

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102054
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	323579
Inspection date	29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Hugh Protherough

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	209
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Richard Knowingling
Headteacher	Mr Stefan Roos
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	South Street Ponders End Enfield EN3 4LA
Telephone number	020 8804 1666
Fax number	020 8364 7533

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What is the current profile of achievement in Year 6 and has the progress of Black African and White British pupils improved (especially in writing)?
- How do teaching and the curriculum support achievement and develop effective learning for children of all backgrounds and abilities?
- How do the senior leadership team ensure that middle managers are fully effective in supporting school priorities such as improvement in writing?

These issues were explored by gathering evidence from school assessment data, conversations with pupils, the analysis of their work and lessons observations, and discussions with staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an increasingly diverse community. Of the 16 ethnic groups represented at the school, the largest are White British, Black Caribbean, Black African and White other. While most are competent in English, the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning the language is around a tenth, and increasing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, with a preponderance in the younger classes. They have a variety of needs including moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism. After a period of temporary leadership, the past 15 months has seen the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

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 that is improving rapidly under the astute leadership of its new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The key to their success lies in the commitment to building a school community where all stakeholders feel they can make positive contributions. This is particularly the case among the staff team. Long-serving senior and middle managers say that over the past 15 months they have been rejuvenated. They are listened to, offered responsibility and training and play a full part in determining the school's priorities for improvement. They monitor with increasing acuity the quality of the school's provision and its impact on pupils' achievements. As a result there is a shared understanding of the school's present position and what needs to be done to improve further.

Pupils' achievement is good. Although results in last year's national tests for Year 6 continued to be slightly above the national average in English, mathematics and science, pupils' progress from their starting points in Year 2 was, at best, satisfactory. There was particular concern about the performance of Black African and White British pupils in this year group. This scenario had already been identified by the leadership team and work has started on improving the accuracy of teacher assessment throughout the school. A programme of pupil progress meetings has been established where staff examine the work and progress of each child in the school. This rigorous evaluation of individual pupil needs has led to the development of a wide variety of intensive support packages and the provision of a range of individualised learning arrangements. Measurable short-term targets are established, agreed with the pupils in 'child friendly' language and continually assessed.

All this is having an immense impact on pupils' achievements. Last year the school correctly identified that the progress of the current Year 6 showed a similar trend to that of the 2008 cohort. The inspectors' analysis of pupils' work over the course of this year shows dramatic improvement in quality and quantity. This confirms the trend established in the school data that shows well over half the pupils made and exceeded the progress expected for a year during the autumn and spring terms. Year 6 pupils are achieving well and reaching their increasingly challenging targets. This highly effective approach is leading to sharply accelerated progress throughout the school.

Teachers know their pupils very well, their interests and personalities as well as their academic progress. As a result pupils are attentive and well-motivated learners. Lessons are well planned and the match of work to pupils' abilities is very good. The effective deployment of teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to the learning of all pupils and especially those with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The well-established teaching of basic skills such as handwriting and the high expectations for neat presentation of work serves the pupils well; by Year 6 most have a neat, joined, cursive script. The recent development of a creative curriculum is improving things further because of the increased opportunities for pupils to write for a wider range of purposes and audiences. For instance, Year 3 pupils are publishing their own stories as part of a fund-raising project for a local charity. The excellent displays of pupils' work and 'working walls' also reveal good-quality writing in relation to history, art and science. Teachers are knowledgeable and present their lessons well, making clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Most proceed at a brisk pace, but sometimes teachers talk for too long, and although pupils remain well-behaved, it is clear that the minds of a few begin to wander.

The school successfully promotes healthy lifestyles. The pupils appreciate daily servings of fruit and vegetables and one or two parents wrote to say how pleased they are that sweets are discouraged. The appointment of a specialist teacher of physical education successfully ensures that pupils (and staff) exercise vigorously in these lessons. Many take part in the good variety of sports clubs offered after school hours.

