

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Mill Lane, Normanton-on-Trent, Newark, NG23 6RW

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's decisive and well-managed approach to school development and improvement has created a positive and ambitious atmosphere for learning.
- She is strongly supported by other leaders and staff, and the governing body, in striving for consistent and continual improvement in the school's performance.
- The governing body has improved its contributions to the management of the school. Governors understand the strengths of the school and where it can improve, and are more prepared to challenge school leaders.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school, are lively and fully involved in many stimulating learning activities. They care for each other and act like a large family in and outside of the school buildings.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are being well prepared for their future. Their attendance and punctuality are good.
- Teaching has improved and is good across the school. Teachers are particularly effective in understanding and providing for the many diverse needs of the pupils. A rich and exciting new curriculum has been introduced.
- Teaching assistants make sensitive and effective contributions to the learning and social development of the pupils.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. They quickly become confident learners, and benefit strongly from working and playing with older pupils in their class.
- The school is gaining from its successful partnership with Norwell CofE Primary School.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements in the last year in pupils' progress and achievement, especially in Key Stage 2, have not yet been maintained over a longer period of time.
- Teachers sometimes do not move pupils on to higher challenges when they have understood a piece of work and are not always consistent in correcting misspellings.
- The present partnership with parents, although positive in many respects, requires further development so that parents can share the learning and progress of their children more closely with the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in seven lessons. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and five governors. The inspector also spoke with the school's improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were also examined.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- The inspector took account of 17 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. He also spoke to a number of parents in the playground.
- The inspector considered the 10 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from staff.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, analyses of pupils' achievement and progress, safeguarding arrangements, school policies, and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Children in the Reception year attend the school full time. They are in a class with Year 1 pupils in the morning, and are also joined by pupils from Year 2 in the afternoons. There are two other mixed-aged classes; Years 2/3; and Years 4/5/6.
- The school's national test results cannot be compared to the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6. This is because there are fewer than the minimum 11 pupils required to make such a comparison meaningful.
- The school has several links to other schools in the area and in Leicester. It works mainly in partnership with Norwell CofE Primary School, a few miles away.
- The school provides a number of out-of-school activities and sports clubs.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in April 2014, and holds a similar position at the partner school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recent improvements in attainment and progress are maintained over time by;
 - encouraging teachers to move pupils quickly on to fresh challenges when they show they have met their learning objectives
 - building upon the developing partnership with Norwell CofE Primary School in order to raise further pupils' learning and social skills.
- Strengthen and develop the present partnership with parents so that they and the school work more closely together for the benefit of pupils' learning and social development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The highly perceptive and experienced headteacher leads the school with considerable skill. Under her leadership in the last year, the school has moved quickly to improve its variable performance in recent years.
- An enthusiastic staff and the governing body share the headteachers aspirations for consistent improvement in teaching, pupils' achievement and learning, and promoting a wider curriculum.
- The good leadership of the early years provides an exciting start for children in a warm and vibrant environment, where their learning benefits from working with older children.
- The headteacher has been especially effective in monitoring and developing a higher quality of teaching in the school resulting in much improved progress for pupils in all classes.
- Improvements have been most notable in pupils' learning in mathematics; the development of a new and challenging curriculum; better systems for tracking pupils' progress on a more regular basis; the early introduction of new and innovative assessment procedures, and more training opportunities for teachers and their assistants.
- In addition, senior and middle leaders are enthused by their wider responsibilities, and are rapidly developing their management skills, whilst fully accepting full accountability.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is detailed and accurate. The development plan for example, is clear in planning for the continued improvement in pupils' progress and attainment as this has not yet been sustained over time.
- The improved curriculum has had a positive effect upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is enhanced by the many exciting and colourful displays of pupils' learning throughout the school, for example their work on nocturnal animals, and their activities in the gardening club.
- Leaders place an increasing emphasis on promoting British values and preparing pupils for their future lives in modern Britain. Pupils learn about this regularly in assemblies and their history studies. The school strongly encourages pupils to accept responsibilities for others in the school community from an early age. Pupils have opportunities to lead prayers in assemblies and enjoy chances to have a democratic vote on decisions of importance to them in school.
- A growing strength of the school is its regular contacts and partnerships with other schools, especially Norwell CofE Primary. This has been very effective through the sharing of the expertise of the headteacher, the exchange of ideas during joint staff planning, the evaluation of pupils' performance and the moderation of assessments of pupils' work. The school wishes to develop this cooperation to a greater degree.
- The additional funding for physical education and sports has been used to good effect. Pupils' interest in a wide range of sports has risen strongly, especially through their opportunities to join with other schools in these activities. Teachers are increasing their skills through their opportunities to work with specialist sports coaches. Pupils' greater involvement in sporting activities is improving their understanding of the importance of their healthy and physical fitness.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well, and does not tolerate discrimination. Pupils, whatever their age or abilities are always welcomed into a wide range of activities throughout the school, including after-school activities and clubs.

