

Matching Green CofE VC Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115126
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338516
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter McGregor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daren Olley
Headteacher	Sarah Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the self evaluation form, a sample of pupils' books, curriculum planning and a wide range of policies, including safeguarding information. They also took into account the views expressed in questionnaires by staff, pupils and 24 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well teaching contributes to pupils' progress and standards
- how effectively the curriculum promotes high standards
- how well pupils' progress data is used
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Information about the school

This is a small primary school which serves the needs of local families, and those who live some distance away. Pupils are taught in mixed age group classes. Most pupils are of white British heritage and there are no children learning English as an additional language. Free school meals eligibility is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with statements of educational need is well above average and includes a wide range of specific needs. A higher than average number of pupils arrive or leave the school other than at the usual times. The school offers extended services through workshops for parents.

In the past year, the school has experienced some difficulties in appointing staff and has undergone extensive building work. It has gained a number of awards, including Investors in People, Activemark and Healthy Schools.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. It has some outstanding aspects, particularly the extent to which pupils feel safe. The headteacher is supported by a committed team of teaching and support staff who provide excellent care for the pupils. Parents' remarks such as 'a very safe caring school where my child could not be happier' are reiterated by the pupils themselves. Pupils are well-behaved, lively young people who enjoy their education. They adopt healthy lifestyles and take their responsibilities, such as play leaders, very seriously. Their attendance and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Pupils build on the sound progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress overall. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average, although the small and varying cohort sizes and the significant number of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the usual times, lead to considerable fluctuation from year to year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, because of the support they receive from teaching assistants. Standards are improving; they are strongest in English, particularly reading. Recent initiatives to improve mathematics and boys' writing are having a positive impact.

Teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Teachers' interest in the pupils' welfare is apparent at all times. Teaching is less successful when assessment information is not used effectively to provide pupils with sufficient challenge. The interesting creative curriculum being introduced links subjects together, focusing on pupils' skills, such as writing, speaking and listening. It has been instrumental in improving pupils' progress in these skills. It is not yet fully established to ensure continuity of learning within the mixed age classes.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. The important steps taken to improve standards across the school are proving successful, although they have yet to show their full impact. Splitting the mixed age upper junior class so that the Year 6 pupils are taught separately each morning is working well. Staff recruitment issues are now largely resolved. Provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, whilst satisfactory, are not as good as they could be because of a delay in training staff new to this age range. Children currently have insufficient opportunities for outdoor play and generally for choosing their own activities. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and many worthwhile links with the local community. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are treated equally and valued. Safeguarding procedures are excellent as exemplified by rigorous child protection training and the vigilance of staff. Community cohesion has been a successful focus for governors and senior leaders this term. Governance is effective. Given that the school knows itself well, the better curriculum is

