

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103404
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308308
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melvin Brooks
Headteacher	Beverley Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Duddeston Manor Road Birmingham B7 4JR
Telephone number	0121 3591602
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. The vast majority of pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Black African. Around 10% of pupils are of White British origin. Over half of the pupils in the school are new to speaking English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high but very few have a statement of special educational need. A high number of pupils start at the school at times other than the Foundation Stage and some of these pupils have not had any previous schooling. The school has had many changes in teaching staffing since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. It is a happy place where everyone's contribution is valued. There is a strong sense of community and harmony amongst the school's culturally diverse population. This welcoming atmosphere helps pupils feel safe and secure. They trust the adults who work with them, form good relationships, behave well, work hard and show kindness to others. They say they love school and most attend regularly. The school has forged excellent links with parents and the community. Parents are extremely positive about the school and all that it does to help pupils and their families. Good teaching, a well planned curriculum and detailed checks on pupils' progress ensure they achieve well. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are very low for their age. Recent improvements in the Foundation Stage, particularly in teaching and the curriculum, help children make a good start to their education. At the end of the Foundation Stage, while many are still below average in their literacy and numeracy skills, a significant number attain average standards. Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as good because pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. Pupils in the current Year 2 did not benefit from the improved Foundation Stage provision and those who joined the school in Years 1 and 2 have not been there long enough to have achieved more. Standards in Year 2 are below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. In Years 3 to 6, as pupils gain confidence in their literacy skills, they progress well. This is a marked improvement on previous years. Standards in Year 6 are below average but considering pupils' very low prior attainment, this reflects good achievement. Because developing writing has been a priority, standards in English are close to average for those who have been at the school since Year 1. However, standards have not improved as much in mathematics and science because pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out investigations. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they achieve well. Support for those learning English as an additional language is also good. The curriculum is good with many enrichment activities that support pupils' good personal development. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils understand how to stay safe and have targets that help them improve their work. However, teachers do not always give pupils the advice they need to attain these targets. Good leadership and management have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' progress is now analysed closely to set challenging targets. The leadership of English is good but the leaders for mathematics and science are new in post and have not had time to develop their leadership roles. Financial management is good with priorities, such as staff training, resourced well. Governors support the school and check its performance well. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation. The quality of care and education is good and standards are rising. School leaders are well capable of making further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching, a well planned curriculum and the effective use of the spacious accommodation and good resources help children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Because many have had little or no pre-school experience, high emphasis is given to developing children's personal and social skills. Children adopt school routines quickly, settling happily and confidently in these secure settings. They love exploring the fun activities that staff plan, and learn effectively. A good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by themselves helps them gain confidence and independence. Staff check that children try everything that is planned and intervene effectively to guide their learning. As the children's skills in literacy and numeracy

are particularly low when they start, more time is given to these areas. Leadership is good. Effective teamwork ensures all staff are clear about what they have to do to help each child succeed. Children's individual needs are identified early and the right help given to ensure their good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1, so that lesson activities consistently challenge pupils, especially the more able.
- Raise standards in mathematics and science ensuring that pupils have more opportunities for investigative work.
- Ensure all subject leaders have the time they need to develop their subjects.
- Make sure teachers give pupils the guidance they need to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From very low levels of attainment at the start of the Foundation Stage, standards rise significantly but are below average in Year 6. This represents good achievement. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in all the areas of learning. This good progress is not maintained through to Year 2, mainly because teachers' expectations are not high enough of what pupils can do, and work is not matched well to their needs. While overall standards are well below average, they are better in mathematics where pupils do not have to rely as much on their literacy skills. In Years 3 to 6, pupils progress well. The improved standards in English are helping pupils to make good progress in other subjects. Pupils who join the school later than Year 2, sometimes with little or no English, make lesser gains despite the school's good efforts to support them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good additional support they receive. This is also true for pupils learning English as an additional language, where specialist support is an asset.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay healthy. They select healthy snacks and lunches and many attend the school's numerous sports activities. They know how to stay safe, understand the dangers of drugs and who to go to if they feel threatened. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils are friendly and polite and willingly help others. They respond enthusiastically in lessons but a few say they could do harder work. They show responsibility by helping around the school. School council members organise playground activities and older pupils make sure everyone plays sensibly. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community by attending local events and giving time and money to worthy causes, both here and abroad. The many visits and visitors help them to extend their understanding of the world of work and leisure. Most pupils arrive on time and attend regularly, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils understand their own cultures well and recognise that cultural diversity exists in the school and beyond, but cannot confidently explain how this affects their lives. While pupils' personal skills are good, their below average basic skills mean their preparation for the next stage of their education is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Where teaching is good, lessons are lively, teachers' presentations are stimulating, expectations are high and work is matched well to pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy learning and settle to their work quickly. Teachers challenge pupils through questions that encourage them to think about their work and discuss their ideas. Support staff prompt pupils to offer answers even when they are unsure. Interactive whiteboards and drama are used effectively to present work clearly, with simplified explanations to help pupils whose vocabulary may be limited. Pupils try hard even when lessons are uninspiring. The satisfactory lessons are less demanding and pupils of all abilities often do the same work because teachers do not use assessment information well enough to guide their planning. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and pupils have too few opportunities to discover for themselves through, for example, investigations. Regular assessments help staff identify pupils who need additional support. Setting individual targets is helping pupils understand what they are aiming for, but the practice is not yet secure in every class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured to help pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. Teachers are beginning to link work across subjects through themes that help pupils make better sense of their learning. Improving pupils' literacy, particularly writing skills, is an appropriate focus for raising standards. Because the acquisition of English is a high priority for many pupils, specialist staff organise individual and group activities to help pupils learn English as quickly as they can so they can participate fully. Appropriate activities are planned to help pupils with specific learning needs achieve well. Although the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is still limited, standards in ICT have improved and are now satisfactory because pupils use computers regularly and competently. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. An extensive range of visits, visitors and numerous activities out of school hours adds excitement to pupils' learning and gives them ample opportunities to develop their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care arrangements are good and the school takes swift action when problems arise. Pupils feel they are listened to and that staff will help if they are worried or upset. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all secure. Pupils who have specific social, emotional or educational needs are supported very sensitively with external agencies consulted where necessary. Those identified as gifted and talented receive good guidance to extend their skills. Pupils are supported very well when they first start school and are prepared well for secondary school. Pupils' progress is assessed well, particularly in English, to set accurate and challenging targets and identify those who may be falling behind or need specific help. Individual targets are proving particularly effective in raising the aspirations of older pupils. Other pupils are not always sure what they have to do to achieve their targets. Marking is generally good in literacy, showing pupils what they have done well and what to do to improve their work. The practice is not as good elsewhere.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher knows what needs to be done to raise standards. Her drive and passion has led to standards being better than at the time of the last inspection. She also now has a strong senior leadership team that is well capable of helping her make improvements. The right priorities have been identified and appropriate action is being taken to realise higher standards. Senior managers check pupils' progress rigorously and offer teachers guidance and support when problems arise. Teaching is now good and pupils make good progress. The new systems to track pupils' progress are good and provide the school with useful information as to where to target additional support so every pupil achieves well. Staff changes have hampered more rapid progress in all subjects and all year groups. Governors see the school as a vital part of the local community. They visit the school regularly, are well informed and carry out their duties well. They ensure it is well maintained so that it is a place where people want to be. The school's outstanding partnerships with parents, other schools, agencies and the local communities are helping to raise pupils' aspirations and support their good achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- 28 February 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Matthew's C of E Primary School, Birmingham, B7 4JR I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to you and your teachers. Thank you for making us feel welcome, for being so friendly and polite and for the lovely plants you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you about school, the good friends you make and the interesting trips you go on. It was great to see how well you get on with each other and hearing about your excellent work in the local community. Please thank your parents for filling in questionnaires where they told us how pleased they are with the school. Your school is good in every aspect. These are the things we particularly liked.
- You all try hard with your school work and make good progress. The results in Year 6 are much better than they used to be so things are improving.
- Your lessons are good because teachers make them interesting and fun.
- The activities teachers plan, including the many trips and clubs you can join, are good.
- You behave well and enjoy learning. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- You know that all the grown ups who work at your school will help you if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take good care of you. These are things we have asked the teachers to do to make the school even better.
- Improve the teaching in Key Stage 1 so that all of you achieve well, especially those of you who find the work too easy sometimes.
- Make sure you do better in mathematics and science by having more time to carry out investigations.
- Make sure the leaders in the school have the time they need to improve what you do in all your subjects.
- Make sure your teachers give you the advice you need to improve your work. There are things you could do to help too, for example you could make sure you come to school every day and ask for harder work if it is too easy. I hope that you will all do well in the future. Yours sincerely Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector

Annex B

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Matthew's C of E Primary School, Birmingham, B7 4JR**

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Your school is good in every aspect. These are the things we particularly liked.

- You all try hard with your school work and make good progress. The results in Year 6 are much better than they used to be so things are improving.
- Your lessons are good because teachers make them interesting and fun.
- The activities teachers plan, including the many trips and clubs you can join, are good.
- You behave well and enjoy learning. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- You know that all the grown ups who work at your school will help you if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take good care of you.

These are things we have asked the teachers to do to make the school even better.

- Improve the teaching in Key Stage 1 so that all of you achieve well, especially those of you who find the work too easy sometimes.
- Make sure you do better in mathematics and science by having more time to carry out investigations.
- Make sure the leaders in the school have the time they need to improve what you do in all your subjects.
- Make sure your teachers give you the advice you need to improve your work.

There are things you could do to help too, for example you could make sure you come to school every day and ask for harder work if it is too easy. I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Lead inspector