- The school works very closely with the local authority improvement adviser. This has proved most helpful in supporting the schools' work on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. The school's leadership is highly regarded by the authority.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. The safety and security of pupils are reviewed regularly, and staff have regular training in child protection. Leaders are presently developing plans to identify and deal with extremism and radicalisation should they arise.
- Leaders and the governing body monitor the spending of the fund for disadvantaged pupils carefully. They compare these pupils' progress with that of other pupils, and analyse how any gaps are closing between the performance of these pupils and others.
- Without exception, parents would recommend the school to others. Although school leaders appreciate this, they accept that more could be done to expand parental involvement in partnership with the school. This would include not only social fund raising events, but also a closer liaison in helping children's learning and development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school, visiting it regularly, making 'learning walks' and producing reports for the governing body on what they have observed.
 - Governors ensure that they have good information to know how well pupils are doing compared with others nationally, and a good knowledge of the effectiveness of teaching in the school. They also make sure that they have a range of training, particularly in safeguarding in order to make informed judgements.
 - Governors have increased their knowledge of the school sufficiently that they are more confident in challenging school leaders. They have, for example, checked with the school whether the most-able pupils are achieving well enough.
 - The governing body's knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school is used well to guide decisions for pay increases for teachers. These are based on the performance targets set for teachers to reach, as shown by pupils' progress and attainment. As yet they have not had occasion to deal with staff pay if they do not reach their targets.
 - The governing body carefully monitors the budget, is fully involved in the allocation of additional funding, the evaluation of how well it is used and its effect on pupils' learning.
 - Governors are concerned that they interact effectively with parents, and have plans to broaden parents' knowledge of their roles as governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in all years. They have enthusiasm for a wide range of learning activities and work confidently and cooperatively with other pupils even though there may sometimes be wide age differences between them. Pupils' eagerness to learn has had a significant effect on improving their achievement.
- Pupils feel that they have many really interesting learning activities. In particular they much enjoy meeting and working with pupils from other schools, especially their partner school and a much larger school in Leicester. They also talk with great excitement about cooking lessons, watching the schools' chickens hatch eggs, residential visits, and the many school clubs, especially for sports. Most of all, they enjoy their school so much because, 'It is out in the country, no noise and no cars, just fields and trees. This school is a smiley face'.
- Pupils move briskly around the school, and although often exuberant, they are polite and helpful and behave well. They enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities on the spacious and very well resourced school field. Pupils are very appreciative of the sports clubs they are able to join, some as the result of the

primary sports funding. They talk enthusiastically of the 'Try Golf' club, netball and rounders and the fact that their joint cricket team with their partner school did well in a recent competition.