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enhancing pupils' achievement, and excellence has been sustained in the quality of care and parental links, its capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage through:
 - providing additional training for staff involved in teaching reception age children
 - enhancing the quality of the outdoor area and children's access to it
 - increasing opportunities for children to initiate their own activities.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' standards in writing are improving as a better balance is achieved between creative and technically correct language. Boy-friendly themes have been used for writing, which has improved the quality of boys' work, and expectations of accurate spelling and the correct use of grammar have been established. In science, gaps in knowledge, resulting from weaknesses in planning for the mixed age classes, have been identified and support provided to remedy the problem. Pupils' progress is very good in physical education and in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their targets as a result of the very effective guidance they receive from support staff. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. This can be seen in their appreciation of the good school food and participation in the many sports activities available, including a before-school basketball club. During personal and social education lessons, pupils learn to value the contribution of their peers and develop an understanding, for example, of the importance of anger management. Behaviour is good and pupils are extremely confident that the school is a safe place to be. They are keen to be involved in assemblies and sing enthusiastically. Their good moral and spiritual development is based on a strong Christian ethos in the school. Pupils work well independently and usually co-operate well with each other. These personal qualities, combined with their ICT capability and developing basic skills, mean that pupils are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teamwork between class teachers and support staff is very good. Excellent examples of staff correcting pupils' use of non-standard English were noted. Marking is usually used to good effect to show pupils what they can do to improve their work. In most sessions, learning intentions are shared with pupils, explanations are clear and pupils enjoy learning. Teachers make good use of modern technology, particularly digital projectors and interactive whiteboards to maintain pupils' motivation. Expectations during group work are not as high as during teacher led sessions. Questioning is not always focused on assessing pupils' prior knowledge and their developing understanding so that work can be matched to their needs. Curriculum planning for continuity is made complex by the change in composition of mixed age classes every year. Much has been carried out to alleviate the problem and increased numbers entering the school are leading to relatively stable year group sizes. A clear curriculum policy where topics which engage pupils' interest make work fun as well as meeting requirements, is helping to raise standards. A large majority of the pupils take part in after-school clubs provided, from homework to the choir. A wide range of visits, including a residential activity and a trip to the Tower of London enhance the curriculum. The excellent relationships and co-operative atmosphere generated in this small school, where all know each other very well, mean that slight changes in a pupil's attitude are noticed and any problems can be rapidly resolved. The quality of care for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptionally good. Links with pre-school settings and the local secondary schools are strong. Staff visits and the transfer of information are very effective in ensuring a smooth transition from one stage to the next.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, fully supported by governors, is the driving force behind the popularity of the school with parents, and the improvements taking place. A long term view has been taken of how the school should change and improve and priorities are being systematically implemented. Finances are planned to ensure appropriate staffing can be maintained for the next few years. Governors, through regular visits to the school and full board and committee meetings, keep a close eye on what is taking place. They are very supportive but also hold staff to account. The improvement of teaching and full implementation of the curriculum have been, and remain, a focus for the headteacher, with regular and accurate monitoring and guidance helping to improve the overall quality. Parents appreciate the many opportunities to involve themselves in their children's learning. These include curriculum evenings, celebration assemblies and termly opening mornings to see their children at work. Reports are informative and constructive. The school's tracking systems are good and show clearly how pupils make progress. Through valuing every child equally, the school successfully creates an atmosphere where discrimination against any individual or group is unacceptable. Safeguarding, both policies and their implementation, is a high priority for all involved in the school. Community cohesion is promoted well. Links with the local community are very strong and pupils' understanding of more distant locations is good, for example through a developing link with a Ghanaian school and visits by staff from a Chinese school to discuss their faiths and customs. The school spends the resources at its disposal well, achieving good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children of a very wide range of ability make satisfactory progress to attain broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Communication, language and literacy, and personal and social education are generally not as strong as mathematical, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. Staff care for all children well and do their best to provide an enjoyable series of learning experiences. The outdoor area, easily accessible from the classroom and covered to enable all year round use, is in the process of change now that building work associated with the new hall next to the area is complete. The current use of this area does not realise its full potential as a stimulating part of the children's learning experience. The welfare, health and safety of the children have a high priority, as they do throughout the school. The children are safe and secure and enjoy their lessons. The difficult task of providing for Year 1 pupils as well as Reception age children in one class, is made more difficult without a teaching assistant trained in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Training is planned for all Early Years staff, but this has yet to be provided. Teaching is sound with a good focus on cooperative work, phonics, understanding of number and on helping children to appreciate what is acceptable behaviour. On-going assessment is satisfactory but information about individual children's achievements is not always systematically recorded to help plan future tasks. Children have opportunities to discuss points together, for example as talk partners during whole class activity, but the balance of work gives them insufficient chances to choose for themselves what activities they carry out in outdoor and indoor contexts.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Almost all the parents and carers responding to the questionnaire about the school are very pleased with the quality of education provided. Areas of greatest strength identified are their children's enjoyment, how safe their children feel, how well the school is led and managed and the overall quality of their children's experience. Inspectors support these very positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Matching Green 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	50	10	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	63	8	33	0	0	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)	8	33	8	33	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	63	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	50	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Matching Green Primary School, Harlow, CM17 0QB

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for all your help whilst we were with you. You told us that you are very happy at the school, feel extremely safe and that all the staff care a lot about each of you. Your parents told us that they are as happy with the school as you are. We agree that the school takes excellent care of you and we can see why you enjoy learning in such a safe and pleasant place.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. You behave well and get on very well together. Your attendance is good. You are polite and confident and know what are the right and wrong things to do. By eating properly and taking part in lots of sport you have shown how you understand the importance of healthy living. You make satisfactory progress during your time at Matching Green and reach average standards. The headteacher is leading the school well and knows what needs to be done to help the school improve.

These are the things we have asked the headteacher to do, with the support of her staff:

- help you make better progress by making sure that what you do in lessons is not too easy and that you work hard all the time
- keep checking that the curriculum covers all the work that you need to learn and understand to do well
- provide those of you who are in the Reception year with lots of opportunities to choose activities, including in the outdoor area.

We know that you will continue to enjoy your learning and will want to work even harder and do very well.

Yours sincerely

Peter McGregor

Lead inspector

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