged your behaviour and your contributions to the school and local community to be excellent. We were very impressed, for example, with how you work with local schools, different churches and mosques and different groups of people who live in your community. Although everyone in your school is different, it was excellent to see how you all get along together, respect each other and have an equal chance of joining in with school activities. We judged your leaders and managers to be doing an outstanding job and have changed the school for the better over the last few years. You are right to be proud of your school and new building.

We have asked your teachers to work on two main things to improve the school even further. First, we have asked that they work with the community to increase your attendance by reducing the time you have off from school on holidays and festivals. Second, we have asked teachers to work on improving your speaking skills to extend your vocabulary and to show you how to explain your thoughts and opinions in increasingly complex sentences and in different problem-solving activities. You could help too by learning to use new and exciting words in your sentences and by trying to explain your views precisely.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

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