

# St Matthew's Primary School

Wenlock Street, Luton, LU2 0NJ

**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, with the effective support of senior leaders, has led to marked improvements since the last inspection.
- The governing body has a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is working closely with senior leaders to continue to improve the quality of pupils' education.
- Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of personal safety.
- High quality displays around the school encourage pupils and help them to learn.
- Activities organised outside lesson times help the pupils make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are lower than those in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make it clear what they expect pupils of different abilities to learn by the end of the lesson.
- More-able pupils are not always given hard enough work to do.
- Pupils do not always have the chance to develop their basic skills in other subjects.
- Teachers do not all apply the marking policy in the same way.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other shorter visits to lessons. They heard some pupils read in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan.
- Inspectors took account of the 78 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in making their judgements and the 83 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Aileen King	Additional Inspector
Anne Wesley	Additional Inspector
Teresa Kiely	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger in size than the average primary school.
- A large number of minority ethnic groups are represented within the school. The largest are of Asian or Eastern European background. The proportion of pupils of White British origin is considerably lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above average, but few are currently at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose families are in the armed forces) is well above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual starting and finishing points is considerably higher than average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision off site.
- The school runs an on-site Family Centre and a breakfast and after-school club.
- Major building works have been completed recently.
- The school shares the site with a privately run nursery. It did not form part of this inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and help pupils make quicker progress, especially in writing by:
  - making sure that teachers consistently plan work that is at the right level for all pupils
  - making sure that pupils of different abilities clearly understand what they are expected to learn by the end of each lesson
  - giving pupils more chance to develop their basic skills in other subjects
  - making the work more difficult for the more-able pupils.
- Make sure all teachers apply the marking policy in the same way.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are rising rapidly and are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is a marked improvement from the time of the last inspection when standards were exceptionally low. Standards in reading and mathematics are generally higher than those in writing.
- The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books confirm the significant improvement in their rate of progress and the standards reached. However, some of the more-able pupils do not do as well as they could. This is because not all teachers set them hard enough work.
- Most children start school with social skills similar to those expected of a typical five year old. This helps them to make friends and settle quickly into the supportive and nurturing Reception classes where they make at least good progress in all areas of learning. Teachers build systematically on the children's early literacy and mathematical skills which are usually well below those expected of a child entering the Reception class.
- In Years 1 to 6 pupils' skills in reading are developing well. Most pupils enjoy reading and read with the confidence and accuracy expected of their age. Younger pupils are making good use of the sounds that letters make to help read unfamiliar words. The large majority of older pupils read with fluency and expression. They have a good understanding of the text and can predict how the story might develop.
- Standards in writing are rising steadily. Pupils write in different styles and for different purposes, for example newspaper accounts, invitations and poems. They have a reasonable grasp of basic skills, such as sentence formation, punctuation, use of capital letters and spelling unfamiliar words, but are not consistently reminded to practise them when writing in other subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number and how to work out various calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Some pupils have difficulty in understanding mathematical terms but this is being worked on systematically in most classes.
- Pupils' skills in using information communication and technology are developing well. Older pupils use the internet competently to find out information. For example, in a Year 5 class pupils tried to find out if statements about 'sound' were 'true or false'. They enjoyed the activity and spoke confidently how the pitch of sound can be altered and how it is measured in decibels.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. The headteacher and senior staff check how well they are doing every half term and make sure that additional support is provided if necessary. As a result, the gap in performance between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils nationally is closing. Performance information shows that last year, pupils known to be entitled to free school meals did not quite reach the same standards as other pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly similar to their peers. This is because their needs are identified early and they are given the right level of support.
- The focused additional support for pupils who speak English as an additional language,

