

St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Wordsworth Road, London, N16 8DD

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Participation in the federation has helped to stabilise the school and supported its improvement. It has provided strong leadership and governance both sharply focused on raising the quality of teaching and the pupils' attainment.
- Teaching has improved considerably and is now consistently good across the school. This is leading to the good progress now seen in all year groups and to rising attainment.
- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes and well-organised induction arrangements help the children settle into their new surroundings and enable them to quickly start to learn.
- Improving behaviour has been a key to raising achievement and contributes to the harmonious atmosphere in the school. Pupils are polite, well mannered and understand the importance of behaving well.
- Reading is seen as crucial if the pupils are to succeed. Basic skills are developed well through a tightly structured programme that also promotes wider skills of comprehension.
- The active promotion of the school's values of 'Endurance, Hope and Trust' through lessons and assemblies contributes greatly to the pupils' personal development.
- The school makes sure the pupils get plenty of physical exercise. Pupils develop healthy lifestyles through their participation in a wide range of physical and sporting activities.
- The needs of each individual pupil are carefully identified so that focused support can be put in place to support their development.
- Pupils show great determination to be successful by working hard in lessons and trying their best at all times.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- When teaching is less successful it is generally because teachers do not make learning interesting enough to engage pupils and retain their attention fully.
- The pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation are not promoted as well as other key skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, four of which were seen together with the senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and so the results were taken into account of a survey undertaken by the school during the summer term to which 100 parents and carers responded. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information on the pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also listened to the reading of a sample of pupils in Year 2.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clementina Olufunke Aina

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is average in size.
- Almost all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and three quarters are from families of Black Caribbean and Black African heritages.
- One third of the pupils speak English as an additional language, although few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The majority of pupils are known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Their needs are varied.
- More pupils than in most other primary schools join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- The school is a member of the Primary Advantage Federation of local schools. The federation is led by an Executive Principal and the school by a headteacher who took up the post at Easter 2013. Governance is through a federation governing body and a school committee with a range of devolved responsibilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good and increase the amount that is outstanding by:
 - making learning interesting throughout all parts of each lesson so that pupils remain fully engaged
 - ensuring that pupils' learning is not slowed by listening to explanations they already understand.
- Raise attainment in grammar, spelling and punctuation by implementing a teaching programme to develop these skills systematically across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From skills well below those expected for their age on entry pupils are now reaching average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 6 test results rose in 2013 in all areas, continuing the improvement seen in reading and mathematics the year before. Most pupils are ready for secondary school, reaching levels expected for their age. An increasing number of pupils are working at higher levels because the more able are challenged consistently. There is no pattern to any variation in attainment by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and later arrivals make the same good progress as others.
- Key skills develop well. Pupils read daily in all classes, regularly at home and with reading partners from a law firm. They quickly learn how to apply their phonic skills (linking letters with sounds) when faced with unfamiliar words. The pupils' writing has improved considerably as they have plenty of opportunity to write at length having first spent time planning and discussing their ideas. Pupils make good gains in their mathematical skills which are consolidated through their application to problems and investigations.
- Children make rapid gains in their confidence and skills in the Nursery and Reception classes. The majority of the most recent cohort reached a good level of development, which represented a considerable improvement over recent years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. This is a result of careful planning and the range of additional programmes. Pupils speaking English as an additional language also make good progress through the focus throughout the school on developing speaking and listening.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to provide individual and small group work to boost the achievement of eligible pupils. As a result, these pupils are making good progress and attainment at the end of Year 6 for the last two years has been in line with, or slightly above, others in English and mathematics.
- Specialist sports coaches teach physical education lessons well. They organise many lunchtime activities with almost all pupils involved, offer a wide range of popular and well-attended after-school clubs and run successful competitive sports teams.
- Results in the new grammar, punctuation and spelling test for Year 6 pupils were lower than in other subjects. This was because the school had not developed a systematic approach to teaching these skills. Leaders have recognised this and are starting to put in place new programmes to support teaching.