Inspectors agree with the parents and carers who wrote to express their appreciation for the fact that their children are happy and feel safe in school. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors were very clear that the school is an orderly community. The consistent application of the 'Good to be Green' behaviour policy means that they know what is expected of them. They respond enthusiastically to the awards for good behaviour and say that any rare incidents of rude or intimidating behaviour are swiftly dealt with by staff.

Communication between home and school has improved since the last inspection. Several questionnaires commented upon the friendliness of staff and the ease with which parents can obtain information about their children's progress. Inspectors recognise that the school is increasingly facing outwards to become a focal point within its community. Governors play an active role in the life of the school, offering strong support and appropriate challenge when it is needed. Each class is enthusiastically fund-raising for a variety of local charities, including support for local senior citizens. There are residential trips in England and to a school in Germany, as well as links with Sierra Leone. These initiatives are a good indication of the school's commitment to preparing pupils for life in a diverse society. The school is well set for the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class make a good start to their education and achieve well. Staff ensure that children are well prepared for school, meeting them in their pre-school settings and homes and providing opportunities for them to visit the school. Consequently they settle quickly into class, make friends easily and soon become accustomed to school routines. The school's assessments of children at the start of the year suggests a wide range of abilities, but that most arrive with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are lower than the nationally expected levels for four-year-olds. This is particularly the case in respect of communication, language and literacy.

Staff plan thoroughly and ensure a successful blend of activities covering each of the areas of learning in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. The introduction of new approaches to teaching children about letters and sounds is improving children's early reading skills. Opportunities to write in a wider range of contexts and using a good variety of materials is motivating the children. They are proud of their writing and eager to read it to visitors.

Arrangements for assessment are extremely thorough. Staff record daily observations of what children know and can do and include photographs and samples of significant pieces of work. This builds into a compelling picture of each child's progress. These files of work are readily available for parents to see. One commented that until she saw her child's folder, she did not realise what her daughter could do and how much work she had done.

The outside classroom is well used, but too small. There are many well-planned activities and experiences for the children to explore. However, physical activities aimed at developing motor skills, such as using a bat and a ball, require considerable vigilance by the adults due to the proximity of other children and equipment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There is a sharp focus on children's all round development. The impact of recent improvements in provision can be seen in the increasing number of children who are reaching a good level of overall achievement at the end of their Reception Year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the pace of learning by reducing the amount of time spent listening to the teacher.
- Extend the space available to Reception children in the outdoor classroom.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Enfield, EN3 4LA

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed speaking with you during the day and your comments and observations were extremely helpful.

We agree with you that St Matthew's is a good school. From the moment we arrived we were impressed by your good behaviour. You are polite, courteous and work hard in lessons. One or two of you were a little bit shy about your work, but you need to know that you are making really good progress. There are several things that particularly impress us:

- you always try to present your work neatly, so that by Year 6 almost everyone has good joined-up handwriting
- you know your targets and you keep checking them to make sure you improve your work in English and mathematics
- you produce some really good work in other subjects such as art.

You can do all this because you have the support of really good teachers and teaching assistants. You told us that you like the teachers and that they often make lessons exciting and fun. We agree, because we saw this during the inspection - I learnt a lot about animal habitats by talking to the Year 4 pupils when I visited their class. Your teachers know a lot, but sometimes in lessons they talk just a little too long and although you are all too polite to say, we could see you starting to lose concentration. We've asked them to think about this in future lessons.

Reception children work very hard and it is good to see you starting to read, write and count. We know you enjoy working outside, so we've asked the teachers to try and make a bigger space in order that you can all work without bumping into each other!

There are many other things that are special about St Matthew's, too many to include in this short letter. We particularly like the way every class is involved in fund-raising for different charities and the fact that you are getting to know about different communities and nationalities around the world.

With every best wish for the future.

Yours faithfully

Hugh Protherough

Lead Inspector