

St Matthew's CofE Aided Primary School and Nursery Centre

Church Road, Donnington Wood, Telford TF2 7PZ

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| Inspection dates | 6–7 July 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. It is now a good school.
- Leaders have created an extremely purposeful atmosphere where pupils learn well because they feel very safe and warmly nurtured.
- Teaching is good. As a result, pupils engage well with adults and learn at a good pace.
- Achievement is good. Pupils' progress has improved strongly since the last inspection, including that of the most able, those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Parents are full of praise for the school, and the overwhelming majority say they would recommend it to others. 'Can't speak highly enough of the school' and 'It's an all-round child-focused school' were typical comments.
- The outstanding headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a crystal-clear vision of what the school should be. Together, their skills are driving rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- From starting points that are typically lower than expected, pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Outstanding early years provision, including in Nursery, gives children the best possible start in school and as a result, they make rapid progress.
- Pupils are very happy in school and their behaviour is outstanding. In lessons, they always persevere and do their best.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school and this has helped in bringing about significant improvements in all areas of school life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Occasionally, adults do not check effectively enough on how all groups are getting on, so gaps in learning are not always filled quickly enough.
- Pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2 is not as consistently strong as in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - redoubling efforts to ensure that key stage 2 pupils' progress in reading is as consistently strong as in other subjects
 - checking more frequently on the understanding and progress of different groups of pupils in the class so any gaps in their understanding can be filled more quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has maintained a very strong, uncompromising focus to secure rapid improvements in key aspects of the school's work. Across the school, leaders accurately identify and remedy areas of weakness and ensure that pupils access consistently good-quality teaching that results in good progress for all. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey agreed, saying they are proud to work at the school.
- Very carefully matched work, small-group sessions or one-to-one support meet pupils' needs very well. Excellent provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they are given the support they need, and pupils who find learning easier receive the extra challenge they require to ensure their continued good progress.
- Rigorous staff performance management includes focused lesson observations, learning walks, the scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of progress information. Staff must meet rigorous targets, primarily focused upon pupils' progress, if they wish to move to the next salary level. Staff have valued and benefited from professional development and their enhanced skills have contributed strongly to the rapid improvement in pupils' progress, for example in English, grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Outstanding leadership in the early years gives children an excellent start to their education so they progress rapidly.
- Parents value the commitment and dedication of staff in ensuring that pupils' time at school is happy and safe. They say that their children are enthusiastic learners as a result, and their confidence grows throughout their time at the school.
- The rich, very well-balanced curriculum is suitably adapted for all pupils and a two-week rolling programme from Year 1 through to Year 6 ensures that pupils do not repeat work. Curriculum information is on the school website for parents so they can support their child's learning at home. Raising standards in English and mathematics has been a key priority in the school and pupils have the opportunity to use skills gained in these subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy writing up science investigations or measuring items in design and technology.
- Leaders have prioritised tackling historical weaknesses in key stage 2 pupils' phonics and reading knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a core strength. Pupils behave impeccably and all ages and backgrounds mix harmoniously. Pupils become increasingly highly responsible, and fully understand right and wrong and consistently demonstrate British values. They deeply respect different religions and cultures and are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding provides extremely well-focused additional support, such as small-group work for grammar, spelling and punctuation and mathematics. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils progress as well as their classmates and in some classes are outperforming them.
- The primary physical education and sports funding provides pupils with regular lessons and activities with specialist teachers and coaches, often through the local sports partnership. As a result, pupils and staff have gained new skills and participation is high in physical activities such as swimming, helping pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The local authority has provided high-quality support for the school. Leaders and governors have made full use of this for training and development. The local authority has used the school as a model of good practice on several occasions, including effective mixed-age teaching.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have contributed enormously to the rapid improvements the school has made since the previous inspection. They know the school extremely well, are articulate and passionate about education, and are confident to ask appropriately challenging questions. They are committed to their role and meet regularly to monitor the school development plan. Governors are often involved in evaluative activities, such as observing with leaders teaching around the school, focusing on their designated subject area.
 - Governors are skilled in looking closely at pupils' progress. As a result, they have a good level of understanding about the progress pupils are making and need to make.