- Pupils think that behaviour in the school is good, but there are 'a few' pupils who can be a nuisance and disturb their lessons. These incidents are infrequent, but are usually dealt with effectively by adults, and pupils have a good understanding of the schools' expectations of behaviour, especially the 'good to be green' theme.
- Pupils are particularly proud of the responsibilities they are given around the school, especially if they are appointed as a headteacher's monitor. They are also quick to take the initiative in helping others.
- Few incidents of unacceptable behaviour or racialism have been recorded in recent years, and there have been no pupil exclusions for several years.
- Pupils have secure knowledge of British values which are promoted strongly in assemblies when they learn about trust, care and having faith that you can achieve even the most difficult tasks. This helps to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education, and to prepare them for the next steps in their education.
- The great majority of parents think that the school deals well with pupils' behaviour, as do all the staff.
- Attendance has been average or better for several years, and pupils and families are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality for school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils, in discussions, indicated that they feel safe in school. Several commented on the new replacement perimeter fence which had made them feel even safer.
- Pupils know that they have many adults they can also turn to when they feel unsafe. They are pleased with the new nurture 'Rainbow' room where they can discuss their personal feelings with a very sympathetic and helpful member of staff.
- Leaders and governors have undertaken good quality training in child protection, and the school maintains close contact with external agencies and local authorities concerning the needs of some pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of all types of bullying, including bullying through the internet or mobile phones. Some have learned much about bullying from watching 'Childline'. Pupils were unable, in discussions, to remember any recent incidents of bullying. The school is fully inclusive, and all risk assessments are checked rigorously by the headteacher and administrative staff.
- Responses from parents and staff were unanimous in indicating that pupils are kept safe in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This has led to improved attainment and progress for many pupils.
- The improvement, especially during the last year, has been guided by very positive support and coaching by the headteacher and external advisers, in particular from the local authority. Teaching has improved as a result of the sharing and development of teacher skills with the partner school.
- The headteacher has monitored teaching consistently since her appointment and has ensured that there is continuity in identifying and developing the quality of teaching in the school. Training has been given to other leaders and they too are gaining in confidence in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching.

- The introduction of better and more understandable checks on pupils' progress has led to a good understanding by teachers of the individual needs and abilities of their pupils. Teachers' ability to plan for the needs of a wide range of ages and abilities in every class is now a strength, and was observed in every class. In class 2 for example, pupils worked very productively in small groups to devise brief playlets about poems of interest. All acted out expressively, and often amusingly, poems such as *The Little Red Hen*, and *Horrible Horace*, poems chosen to appeal to different age groups in the class.
- Consistently effective teaching is leading to good gains in learning, so that pupils throughout the school, including the early years, are reaching their potential and making good progress.
- Teachers have raised their expectations in the last year, and have been helped by their development of a fresher and more interesting curriculum. Aspects of British life and history are being promoted well by teachers, for example, through pupils' study of the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in the Victorian era; this is being complimented by pupils' learning through the theme of 'In the Trail of Invention'. Pupils are given regular opportunities in other subjects to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Much attention has been paid by leaders and teachers to improving mathematics. As a direct result of better teaching, pupils' learning, achievement and progress in the subject is much improved. In class 3, for example, pupils learned at several different levels how to interpret data and graphs. This included comparing air temperatures at different heights in an aeroplane, and converting Fahrenheit temperatures into centigrade.
- The teaching of reading has improved and is now good. Teachers have better skills in teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), and ensure that pupils choose and read books which interest them.
- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and their pupils are excellent. Teaching assistants in particular, show great patience and sensitivity when helping the learning of pupils who find activities difficult. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, benefit socially and academically from their support.
- So much is going on in all classrooms that teachers occasionally fail to notice the few pupils who are not on task, or whose attention wanders so that they disturb the learning of others. This is sometimes because pupils are not moved on quickly enough to higher challenges which teachers have already prepared. Likewise, although marking is mostly good, sometimes pupils' careless errors, especially in writing, go uncorrected.
- The school leadership rightly judges that the improvements in teaching to ensure better progress, and the links established with other teachers, are still in the early stages and must be maintained and developed further in the future.
- Teachers promote literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. Pupils are given ample opportunities to develop these skills through topics such as 'Sounds and Vibration', 'Similarities and Differences' and even, 'What are jelly babies?'
- Parents are unanimous in their view that teaching in the school is good.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment over time has been variable. Year cohorts are so small, though, that comparisons of attainment are not comparable with schools nationally because figures can be skewed by the performance of just one or two pupils. In the present Year 6, for example, there are only three pupils.
- School data and scrutiny of pupils' work during this year shows that almost all pupils in every year are making expected or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in other subjects such

as grammar, spelling and science.

