

# St Matthew's Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110750               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cambridgeshire       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 378157               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 15–16 September 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Nick Butt            |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 463                                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Martin Smart                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tony Davies                               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 10 October 2009                           |
| <b>School address</b>                      | 19 Norfolk Street<br>Cambridge<br>CB1 2LD |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01223 568838                              |
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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 3–11                 |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 15–16 September 2011 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 378157               |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 24 lessons or part lessons taught by 16 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 203 parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact of the school's measures to move teaching from satisfactory to good?
- How effectively does the revised curriculum improve pupils' attainment and enjoyment of their learning?
- To what extent have school leaders been successful in driving forward improvement, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

## Information about the school

St Matthew's is a larger than average primary school. Approximately a third of pupils are from a wide range of different minority ethnic groups, with a small number at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. In September 2011 the number of Reception classes increased from two to three, as the school moved to three form entry. A major building project is about to begin to remodel the school and construct additional classrooms. The school has the Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

St Matthew's is an outstanding school. The relentless drive for improvement since the last inspection has resulted in very rapid progress, with pupils' attainment high in English and mathematics. The quality of pupils' learning is good, with effective use of assessment to set challenging targets and plan work that suits their abilities. Most parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school. They say that it 'is very good at promoting friendship and acceptance of others' and that 'learning is supported creatively.

The headteacher and the two assistant headteachers form an extremely effective senior leadership team, giving vision and direction to the school. Excellent monitoring systems ensure that leaders have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas to develop, and these form the heart of strategic planning. Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils and give the school a strong sense of purpose. This, in turn, builds a dedicated staff team, who work together extremely well and are keen to continue to improve their practice.

Most teaching is good, and some is outstanding. In these exceptional lessons, teachers use resources in innovative and exciting ways, and make the most of information and communication technology (ICT). However, teachers have not shared this excellent practice as widely as they could, in order for the proportion of outstanding teaching to rise further. Considerable development of the curriculum has made it much more engaging and relevant for pupils, and this has contributed to rising standards of attainment and pupils' enjoyment of school, as well as in their good attendance. A stimulating launch to each new topic, such as a visit to the Kew Gardens' conservatory for Year 5 studying rainforests, generates much interest and excitement.

Pupils have a great awareness of keeping safe and are involved in helping the school judge risks that may arise, for example with trip hazards in cloakroom areas. Their outstanding behaviour and encouragement for one another contributes to an ethos of care and consideration. They take on additional responsibilities enthusiastically, such as buddies or play leaders, and the school council is influential in making suggestions for improvements. Staff know all pupils extremely well, so that pastoral care is outstanding and interventions are tailored to specific needs.

The accelerated rate of the school's improvement, combined with the excellence of its leadership team and governing body and highly effective self-evaluation

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procedures, give it an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching even more by:
  - using ICT in an increasing variety of interactive ways to involve pupils in their learning
  - building on the existing examples of excellent and innovative use of resources to interest and engage pupils
  - sharing outstanding practice more widely in school and further afield.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning as they take an active role in lessons and are very keen to contribute. They also work extremely well independently or in small groups, and take a pride in what they produce. For example, pupils in Year 5 concentrated hard on designing new rainforest plants using their extensive knowledge of how plants adapt to their environments. In another Year 5 class, pupils discussed animatedly how to calculate the number of zeros required, to attach to the doors of 367 rooms in a newly built hotel, and whether there was a formula they could apply to work this out.

Attainment has been rising rapidly across the school and is now high in most year groups in English and mathematics. An emphasis on analysing the performance of groups and tracking the progress of individuals means that any potential underachievement is picked up quickly and acted upon, and teachers are held fully accountable. This has resulted in a marked closing of the gap in performance between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties make good progress like their peers because close attention is paid to setting specific targets that will help them to succeed, and teaching assistants are fully involved in planning and evaluating their support. Dedicated teaching assistants work alongside any pupils at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. They ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning and that work is carefully adapted to suit them, enabling them to progress well.

