

St Matthew's Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123557
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	314637
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Frances Gillam

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wright
Headteacher	Glenn Calcutt
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
School address	Church Road Donnington Wood Telford TF2 7PZ
Telephone number	01952 386260
Fax number	01952 605284

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Matthew's is a large primary school. Pupils' attainment on entry into the Nursery is well below that expected for three-year-olds. Most pupils come from a White British background. A much higher proportion of pupils than seen in other schools have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average.

St Matthew's is one of only four primary schools in the country to be on the register of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust for information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Matthew's is an outstanding school. Staff, governors and parents share the headteacher's strong commitment to raising standards and improving pupils' achievements. They work together with a common purpose and have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. These features promote a 'can do' culture and enable pupils to become confident and eager learners. Ambitious, yet realistic goals for raising standards have led to impressive improvements in pupils' progress from the Nursery to Year 6. These features show the strong capacity the school has to improve further. The excellent start children make in the Foundation Stage provides a firm base for future learning. From the time children start in Nursery until the time they leave in Year 6, staff are committed to making school an enjoyable experience. Pupils say this is very much the case. Pupils find lessons exciting and this spurs them on to work hard and to do their very best. Teachers plan activities very carefully to meet the needs of individual pupils. This enables all pupils to do extremely well and to reach above-average standards by Year 6. This prepares pupils very well for the future.

The rich and vibrant curriculum appeals to pupils of all ages. The extensive range of activities outside normal lessons enhances pupils' learning experiences and contributes successfully to their personal development and well-being. This is also a key reason for their very good attendance. Skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT successfully support pupils' learning in other subjects. This leads to high quality work across the curriculum. Bright and attractive displays celebrate pupils' achievements and also show the value the school places on promoting pupils' awareness of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils understand the plight of others and they are eager to raise funds for those less fortunate than they are. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and, because of this, behave extremely well in and around the school. Pupils are very friendly and polite. This leads to a calm and well-ordered school where pupils say they feel safe and secure. Parents are right to express a high level of confidence in the school. Their children are very well looked after, supported and guided and, in response, pupils show a high level of care for themselves and consideration for others. Pupils make reasoned choices about exercise and diet because they have a very clear understanding of how to remain fit and healthy. They take a very active part in making their school a better place to be and make a strong contribution to the wider community, for example, through their links with the church and involvement in environmental initiatives.

Senior managers, governors and staff have a very clear understanding of the school's effectiveness and continually seek to improve its work. Very recently, the school has modified the systems that track pupils' progress. Senior managers rigorously check pupils' achievements each term and hold staff to account for the progress pupils make in their class. However, senior managers acknowledge that the modified systems do not provide a clear overview of pupil's progress from the end of Reception to Year 6 to enable them to check thoroughly if pupils are making sufficient progress towards their end of key stage targets.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children do very well in the Foundation Stage. Staff place a strong emphasis on building positive relationships with children and their parents. Their friendly welcome puts parents and children at ease and children soon settle and become used to the Nursery routines. Activities in the Nursery and Reception classes are exciting and provide children with many opportunities to