The quality of teaching is good

- One key feature of almost all teaching is the calm and well-organised classrooms in which learning is uninterrupted by disruptions. This is by all accounts a major improvement in recent years.
- Teachers have high expectations and work set is usually at a challenging level for all. They teach confidently and with authority. Well thought out methods and activities generate a fast pace and teachers deal quickly with any misconceptions that arise. Questioning skilfully draws out ideas from the pupils and checks their understanding. The active support and guidance of teaching assistants within lessons keeps pupils with special educational needs purposefully engaged and on task.
- Independence is encouraged in mathematics by pupils selecting tasks and resources from a range provided. This helps them to take greater responsibility for their learning. They have to consider how well they understand new ideas and the challenge they need to give themselves.
- Careful planning for the diverse needs of the children in Nursery and Reception builds well on their knowledge and skills. Positive relationships with adults enable the children to settle quickly into the daily routines. The emphasis on developing the children's listening, speaking and

communication skills is enabling many to develop basic reading skills quickly.

- Improvements to marking are helping pupils to see more clearly how they can improve their work. Pupils respond carefully to 'Green Pen Questions' provided by teachers after each piece of work. These suggest areas for improvement, check understanding or provide further challenges.
- A small number of lessons are not of the good quality seen in most classes. This is because teaching to the whole class can last for too long when pupils, often the more able, fully understand and are not moved speedily enough to tasks to consolidate or extend their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils concentrate hard and focus for long periods on the activities they are given. They work with determination, not giving up easily if tasks are hard. They listen carefully to their teachers and learn to respect the responses of others, but the concentration of a small number can waiver when teaching lacks interest or work is not demanding enough.
- Collaboration is a major factor in the successful learning seen across the school. This starts in the Nursery and Reception where children learn to take turns and share resources amicably, and is built on as they move through the school. This is seen when they readily discuss ideas with each other, work together on activities and play happily at break and lunchtimes.
- School records confirm the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils that behaviour has improved considerably in recent years. Bullying and other incidents are rare and decreasing. Pupils and parents and carers say they are confident that any occurrences are dealt with swiftly and constructively. Pupils say this is one of the main reasons why they feel so safe in school.
- The pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in steadily rising attendance which is now broadly average. Pupils greatly value all of the opportunities for sport and physical activity provided for them. They develop a strong sense of responsibility by participating as school council and eco-council representatives and as play leaders.

The leadership and management are good

- Morale is high and the staff team fully supports the direction and high aspirations of the Executive Principal, headteacher and governors. The new headteacher has already made her expectations and ambitions for the school clear to everyone. She is supported in realising these by an effective team of senior and subject leaders.
- Working within the federation gives the school access to a wide range of expertise. Teaching programmes such as for reading and mathematics are developed across the federation. The local authority has also provided a valuable outside view of the school in order to help leaders and governors clarify their priorities for improvement.
- The relentless focus on improving teaching has been rewarded by the sharp rise in the pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Individual teachers' qualities are carefully assessed so that tailored training plans can be put in place including working alongside or observing lessons taught by experts within the school and across the federation. Procedures to manage the performance of teachers are applied rigorously.
- Subject leaders are playing an important role in securing improvements in their areas through their support and guidance for colleagues. Their expertise is constantly extended and they have also benefited from sharing ideas with other subject leaders within the federation.
- The school's success in promoting equality of opportunity is shown by the lack of any pattern to variations in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Discrimination is not tolerated and good relationships are fostered within and beyond the school. This includes the close partnership with parents and carers who are encouraged to become involved in learning through workshops and the regular opportunity to work in the classroom with their children.
- Teaching is sharply focused on developing basic skills, particularly in reading. Interest is added through the topic themes all of which are linked to an educational visit. Teachers use the topics

well to promote skills, particularly in writing.

- Every opportunity is taken to broaden the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Special events such as 'International Heritage' day as well as Black History month celebrations with parental participation help in the celebration of cultural diversity. Many other international links extend the pupils' cultural awareness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Through its support and challenge, the governing body has been instrumental in the school's improvement. Governors scrutinise the work of the school very carefully including ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully implemented. Their regular visits support school self-evaluation and enable them to compare performance across the schools in the federation. They are fully aware of the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is managed so that it improves. Governors continually extend their expertise through training including in understanding assessment data. This enables them to set high targets and ask searching and pertinent questions of school leaders. The budget is carefully scrutinised to ensure resources are deployed effectively and efficiently. Governors are fully involved in decisions about the allocation of pupil premium funding and rigorously check its impact.

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	100267
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	425501

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Arnette Frederick
Head of School	Orlene Badu
Executive Principal	Sian Davies
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 September 2011
Telephone number	020 7254 1148
Fax number	020 7275 9215
Email address	admin@st-mathias.hackney.sch.uk

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