Pupils have a high level of understanding about making healthy choices, and run their own healthy tuck shop. All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 go swimming and the participation rate in sports clubs is high. Pupils have a very strong awareness of emotional well being as well as keeping fit physically. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, running a mock trial at the county court and taking part in local events such as the Winter Fair. Pupils contribute to local consultations and have made suggestions about what they would like to see in their new school building. They are skilled at resolving disagreements. One pupil said, 'We normally work it out ourselves.' They have a keen interest in ethical issues and enjoy discussing ideas. Pupils celebrate the richness of their many different

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heritages and staff have written schemes of work to promote cultural diversity which are used widely by schools and distributed nationally. They are particularly well prepared for secondary school, both in terms of their high levels of basic skills and also in their work habits and positive attitudes to learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>1</b> |

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers' good subject knowledge makes pupils enthusiastic and motivated to learn. They plan work carefully to suit pupils' different abilities and to ensure a sufficient level of challenge. For example, in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were learning to multiply by partitioning, all groups were busily engaged in different levels of activity that ensured they made good progress. Some were using cards to generate problems to solve, while others were looking at solutions to generate a rule they could apply. In the best lessons, teachers use resources extremely effectively, including well-chosen video clips and photographs to stimulate learning and prompt discussion. On the rare occasions when teaching is less than good, resources are not sufficiently stimulating and pupils are not as actively involved, so that the pace of learning slows down. Pupils receive good quality feedback, both orally and in their books, which helps them to improve. Teacher-pupil consultations and 'learning journeys' have been used by the school in its pilot to focus more closely on monitoring progress, and to involve pupils in setting their own targets. Early signs are that this is having a positive impact on pupils' awareness of how to meet their individual targets.

<sup>1</sup> 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 curriculum is highly imaginative and creative, and is built on key skills to support the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT across different subjects. Year 6 pupils recalled their satisfaction in making board games for younger pupils to play, and how the topics they have covered throughout the school have given them memorable experiences. For example, they mentioned the time they all dived under their desks during an 'air raid' and, on another occasion, held a street party to celebrate VE day. Pupils value opportunities to shape the direction of their learning by posing questions and making suggestions, such as holding an Olympic Games during work on Ancient Greece. The curriculum is extremely well enriched with clubs, visits and visitors, including a John Lennon lookalike (to launch a topic on biography). Music and the arts are particular strengths, the school benefits from the talents of its parents and carers, who help with singing and painting.

A parent commented, 'We love the school's environment and ethos which is wonderfully supportive and nurturing.' Many parents and carers praised the high level of care and support for pupils, and how well staff know their children. Transition arrangements are particularly effective, preparing children extremely well for joining the Nursery and Reception and supporting pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable as they leave for high school. Programmes such as the nurture group and 'Tuesday Club' are successful in helping pupils to develop their social skills and play a full part in the life of the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The annual cycle of monitoring and assessment is well established; this gives leaders a very clear view of how the school is performing and informs its strategic plan. Much of the school's work revolves around meeting the aims of the plan, which is both aspirational in its longer-term view and practical in its short-term goals. Senior leaders have successfully driven forward improvement, enabling the school to move from satisfactory to outstanding within three years. They have set out an ambitious vision that staff embrace and are backing it with a purposeful and consistent approach rooted in raising standards and improving teaching. Measures to improve teaching from satisfactory to good have been very effective, with clear guidance and coaching for all staff. The governing body's effectiveness is outstanding. Members of the governing body are extremely knowledgeable about the school and provide a clear strategic lead; they are heavily involved in the move to three form entry and

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the building project. Their monitoring is thorough and astute, backed up by detailed reports of visits. There is a link governor for parent and carer communication, as well as governors linked to priorities on the school development plan.

The school communicates well with parents and carers, and hold regular 'Meet the Head' sessions for parents and carers to attend. The school works hard to engage all parents and carers and takes any concerns seriously. It actively seeks their views and support through newsletters and questionnaires, as well as holding regular meetings for them. There is a thriving Parent-Teacher Association. The school takes a leading role in local partnerships with other schools, outside agencies and businesses, securing support and sponsorship. A recent project with the Mill Road Cemetery has given pupils opportunities to explore a unique environment from historical, artistic and ecological perspectives.