- Governors have a thorough understanding of performance management procedures. As well as holding teachers and leaders to account, they ensure that the management of teachers’ pay is effective. Through detailed checks, they ensure that the pupil premium and the physical education and sports funding are spent effectively and make a positive difference to pupils’ achievement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Rigorous and robust systems are in place and are understood by staff. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and up to date. Consequently, safeguarding is a very high priority in school. Leaders are very persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil’s welfare. Very timely and extremely effective relationships with other agencies ensure that pupils are kept very safe and their welfare needs are fully met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Improved teaching is ensuring that pupils achieve much better outcomes than at the time of the previous inspection. The regular and rigorous monitoring of the quality of learning within lessons supports at least good teaching across the vast majority of classes. As a result of improvements in teaching, pupils are making better progress and standards are rising.
- Teachers plan exciting learning tasks. Lessons are interesting and lively. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to pitch work correctly according to pupils’ skills and abilities. Work at the right level of challenge is provided to enable pupils, including the most able, to make at least good progress. Those pupils who have gaps in learning arising from earlier weaknesses in teaching are effectively helped to catch up quickly.
- The vast majority of teaching assistants and teachers work closely together to ensure that timely and constructive support is provided for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They provide good support to pupils working in groups or on an individual basis.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve; however, some staff do not check sufficiently on how well all groups are progressing in their classes and gaps in learning are not always filled quickly enough.
- Teachers have been invited by the local authority to share their good practice in mixed-age teaching with other local schools.
- The school’s marking policy is followed consistently by teachers. The feedback provided is of a high standard and teachers allow time for pupils to read and respond to the advice given.
- Staff question pupils well to extend their learning and deepen their understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils were questioned effectively to explain the value of a letter as they solved algebraic equations.
- Classrooms are bright and well organised and pupils’ work is displayed proudly around the school.
- Reading and the teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) are carefully developed in the early years and into key stage 1. However, in key stage 2, in the past, these skills have not always been developed well and, at times, pupils have lacked the support they need to accelerate their progress. More recently, leaders have begun to address this, and listening to older pupils read during the inspection indicates that rapid improvement has taken place.
- Pupils’ mathematical skills are developed well through regular challenges and opportunities to apply knowledge to solve problems, including when they learn in other subjects. For example, pupils use their measuring skills when working out the size of different shapes in design and technology.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils are given good guidance on how to structure their writing. They are encouraged to use interesting and imaginative vocabulary and pupils have good opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils’ homework prepares them well for the following lesson. The majority of parents who expressed a view are supportive of the progress that homework helps their children to make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils are extremely proud of their school, value their education and demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. The overwhelming majority take care with the presentation of their work and are eager to improve. They are very enthusiastic when working in pairs or groups and relish new challenges.
- Many pupils willingly and enthusiastically take on roles of responsibility within the school, for example acting as junior road safety officers, to ensure that other pupils are aware of road dangers, and providing daily care for the various school pets.
- Pupils explain very well what they understand by British values and are given opportunities to experience democracy and fairness, for example when voting for members of the school council.
- Staff actively promote all aspects of personal development, health and welfare so that pupils are very well trained to be aware of hazards, such as fire risks, road safety, e-safety and substance misuse, and how to respond to risky situations.
- Pupils feel safe and are looked after well. Staff work closely with individual pupils and families and with external agencies when necessary.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and the vast majority of parents confirm this. Pupils know exactly what to do if they experience bullying, but insist that it does not happen.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well at all times. Their behaviour in class is impeccable. They are eager to answer questions and listen very carefully and respond sensitively to their peers' ideas and opinions. Pupils move around the school very safely and sensibly and help to ensure that buildings and playing areas are tidy and looked after very well.
- Pupils rarely miss a day of school. Pupils attend regularly because they do not want to 'miss out' on any aspect of school life and are very keen to learn as much as they can.
- Pupils are very polite, well mannered and respectful. They thoroughly enjoy welcoming visitors into their school and talking about their achievements. They take on their many responsibilities enthusiastically and are excellent school ambassadors.
- Pupils' behaviour during assemblies is exemplary. Here there is a great sense of unity, common purpose and spirituality. This was shown during a rewards assembly where pupils were encouraged to recognise and value the efforts of others, and to celebrate their school's success in sporting activities, such as swimming.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From starting points when pupils join the school, which are often lower than those typically expected for their age, pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. This good progress is repeated in other subjects, including science and history. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education.
- In the 2016 national checks on how well pupils know the sounds that letters represent (phonics), pupils attained outcomes that were higher than the national average for Year 1. Nearly all pupils met the standard for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have risen since the previous inspection. Checks made by inspectors on the school's latest performance information, and other inspection evidence, reveal that pupils across key stage 1 are progressing well and standards continue to improve.
- During the inspection, results for the key stage 2 national tests were published. Early indications from the unvalidated results of the Year 6 national tests indicate a rise in standards across the board but not as noticeable in reading as in mathematics and writing.
- In 2015, as a result of effective use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils made at least good progress and some made more progress than this. Work seen during the inspection indicates that disadvantaged pupils in the school are continuing to make at least good progress over time, and gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils are continuing to narrow quickly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported by teaching assistants and class teachers. Their progress is carefully tracked by the coordinator for special educational needs to make sure that they receive the right level of intervention to help them learn and make progress in line with other pupils.