- The school recognises that there have been weaknesses in attainment and achievement, especially in mathematics. Effective steps have been taken in the last year, particularly in improving teaching skills, so that improvement is showing in all areas. The progress of pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was disappointing but is now improving and continues to do so in all years.
- Progress has been noticeably weaker in the past in Key Stage 2, but this is now much improved. Progress in the early years has been consistently good for some time, although leaders still seek further improvement. Similarly, a majority of pupils are making consistently good progress now in Key Stage 1.
- The school has been successful also in raising the number of pupils in the school who are reaching above average standards. This has been a weakness in the past, but the most-able pupils are reaching their potential more often than in the past. Leaders agree that more can still be achieved by these pupils, especially if they are moved more quickly on to challenging tasks which have been prepared for them.
- Achievement is consistently good for all groups of pupils across the school. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who have rapidly improved their progress, which now matches that of other pupils in the school. Teachers and their assistants have extensive knowledge of the differing needs of these pupils, and carefully plan for their learning needs.
- For a number of years there have been very few disadvantaged pupils and it is not possible to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying them. Their progress is much improved and is now good and similar to that of other pupils in the school. Gaps in between them and other pupils have varied across year groups because of very small numbers, and currently there is little difference in the attainment gap.
- Pupils are keen readers and enjoy reading to adults at home and school. Pupils in Year 1 for example stated firmly that they 'absolutely love reading' and talked excitedly about their books. They are being helped by their good learning in phonics. All of them show good and improving skills in reading words with which they may not be familiar. Older pupils also enjoy reading, although some prefer to read on the internet rather than with books.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years by the class teacher are good. The leader, with the very able support of the teaching assistant, succeeds in managing a complex class, often comprising three different year groups. The adults are very aware of the wide age and ability range of children in the class. They are accurate in their understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the learning of the Reception children.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and experience typically seen at their age. They make good progress in all their skills, because teaching is consistently good and staff evaluate and track children's progress effectively. Staff have considerable skills in understanding the individual needs of each child.
- Leaders ensure that children have many varied, challenging and exciting learning experiences in an excellent learning environment, especially outdoors. Most children spend a good proportion of their time learning and playing in this area because so many activities are made accessible for them.
- The mixed ages in the class are very beneficial for Reception children. They learn quickly from older pupils especially in cooperating with each other and sticking to their learning challenges. During the inspection, these children were also seen helping children being inducted into the school in September.
- As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in the development of their phonic skills which helps their learning in reading and writing. By the time they transfer to Year 1 nearly all children are reaching good levels of development. Their progress is also notable for the way they increase their independence and self-confidence. Few have any difficulty in explaining their learning and opinions.

- Children's behaviour is good because they have inquisitive and imaginative attitudes to their learning. When involved in outside activities during the inspection, for example, children were fiercely involved in acting as monsters with the use of the sand and water trays, but did so with respect to others watching. Again, they take duties like watering plants in the outside area very seriously.

- Staff care for children's safety and welfare very attentively. They place great attention to this area of care, and are rigorous in implementing effective safeguarding procedures. Older children also do their best to ensure that the youngest children are well looked after around the school and at dinnertime.

- The class teacher and her assistant make every effort to engage with parents who are offered regular opportunities, often daily, to discuss their children's progress and well-being. Parents are very pleased with the start their children have to their schooling. The school also works effectively with the main pre-school provider in a neighbouring village.

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

Unique reference number	122764
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	461983

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	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Martin
Headteacher	Diane Ward
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2013
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