The school promotes equality extremely well, gaining national recognition for its pioneering work in tackling homophobia. The staff's meticulous analysis of how different groups perform ensures potential gaps are identified and closed. Outstanding arrangements for safeguarding pupils include exemplary record-keeping and extremely effective systems for assessing risks. The school knows its local community very well and reaches out to many different groups, such as through the annual summer 'extravaganza'. It actively seeks the views of minority groups to inform its policies, such as its Disability Equality Scheme. The school is developing links with a contrasting village school, and with the wider global community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 1        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>1</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with a wide range of skills and

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abilities broadly in line with those expected. They settle quickly because of excellent induction arrangements and well-established routines, into a stimulating and well-equipped learning environment. Progress is good because teachers match activities to children’s needs and interests and ensure they make a good start in their development of early numeracy and literacy skills. Occasionally, there is some variation in the provision between Reception classes in pace, but all children are happy and enjoy their learning. Children take responsibility, for example undertaking risk assessments of the spacious outdoor area and pouring out their own drinks. Adults engage and encourage children well and there is an appropriate mix of activities led by adults and chosen by children, both inside and outside the classroom.

The quality of provision has improved considerably since the last inspection because of changes brought in over a relatively short period by the new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, who is a leading teacher for the county. She has brought consistency to planning and developed outside learning, and moulded a strong staff team. Assessment is thorough and children’s achievements are recorded very well to build up a clear picture of their performance.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| 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 | 1        |

**Views of parents and carers**

The response rate to questionnaires was above average, with many more written comments by parents and carers. Most parents and carers say their children enjoy school, and are happy with how they are doing. A very large majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making enough progress in school and that the school keeps them informed about their child's progress. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their children could make better progress and that the school did not provide them with enough information. Inspection findings were that pupils make good progress and teachers cater well for their needs. The school does more than most schools in keeping parents and carers informed, and is continually considering ways to communicate with them even more effectively. This is why there is a designated governor for parent and carer communication. A few parents and carers raised individual issues, which the team investigated and brought in general terms to the attention of leaders and governors. Inspection findings supported the views of the vast majority of parents who were happy with the work of the school.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthew's 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 203 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 463 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 103            | 65 | 48    | 30 | 7        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 100            | 63 | 48    | 30 | 3        | 2 | 5                 | 3 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 71             | 45 | 72    | 46 | 6        | 4 | 7                 | 4 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 69             | 44 | 65    | 41 | 12       | 8 | 7                 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 85             | 54 | 57    | 36 | 6        | 4 | 6                 | 4 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 70             | 44 | 66    | 42 | 12       | 8 | 7                 | 4 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 77             | 49 | 75    | 47 | 3        | 2 | 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) | 85             | 54 | 54    | 34 | 7        | 4 | 3                 | 2 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 72             | 46 | 66    | 42 | 4        | 3 | 8                 | 5 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 69             | 44 | 66    | 42 | 5        | 3 | 6                 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 64             | 41 | 78    | 49 | 4        | 3 | 8                 | 5 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 89             | 56 | 51    | 32 | 6        | 4 | 8                 | 5 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 98             | 62 | 43    | 27 | 5        | 3 | 6                 | 4 |

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      | 43  | 47   | 10           | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 46   | 42           | 6          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 36   | 41           | 9          |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 42   | 41           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 30  | 48   | 19           | 3          |
| Pupil referral units | 14  | 50   | 31           | 5          |
| All schools          | 10  | 44   | 39           | 6          |

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| 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.**



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Matthew's Primary School, Cambridge CB1 2LD**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and sharing your views with us, both through our meetings and also through your questionnaires. You told us how much you enjoy school and find your work interesting. St Matthew's provides you with an outstanding education. Here are some of the things it does particularly well.

- Your achievement is outstanding and standards of attainment are high.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- You contribute extremely well to school life and to the wider community.
- Your behaviour is excellent, and you show consideration for one another.
- The curriculum is stimulating and takes account of your interests and aspirations.
- The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you are having difficulties.
- There is outstanding leadership from the headteacher and his assistants to ensure that the school continues to improve rapidly.
- The governing body is fully involved in the school and keeps a close eye on how it is doing.
- Since the new leader has arrived children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made good progress, because of the improvements she has introduced.

We have asked your teachers to build on the work they are doing to make more lessons outstanding, particularly through using resources in exciting and new ways, and helping you make the most of ICT to enhance your learning. You all can help by continuing to give your views about learning, and making any suggestions about areas you would like to study.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt  
Lead inspector

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