

St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Cromwell Road, Malvern Link, WR14 1NA

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the school so they leave with standards that are in line with the national average.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium left school in 2013 having achieved higher standards than their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective support from staff.
- Teaching is good, with a variety of activities in lessons to maintain pupils' interest and focus.
- Marking is detailed and helpful in telling pupils how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants work well with small groups of pupils or individually to enable pupils to learn at a pace that suits them.
- School leaders provide emotional support for pupils who need it through a specialist programme and teacher.
- The highly effective headteacher and leadership team, including Governors, set high aspirations for school performance and are successfully leading the school as teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are capable of achieving more as they are sometimes given work that is too easy for them. Leaders need to check the progress of these pupils more closely.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to their teacher's written comments on their work.
- Pupils do not always know the national curriculum levels to which they are aspiring.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, including one jointly observed with the assistant headteacher. In addition, inspectors made several other short visits to lessons.
- A range of pupils' work was looked at, and inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils.
- Documentation, including that relating to pupils' achievement, safeguarding and attendance, were reviewed.
- Conversations took place with senior and subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and the school improvement partner.
- There were not enough responses to parent view for the results to be analysed, but inspectors took into account conversations with parents at the school gate, and other communications with parents by the school.
- The views of 21 staff were taken into account through the completion of staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Rush

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school, where the majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding from the government to support pupils who are looked after by local authority or who are eligible for free school meals) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and who are supported by school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and a Reception year. Last year half of the Nursery children stayed at the school entering the Reception year. The other half attended primary schools closer to their home.
- The proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school in year groups other than at normal times in Key Stage 2 is higher than normal, although this is not the case in Key Stage 1 where the classes are full.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2011, and works with other local academies as part of the Malvern Academies Partnership.
- The school met the government floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectation for pupils attainment and progress in English and mathematics

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that all pupils achieve their best, by:
 - Raising the expectations of what the most able pupils in each class can achieve so that pupils aspire to complete work set to a higher standard
 - ensuring that all pupils have time to respond in full to the written comments made by their teachers
 - making sure that pupils know exactly what levels they are aspiring to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Carefully analyse the progress and attainment of the most able pupils as a routine part of the checks that leaders in the school make.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, especially in the areas of personal development, reading and writing. They make good progress and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 they are closer to their age-related expectations overall. Their progress in developing their writing skills is below that for other areas, but shows an improvement since the previous inspection, as leaders continue to focus on developing these skills throughout Nursery and Reception.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment has risen over the last three years, and pupils currently in Year 2 are expected to be close to the national average this year. This represents good progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are in line with the national average. Pupils currently in the school are making consistently good gains in their learning. Writing, which was a focus following the previous inspection has improved as a result of a range of opportunities to practise writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieved well in relation to their classmates last year, and this trend looks set to continue. The pupil premium is used to provide additional teaching in small groups and individual support (academic, social and emotional) to eligible pupils. Pupils supported by the pupil premium last year left the school half a year ahead of their peers in reading, and two thirds of a year ahead in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn well as a result of the careful tracking of their progress, additional tuition to develop their skills where they need it, and close analysis of their needs. For example, a particular mathematics programme engages and enthuses pupils to develop their mathematical skills using games.
- Pupils develop their reading skills through the effective use of phonics (the sound that letters and sounds make), and can apply a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Pupils are given lots of opportunity to read to adults in school. Children are confident in using phonics in the Nursery.
- The most able pupils in the school, however, are capable of making better progress than they are doing at the moment. In lessons, they are often not given clear enough instructions as to how much or to what standard they are expected to complete work to.
- Additional funding for physical education is used effectively to provide high quality teaching by professional sports coaches. This also enables teachers to develop their own skills in teaching this subject.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all, as demonstrated by the good progress that all pupils make.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. From Nursery through to Year 6,

pupils are keen to learn and are proud of their work which features on the appealing and informative displays in each classroom.

- Teachers have developed a system of regular and informative marking, with each comment written to provide clear information so that pupils know how to improve their work. Most pupils respond to these comments, which might, for example, ask for a paragraph to be re-written, but sometimes there is not enough time given for pupils to respond fully, and pupils do not readily relate this to the national curriculum levels that they are trying to achieve.
- Lessons are planned to include a variety of activities to engage pupils' interest. A good use of resources, including ICT, means there is little time wasted in lessons and all pupils know what it is they are supposed to be learning and doing. For example, in a guided reading session designed to develop questioning skills, whilst the teacher was working with a small group of pupils, some other pupils were enthusiastically making a model for other pupils to ask questions about.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work as a team to ensure that different groups learn well, especially those eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There are many opportunities for one to one or small group work and pupils move quickly and quietly to and from different groups as required without disturbing the learning of others.
- Homework is used to maintain pupils' motivation for learning, consolidate what they are studying in school, and to engage parents in their children's learning, for example by playing mathematics games together at home. Pupils enjoy the homework set and see this as a valuable part of their education.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give regular verbal feedback to pupils during the lesson, however they do not always make it clear what more is expected of the most able pupils. For example, in an activity where pupils were designing a poster on how to stay safe on the internet, most able pupils were not given clear instructions as to how their poster might differ from other pupils' work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their conduct around the school is polite and courteous, and they are eager to engage with adults and to explain what they are learning.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance has risen to above the national average this year, as a result of school leaders' effective strategies to reinforce the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents.
- In lessons, pupils are aware of the expectations of good behaviour, and demonstrate good social skills of listening to others' opinions respectfully. They understand how the behaviour management system works and appreciate the consistency with which it is applied. They look forward to the rewards they can earn as recognition of their good behaviour, and appreciate that there are some pupils who need occasional reminders of the behaviour expected of them.
- The social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the pupils is a strength of the school. For example, Years 3 and 4 planned and delivered their own assembly to the rest of the school, and all pupils sat patiently and attentively as they listened to a story, then responded willingly to

answer questions, then reflected on the personal goals that they had set themselves.

- The school's work to keep the students safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good awareness of managing risk, such as using the internet.
- There is little bullying, and on the very few occasions it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly by staff. Pupils are confident there is always someone to talk to if they need.
- The school recognises that some pupils benefit from time to talk about their feelings so that they are mentally ready for learning. The school follows a programme where some pupils can take the opportunity to discuss all types of issues with a member of staff.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by highly effective senior and subject leaders, has successfully maintained the good performance since the previous inspection and also led consistent improvements in all aspects of the school as demonstrated by pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching being consistently good throughout the school.
- School leaders and governors have a clear idea of how to continue the pace of improvement with carefully planned actions and targets reflecting high aspirations for the pupils' future. Subject leaders are fully aware of the areas of strength in their subjects and effectively organise additional training for staff to continue to improve what pupils can achieve.
- Good leadership of literacy, numeracy, each Key Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that pupils' individual needs are assessed, and effective support put in place. This ensures that pupils make good progress and their learning is carefully tracked and reported to governors. However, the progress that the most able pupils make is not tracked as closely as that of pupils eligible for the pupil premium or disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The headteacher rigorously monitors the quality of teaching and the performance of teaching staff. Systematic and regular lesson observations, combined with assessment of pupils' achievement and work, leads to targets being set for each member of staff. These are then used to ensure that any training or professional development courses attended has the maximum impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Teachers appreciate the opportunities available for the recognition of good performance and the chance to apply for further responsibilities when possible.
- The curriculum is designed to allow for several opportunities for pupils to write in all subject areas, and this has resulted in writing skills being developed well since the previous inspection.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to employ additional staff and resources to offer academic help as well as emotional support for eligible pupils.
- Additional funding for the development of Physical Education is used to employ professional sports coaches jointly with other local schools. Teachers are fully involved in the sessions led by the coaches, and develop their own skills in teaching Physical Education. Pupils respond eagerly to the opportunities to take part in sports clubs as a result of this funding.

- The involvement of parents in the school is a strength. Parents are enthusiastic about the opportunities to visit school to help with their children’s learning, for example, helping making robots as a part of a Year 4 topic. They say they feel welcome in school and that the staff are friendly and approachable.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school’s performance and of its strengths and areas to develop. They ask questions of school leaders about aspects of the school, and recognise the need to ask more challenging questions about pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching, and so are in the process of forming a subcommittee to have this as its focus. They set a clear strategic direction for the school and carry out their duties diligently.
- Governors often visit the school and link with subject areas to monitor and evaluate progress and learning. They lead the school as part of a team with the senior leaders.
- They have allocated the pupil premium effectively and to have the maximum impact for eligible pupils, as demonstrated by the achievement of pupils in 2013 and those currently in the school.
- They encourage teaching staff to apply for more responsibility, and make sure that good performance is rewarded through the teacher’s pay and underperformance supported by appropriate professional development if necessary.

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	137185
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	440678

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Snelson
Headteacher	Claire Davies
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2012
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