- The most able pupils make similar good progress as other pupils in the school. Teachers are challenging higher ability pupils in lessons by encouraging them to undertake more challenging work, giving them a deeper understanding of a topic. Work seen in books suggests that they continue to maintain well-above average standards.
- Gaps between the attainment and progress of boys and girls are closing because leaders have adapted the curriculum to capture the interest of boys more readily, who have responded by attaining more highly and progressing more quickly.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- From their starting points, children in the early years make rapid progress, with the result that most achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. They are extremely well prepared for their transfer to Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. The early years leader and staff team pay a high level of attention to monitoring children's progress in learning. They have an in-depth understanding of children's individual needs and ways of learning. This is expertly used to provide a broad range of activities that promote learning extremely well.
- The indoor and outdoor space has been significantly developed to provide a highly stimulating environment that fully engages children. Children thoroughly enjoy using the broad range of stimulating resources, skilfully provided to encourage independence and further learning.
- Teaching is of high quality. Staff adapt their questioning and activities skilfully to ensure that children's learning is rapidly developed. For example, children enthusiastically learn to add by fishing for numbered balls and adding totals accurately.
- Children have extremely positive relationships. For example, during the early years sports day, children shouted their encouragement to their peers to do well at the various sports and activities and also as they offer to show each other how to complete tasks. They behave extremely well and are very secure in the routines of the Reception class.
- Children are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They identify rhyming couplets in poetry and begin writing some of their own, which they are then keen to share with the class.
- Parents speak highly of the early years provision and are very happy with their children's progress. They are very well informed and encouraged to be involved in their child's learning through attendance at regular drop-in mornings, where they can see the type of activities and learning in which their child has participated.
- Children learn to be safe when using equipment. Staff are vigilant to ensure children's safety and that welfare requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 123557 |
| Local authority | Telford and Wrekin |
| Inspection number | 10002531 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 326 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roger Lewis |
| Headteacher | Kate Clark |
| Telephone number | 01952 386260 |
| Website | www.stmatthewscofe.co.uk |
| Email address | Kate.clark@taw.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22–23 January 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- Children in Nursery attend part-time in either the morning or the afternoon.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average compared with similar schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 16 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons. They attended two assemblies.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. They also looked at the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Steven Cartlidge, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Lesley Else | Ofsted Inspector |
| Benedict Cox | Ofsted Inspector |

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