explore and discover things for themselves. Talk is an important vehicle for children's learning and staff develop this very well through drama and role play. For example, children in one Reception class had great fun putting the Big Bad Wolf in the 'hot seat' and questioning him about his evil ways. This type of activity, especially for the older children, helps them to organise their thoughts and to plan what they are going to write. The excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage evaluates carefully the work in the Nursery and the Reception classes. Action to bring about change for the better is successful and this ensures children receive well-conceived learning experiences and high quality teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that senior managers track more effectively pupils' progress over time and check more thoroughly that pupils are on track to meet their end-of-key-stage targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because of the excellent teaching, exciting curriculum and high level of care pupils receive. Children do very well in the Foundation Stage because of the attention staff in the Nursery and Reception classes devote to meeting children's individual needs. This challenges children to do their best and, by the time they enter Year 1, they are working securely within the goals expected for their age. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 capitalise on the positive start made in the Foundation Stage. Activities continue to challenge and engage pupils. Pupils continue to do well and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards are above average by Year 6. In the last three years, the school has twice been in the top 5% of high-performing schools in the country. The school's rigorous analysis of data identifies any weaknesses quickly and its response is swift and effective. For example, the school successfully tackled the recent dip in reading results by implementing a 'rapid reading programme' and this is already increasing the pupils' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a strong sense of their own worth. They are keen to share their ideas and have strong views about what makes their school such an exciting place to be. They appreciate the way they are involved in decision making and the trust adults extend to them. Pupils show high levels of respect for their school, the local environment and for people of different cultures and beliefs. They look out for other children and know how to keep safe and free from harm. Their very good awareness of healthy lifestyles shows in their involvement in deciding lunchtime menus and their very high attendance at after-school sporting clubs. Their attendance generally is also very good. Pupils act sensibly and their exemplary behaviour means they build positive relationships with adults and each other. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy school very much. They use their skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy in a wide range of activities including, for example, problem solving and computer-generated presentations. Older pupils are equally confident in working on their own or as part of a group; this prepares them very well for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Lessons, across the school, have a very good balance between pupils listening, sharing their ideas with others and finding things out for themselves. These features enable pupils to engage in their learning and to work with a high level of independence when required. Teachers have very good knowledge of their pupils and this ensures they closely tailor work to the pupils' needs. Learning support assistants play an important part in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make very good progress. Their timely interventions and careful explanations enable these pupils to play an active part in lessons and to have success in meeting their targets. Pupils are adept at using computers to support their learning and readily access them to research information or to record their work. Teachers respond very well to whole-school initiatives, for example, implementing drama in literacy lessons to increase vocabulary and to help pupils empathise with characters. Some of the subsequent written work, across all year groups, is of a high quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides pupils of all abilities with a rich and varied range of activities and promotes pupils' personal development and well-being extremely well. It builds very well on pupils' prior experiences, captures their interest and has a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment of school. It is adapted very well to meet the needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented. Over 90% of the pupils attend the extensive range of activities outside normal lessons and all the pupils in Year 6 choose to attend the weekly after-school study group. When pupils say they love school this is not an exaggeration! The provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is extremely good and this enables pupils to make excellent progress from the Nursery through to Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff are fully committed to promoting pupils' health and safety and encouraging pupils to achieve and to do their best. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust, regularly reviewed and carefully managed. This leads to a safe and supportive environment where pupils flourish and grow in confidence. The school works very well with parents. Parents appreciate the information and support they receive, including family learning programmes. Targets to help pupils improve their work are highly individual. Each day, time is set aside for all pupils to read the comments teachers have made on their work and to discuss the targets that have been set for them. Pupils' subsequent work shows that they respond very well to this guidance, and this has a significant impact on their achievement and progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leaders at all levels focus successfully on raising standards and achievement and on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. Through the very effective self-evaluation

procedures, the governors and staff have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and any weaknesses. The school's excellent use of challenging targets has secured 12 years of continued improvement in test results and it is very well placed to improve further. The school's evaluation of its work takes into account the views of pupils and their parents. This develops a firm bond of trust between pupils, their parents and the school. Close links with outside agencies also support the school's work. Recent changes to tracking arrangements provide teachers with very clear information about how many levels of progress pupils in their class should make in the year. Each term, senior managers check how well teachers are achieving this. This is effective in pinpointing any areas of underachievement. However, the recent changes have left the senior managers without a clear overview of pupils' progress from the Reception Year to Year 6. This makes it difficult to check whether pupils are making sufficient progress over time and if they are on track to meet their end-of-key-stage targets.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Matthew's Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery Centre, Telford TF2 7PZ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your outstanding school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, visiting your lessons and seeing all the exciting things you do.

The people in charge of your school and your teachers do an extremely good job. This helps you to reach above-average standards by Year 6 and to make excellent progress in your work.

Here are some of the things we thought were extremely good about your school.

- All of you do very well, from children in the Nursery right through to Year 6, and this is helping to prepare you very well for your future.
- You are very good at keeping yourselves fit and healthy, and safe from harm.
- You really like school; you attend regularly and get on very well with each other.
- Your behaviour is extremely good. You have a great deal of respect for your school and your local environment.
- You are very kind and considerate and respect other people's views and beliefs.
- You love to learn and find your lessons very enjoyable.
- You are very well cared for and you say you feel safe and happy in school.
- You make extremely good use of all the exciting activities you have outside normal lessons.

We have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on one thing.

- To make sure they check more carefully how well you are doing during your time in school and that you are definitely on track to meet your end-of-key- stage targets.

Yours faithfully

Fran Gillam Lead inspector

17 January 2008

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Lead inspector