

# Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115126
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX
<b>Inspection number</b>	311844
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Daren Olley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Keefe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Little Laver Road Matching Green Harlow Essex CM17 0QB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 731225
<b>Fax number</b>	01279 730204

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a very small school, although pupil numbers are rising. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage and free school meal eligibility is below average. Attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year. It is generally average or slightly better, but was marginally below average for the current intake. High pupil mobility can also affect the nature of each year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is close to the national average and two pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school also has five looked-after children. Pupils are taught in four classes in the morning and three in the afternoon.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Staff and governors are accurate in their evaluation that Matching Green is a good school. There is a strong family atmosphere and it is a happy and harmonious place in which pupils can learn and develop with confidence. The school's improving reputation has led to a doubling in the number of pupils over the last five years. Parents are very much in support of all that the school is doing for their children. As one put it, 'This is a warm, friendly and caring school where each child is treated as an individual with their own special requirements catered for'.

The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money. In spite of several changes of staff, there is a clear vision and a common sense of purpose aimed sharply at meeting the needs of each individual pupil. Management systems are focused on getting the best out of staff and helping them to improve. The new headteacher receives good support from an effective governing body. Progress has continued in the short period since the last inspection. The school is well placed to improve further and meet its current goals.

Effective teaching and learning are the main reasons why achievement is good throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned to tackle the assessed needs of pupils. This is also the main factor in the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Standards vary considerably from year to year but are above average overall. Reception children benefit from an interesting curriculum that tackles all areas of learning. Their personal development is considerably enhanced by being taught alongside older Year 1 pupils.

Much investment in new technology and staff training since the last inspection has led to rising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and greater use of the pupils' skills to enhance their learning in many subjects. Pupils' written work is improving but not as rapidly because boys do not have the same positive attitude towards writing as other areas of their work. The school is seeking ways of engaging boys more in writing. The curriculum is good. It meets most needs well but has not developed programmes to any great extent for gifted and talented pupils. This is now a priority, along with the aim of developing further a personalised approach to pupils' learning.

Parents are very happy that their children's welfare is at the heart of all the school does. Care, support and guidance are outstanding, partly because the needs of each pupil are known well by staff. The pupils are very well cared for, and feel safe and secure. They have someone to turn to with a problem and can trust each other because, as one pupil said about 'Circle Time', 'we know that what is said in the circle stays in the circle'. They know how well they are doing and the steps needed to improve in English and mathematics. The school is seeking to extend this awareness to science and ICT. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They mature into responsible and considerate young people, who work together happily and productively. This, and their good academic achievements, gives them a secure platform for success at secondary school and in future life.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Explore ways of engaging boys more in writing.
- Enrich the learning and development of the most able pupils and those with particular talents by extending their thinking and broadening their experiences.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The youngest children make good progress in Reception and generally meet or exceed national goals by the time that they enter Year 1. The extent to which they do so varies with the different nature of each cohort. Pupils make good progress across the school; this includes pupils with learning difficulties. The evaluation of test results has to be treated with caution as group numbers are often very small. Year 2 results have fluctuated considerably. They fell in 2005 but rose again in 2006, when they were slightly above the national average. Results were better in mathematics than in reading and writing. Current Year 2 standards are very similar to these test results. Year 6 results rose sharply in 2006 and were very high in all subjects. All pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4 and most exceeded this in English and mathematics, while all reached Level 5 in science. Because of many changes to the nature of the group, current Year 6 standards are not as high but are above average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. This is reflected in their punctuality and above average attendance. They have very positive attitudes and participate with much enthusiasm in all that the school offers, particularly the after-school activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to respect and value the customs and cultures of others. They enjoy the responsibility of taking care of each other at playtimes and behave well in and around the school. Bullying is rare. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together, and they trust adults to help them should any problems arise. They fully understand what is needed to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make very sensible choices about food, drink and exercise. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community through activities such as the school council and often take the lead when raising money for charity. Their impact on the local community is less marked.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Almost all lessons are well taught and a few have outstanding features. The pupils generally respond well to their teachers' high expectations of their work and behaviour. Thorough assessment in English and mathematics means that teachers' planning in these subjects takes into account the different ages of pupils in their classes as well as their abilities and attainment. Methods and activities are adapted carefully to individual pupil needs and well supported by a team of effective teaching assistants. They are not only well deployed but several show great initiative when working with pupils because they understand their specific needs and targets. Teachers are increasingly skilled at using the new technology now available to stimulate the pupils' interests and put over learning points more clearly. Pupils develop their writing skills more now, but activities do not consistently fire the imagination of boys.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the pupils' needs and interests as well as to promote their academic and personal development. Additional subjects such as French broaden their experience considerably. The expertise of physical education teachers from a local secondary school extends the opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills. They enjoy the additional activities and clubs provided, which are quite extensive for a school of this size. Programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties or those who are falling behind are carefully planned. There has been more limited emphasis on extending gifted and talented pupils. Basic skills are being developed increasingly in many subjects. ICT provision has improved considerably in response to the shortcomings identified at the last inspection.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils and their particular needs are well known to all adults. This is a significant factor in the high quality of support and guidance from which the pupils' academic and personal development benefits considerably. Systems for safeguarding children meet requirements and the thorough health and safety procedures are rigorously implemented. The personal and academic needs of pupils are very carefully identified and well-planned support provided for pupils with learning difficulties. The school's highly productive links with a wide range of agencies are utilised to support pupils with learning difficulties and for the care and welfare of looked-after children. Target-setting based on accurate assessment in English and mathematics helps the school to identify where extra support is needed. The next steps in learning are clear to pupils and reinforced through rigorous and helpful marking.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Teachers and support staff respond well to the headteacher's high expectations of them. There are robust systems to check and improve their performance. Accurate self-evaluation based on thorough monitoring and a careful analysis of test data enables strengths and priorities for action to be identified. Teachers are playing an important part in leading the school forward, although recent staff changes mean that their impact is still developing. The governing body is well led. It has been instrumental in the school's progress in recent years. Through visits and close co-ordination of their work, governors have a good understanding of the school, help to shape its direction and have supported the new headteacher well. Funding is deployed carefully to meet the main priorities of increasing ICT resources and the number of support staff. Both have a significant and positive impact on pupil 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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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**

4 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Harlow, Essex. CM17 0QB

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. You were very kind and helpful and showed how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

You make good progress during your time at Matching Green. Most of you meet and many of you exceed the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school. Your teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities to help you learn. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work hard and behave sensibly. The care and support you receive are outstanding, helping to make the school feel like one big and happy family. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school.

Your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. There are some areas where we all think that improvements could be made. Your written work is improving but there is still more to be done for boys to show more interest in writing. Those of you with particular talents need to be challenged more and your thinking and experiences broadened. I am sure you and your teachers will work hard to make this all happen.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector