

St Matthew's Primary School

Wenlock Street, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 0NJ

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- Some teachers do not meet the high expectations of the leadership team.
- Teaching in foundation subjects does not always link well to prior learning.
- Some teachers do not set high enough expectations for pupils to allow them to make sufficient progress.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of key stage 2 tests has been below the national average for three years.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average.
- Foundation subjects are not as well monitored as English and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders know the school well and can accurately identify strengths and weaknesses during lesson observations.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their various starting points.
- Children in early years arrive at the school with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age but make strong progress so that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils who arrive at the school with very little English language make rapid progress in a short time.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and their behaviour around school and in lessons is good.
- Recent changes by leaders in writing and mathematics have led to improved progress in some year groups.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers meet the high expectations of leaders
 - all teachers set high expectations for pupils and this has an impact on their progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2.
 - outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are improved.
- Improve the way in which foundation subjects are planned, monitored and tracked by ensuring that:
 - learning in each year group builds on prior learning
 - there is clarity around who is monitoring specific subjects
 - the impact of new initiatives is accurately evaluated.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have accurately identified the areas for improvement and they have developed a clear plan to bring about this change. They have high expectations for staff and pupils.
- Since the headteacher's return from a long period of absence, the leadership team is back to full strength and they have made significant changes to improve attainment and progress in key stage 2. The impact of these changes was seen in the current Year 6 books, particularly for writing and mathematics, where pupils' work reflects strong progress.
- Some of the new initiatives introduced by leaders include an online programme for learning multiplication facts and another to improving comprehension skills and encouraging reading. Pupils spoke very positively about the impact of both and they were able to demonstrate how much they had improved.
- Leaders have identified that the current arrangement for the leadership of subjects is not working as well as they would like. For September 2019 they have developed a new structure which gives clearer areas of responsibility for subject leaders. This change has been carefully considered.
- Year group leaders are effective at supporting and challenging teachers in their team. They provide this support through joint planning, paired lesson observations and modelled teaching. When teaching is weaker they are quick to identify this and share their concerns with senior leaders.
- Leaders have created a curriculum that is well matched to pupils' needs. The activities that pupils do in school have been well thought out and give them opportunities that they might not get outside school. These activities include an open-top bus ride in London, residential trips, representing the school at sport and a sleep-over at school.
- Leaders appreciate the importance of pastoral care for the pupils at the school and they place a high importance on pupil welfare. They have effective systems in place to support pupils with complex difficulties, both with their learning and with daily school life. This support also extends to families, and staff conduct home visits to help parents with forms, housing and school issues. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff at the school say that leaders encourage them to develop their careers and they feel well supported. The systems that leaders have developed to monitor the performance of staff are effective and fair.
- Leaders have enlisted the help of teachers from other schools and from the local authority to help with mathematics. As a result, leaders' analysis of mathematics information is much more forensic and is helping teachers plan their lessons to match the needs of pupils more closely. The impact can be seen in the work in pupils' books.
- Of the parents spoken to by inspectors and those who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, almost all are happy with the education that their children receive and they would recommend the school to another parent. One parent said: 'An

excellent school. Staff are great and always there when you need them. My kids are very happy.’ Another parent said: ‘Very caring and attentive staff at this school make it a lovely place for my child to be attending. Lots of extra activities are organised, helping children to be encouraged and pushed to expand their horizons.’

- Leaders have accurately identified the barriers that exist for disadvantaged pupils and they have used the extra money that they receive to provide extra teaching and to meet the social and emotional needs.
- As a result of effective spending of the sports premium, more pupils are taking part in sports activities. Leaders have identified pupils who have not normally taken part in sport and have introduced them to alternative activities such as dry diving. The PE team has made a conscious decision that all of the activities they introduce are ones that are accessible to pupils outside school.
- There is an alternative provision on the school site that provides part-time education for up to six pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties from nine local schools. This is well managed by the headteacher.

Governance of the school

- All governors are able to talk knowledgeably about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They understand the specific needs of pupils and share leaders’ views that a tailored curriculum is crucial for these pupils.
- Governors are effective in holding leaders to account for the spending of the extra money that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium to raise participation in sport.
- Governors recognise the importance of keeping children safe and they conduct regular visits to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school. The dedicated safeguarding governor monitors the systems in place to check that all adults are suitable to work with children.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have created a strong culture for keeping children safe. All staff in the school are well trained to identify concerns and they all understand the clear systems in place to deal with these concerns.
- The school’s safeguarding manager ensures that all incidents are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner and that records and paperwork are well organised.
- Staff, pupils and parents who completed the online surveys, or spoke with inspectors, agree that safeguarding is a strength.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistent across the school and within year groups.

- Where teaching is strong teacher's expectations are high, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils and as a result they make good progress.
- Leaders have correctly identified where teaching is not strong and high expectations around progress are not seen. They have taken actions to improve this, but the progress for pupils in these classes is not as strong.
- Leaders have developed a robust system for assessing progress in reading, writing and mathematics and where teaching is strong, assessment is accurately used to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Work in mathematics books shows that there has been a move to teaching more problem-solving and reasoning. This is leading to a deeper understanding for all pupils and a chance for the most able pupils to work at the higher standards.
- In topic books the learning is successful when it builds on prior work and pupils have the necessary understanding to complete tasks. Where this does not happen, learning is not as effective.
- The coverage of subjects in topic books is inconsistent across classes and the learning journey, linking lessons for a subject, is not always clear.
- Teachers do not always set work that challenges pupils and some teachers are slow to change the activity if pupils are finding it too easy or too hard.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and are successful when supporting pupils with SEND. The extra learning that they deliver to individual pupils during the afternoon allows them to close gaps and correct any misconceptions.
- Music is taught well and Year 5 pupils have reached a high standard with their ukulele playing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance for other cultures. They celebrate the diversity of the different nationalities within the school and have a good understanding of what it is like to live in modern Britain.
- Pupils value the extra-curricular opportunities offered to them and enjoy their trips, visits and activities. Key stage 1 pupils enjoyed their kite flying and Year 5 pupils were inspired by their trip to the University of Bedfordshire.
- Parents, pupils and staff say that there is very little bullying in the school and that when it does happen it is dealt with effectively by staff. Evidence collected by inspectors supports this.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy and they recognise the importance of this. They also know how to keep themselves safe when playing online games or talking to friends over the internet.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education and the Year 6 pupils are excited about moving to secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have established a calm environment and there is very little learning time lost through poor behaviour.
- Whole-school attendance and persistent absence is just below the national average but better than the average for the local authority. Leaders are working hard to improve attendance through reward systems for pupils, meetings with parents, home visits and letters home. This has led to improvements for some, but for many children their low absence rate is due to extended holidays to visit family abroad.
- Pupils play together well at breaktimes and lunchtimes and make good use of the facilities and resources on offer. Younger pupils value the work of the school prefects and the way in which they support them in their learning and during breaktimes.
- Pupils take a pride in their work, and presentation of work in books is a real strength across all year groups and in all books. This has been driven by the headteacher since her return in January 2019. Pupils are very proud to earn their pen licence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2018 key stage 2 tests was below the national average and progress from key stage 1 to 2 in reading and mathematics was below average.
- Progress in writing between key stages 1 and 2 is average.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils performed better in the 2018 key stage 1 tests than other pupils. Their progress in other year groups is similar to that of other pupils.
- There is a high level of mobility at the school and leaders manage this well. Pupils who arrive at the school with very little English language make rapid progress in a short time, enabling them to access the curriculum. This high level of mobility has had a significant impact on results in national tests. For some year groups, up to 20% of the children did not join the school in early years.
- School information shows that pupils who start at the school make stronger progress than those who arrive at the school at other times.
- Work in books shows that current pupils in most year groups are making good progress in writing and mathematics. This progress is closely linked to classes where the quality of teaching is strong.
- End of key stage 2 writing assessments for the current Year 6 pupils have been moderated and they are showing a marked improvement on the 2018 results.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 4 read to inspectors with fluency and accuracy. They were able to talk about their books. Where pupils do not read often at home, staff ensure that they are listened to in school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have created a vibrant area in which children feel entirely safe to explore, question and play. The flow between outdoor and indoor learning is seamless and both areas are well resourced.
- Activities are very well matched to the children's interests and link well to the teacher-led sessions.
- All groups of children, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress. This can be seen in their books and when talking to the children.
- The early years leader has created well-established routines that make it easy for children to access their learning and to develop their independence. She manages other adults exceptionally well to ensure that no learning opportunities are missed.
- Staff extend children's understanding through skilful questioning that encourages them to think for themselves, solve problems and deepen their understanding.
- Children's behaviour is excellent and they work and play well together. Adults have very high expectations and they encourage children to take charge of their learning and behaviour. Children respond very well to these expectations.
- Staff have developed strong relationships with the children based on trust. It is clear that children are confident talkers and they have developed perseverance and determination during their time in early years.
- Many children join early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Some have very little or no English language. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of Reception is usually in line with national average. Children who do not achieve a good level of development still make strong progress from their low starting points.
- Leaders gradually increase the amount of time spent on teacher-led activities as the year progresses. This prepares them well for the start of key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	109552
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10103362

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley McCullagh
Headteacher	Jane Thomas
Telephone number	01582 723970
Website	www.stmatthewsluton.co.uk
Email address	head@stmatthews.primaryluton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 February and 20–21 April 2017

Information about this school

- Mobility is high, with new pupils starting and/or leaving the school throughout the school year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average.
- More than half of the pupils on roll speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The school manages a provision to educate up to six pupils from local schools with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- Breakfast and after-school clubs are provided on site. These are managed by the governing body.
- St Matthew's is a larger-than-average primary school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in most classes, and were joined by senior leaders for most of these observations.
- Inspectors visited the alternative provision on the school site that is managed by the headteacher.
- The responses of 86 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked through a range of books across most year groups and in all subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders, governors, parents and teachers. Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, observed them at playtimes and lunchtimes and listened to them read from their books.
- Responses from six pupils and 33 staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires were considered.

Inspection team

Nick Templeton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shân Oswald	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Penty	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Rudman	Ofsted Inspector

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