especially those who are new to this country, enables them to take part in lessons and given their starting point make slightly better progress than others.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers have worked closely with the senior leadership team and the local authority to improve their professional skills and have adopted many of the suggestions made at courses and whole-staff training sessions. This has resulted in considerable improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching since the previous inspection. Most of the teaching is now good with examples of outstanding teaching.
- Teachers usually expect the best from pupils in their work and behaviour. Lessons proceed at a quick pace and pupils are fully involved in the lesson. Teachers are skilled at asking probing questions and give pupils the chance to reflect on their own learning. Pupils are encouraged to find out information for themselves from books or from the internet. Teachers promote their enjoyment of reading and the development of their reading skills.
- In an outstanding lesson in a Reception class all the adults got on very well with all the children. They made sure that they were included in the well-organised group activities. Sign language was used effectively to make certain that children who are at the early stages of learning English were able to take part. Staff used praise effectively to encourage the children to do more. As a result, all children made rapid progress in learning the sounds that letters make and in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers and support staff from parallel classes work together to plan lessons well. Occasionally, teachers do not take sufficient account of assessment information and planning does not always make sure that all activities are set at the right level for all pupils. A few pupils, especially the more able, do not achieve as well as they should because some teachers do not always give pupils demanding enough work to do. They do not make their expectations clear of what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn by the end of the lesson.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved but is not yet consistent in all classes. Teachers use praise effectively but do not regularly make written comments to remind pupils what they have to do to improve their work and reach their targets. There are very few examples of the teachers revisiting earlier marking to make certain that pupils have acted on the advice.
- All teachers have a good relationship with their pupils, and manage their behaviour well. The examples set by all staff promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Staff make sure that all pupils, including potentially vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well in most lessons and around the school. In the occasional lesson, particularly where teaching is outstanding, their behaviour and attitude to work are exemplary. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are fully aware of the potential dangers when using the internet and during the recent building work.

- Pupils are courteous and polite to visitors and show respect for each other. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour or of a racist nature are investigated in depth and dealt with well and have reduced dramatically. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including physical abuse, name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say that should an incident occur it will be dealt with quickly and fairly by staff.
- Pupils enjoy going to the breakfast and after-school clubs which provide them with a calm start and finish to the school day. The lunch time activities are very popular. Pupils take the opportunity to relax quietly, use computers or undertake more adventurous physical activities. The clubs and activities help the pupils develop their social skills and foster a positive attitude to school.
- Attendance continues to improve and is now above average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's excellent leadership and management skills and the commitment of senior staff have moved the school forward. A systematic approach to improving teaching one step at a time has borne fruit and pupils are now making good progress. Systems are set up to make sure that the improvements will continue.
- Year group leaders are developing their skills well. They are progressively taking on more responsibility and checking that pupils in their year group are making good progress.
- The headteacher regularly observes lessons and discusses the strengths and areas for development with each teacher. The half-termly checks on pupils' attainment and progress are recorded and analysed rigorously. Teachers are asked to explain why any pupil is underachieving and what they are going to do about it.
- The headteacher makes effective use of the outcomes of the teacher's annual appraisal meeting and pupil performance information to advise the governing body whether individual teachers should be paid more.
- Attractive and well-presented displays throughout the school show that pupils study a wide range of subjects and topics. In all classes, there is a good focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- The Family Centre provides a good link between parents and the school. Many parents attend a range of activities which help them support their child's learning.
- The local authority has provided good support. Effective advice has been given on improving the quality of teaching, raising attainment and in supporting the development of year group leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is developing well. Governors undertake regular training and are increasingly effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. The headteacher's detailed reports give governors a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well the

school is doing compared with similar schools. The governing body makes sure the school meets requirements for safeguarding pupils and that all policies are updated in line with changes in statutory requirements. Following the recent review of the school's Appraisal Policy, governors have a good understanding of how targets are set for teachers to improve their teaching and the process for rewarding good teaching. The school's finances are monitored well. The governing body makes sure that pupil premium funding is being spent appropriately on additional support staff and in supporting a number of initiatives, for example, learning mentors, homework club, breakfast and after-school clubs and the Family Centre. The governing body checks to make certain that pupils are included in the different activities. Any suspected incident of discrimination is investigated carefully and if, necessary, action is taken. Systems for reporting to the governing body what difference this spending makes have yet to be put in place.

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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109552
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	405242

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	721
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Malcolm
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 723970
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