

# St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132793
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	341342
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Keane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs V McDonnell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Queens Drive Walton Liverpool L4 8UA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons or parts of lessons, observing 15 teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, visiting specialists, groups of pupils and representatives of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including policies on safeguarding, the school development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of pupils' progress, including individual education plans for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff and pupils completed questionnaires, and 112 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' achievement, including groups of pupils, for example, girls, and across the whole school in writing and mathematics
- how successful the measures to improve attendance have been
- the school's policy and actions to promote community cohesion
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority have moderate or specific learning difficulties, some have autism and a few have visual impairment. The school has gained the Basic Skills Award (four times), the Artsmark (Silver), the Sports Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils, who make excellent progress in their personal development and achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils, coupled with an excellent curriculum and good teaching, account for these very positive outcomes.

From a below-average starting point, all children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good teaching they receive. However, in this key stage there is potential to develop the quality of teaching further since there are insufficient opportunities for the children to initiate their own learning rather than always be guided by adults. This good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6 and standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to the national average. A dip in standards in 2008 was identified and addressed immediately, thanks to the positive approach taken by senior staff. Standards recovered last year and are being maintained in the current Year 6. Effective teaching throughout the school contributes well to pupils' good progress. In almost all lessons, elements of outstanding teaching are evident. Staff know their pupils well and cater for the needs of all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Assessments of how pupils are doing are regular and thorough. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking with some not matching the best in school.

The quality of pupils' learning is enhanced by their outstanding behaviour, extremely positive attitudes to learning and their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils take on board what they are taught exceptionally well so that their understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and stay safe is fully secure. Older pupils provide excellent role models for younger ones in the way they look out for one another and take on responsibilities around school and beyond. The excellent care, guidance and support for pupils underpin these outstanding outcomes.

The drive to continually improve standards and provision comes from the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. All aspects of leadership and management are outstanding in this school. For example, the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is evident in the way the staff responded to the dip in standards. Overall effectiveness has improved since the time of the last inspection and as a result, the school's capacity to improve is judged to be good.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that it matches the best in school.

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- Provide greater opportunities for children in the Reception classes to initiate their own learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

That pupils of all ages enjoy their learning is clearly shown in their mature attitudes. They listen very well and reflect on new ideas showing great sensitivity. This was well illustrated when pupils in Year 3 discussed the reasons why one boy might feel isolated by the behaviour of another. In addition, pupils display real pride in their work and set it out neatly and carefully, following the high expectations of staff. Learning is consistently good across all age groups and boys perform as well as girls in areas such as writing, in which the national trend is for girls to do better. Boys' writing was a key area to improve from the last inspection report and staff have addressed it exceptionally well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans thanks to the high quality support of teaching assistants. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make progress similar to their classmates.

The excellent school council contributes significantly to the school's improvement and pupils work positively in the wider community. There are several regular events involving the very active choir and musicians, and a number of functions to raise funds for charity. Parents report that their children often bring home what they have learnt about keeping healthy and specifically the dangers of eating too much unhealthy food. Attendance has improved and is in line with the average for all schools and punctuality is good. The number of persistent absentees was a cause for concern at the time of the last inspection. The school set about tackling the problem rigorously. Close links with the education welfare service, the appointment of a family support worker and a prominent partnership with the local 'Safer Schools' Partnership Police Officer, have had significant success. The school now has very few pupils with poor attendance and most of these involve pupils with complex medical needs.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

High expectations, a good pace and excellent relationships between staff and pupils feature in all lessons. The teaching is planned to cater for the needs of all levels of attainment in classes, and teaching assistants are very well deployed to work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or with groups of lower attainers. Staff track the progress of pupils well and regularly check that targets in English and mathematics match the needs of pupils. Marking of pupils' work is supportive. In the best examples, pupils are made aware of the next steps and there is often opportunity for pupils to comment themselves or to comment on other pupils' work. This excellent practice is not consistent throughout the school, however.

The curriculum continues to be outstanding. Basic skills are securely taught and opportunities for pupils to practise skills of reading and writing in other subjects are frequent. Specialist subject teaching, such as in music and physical education, is excellent. Enrichment activities, intervention programmes, extra classes after school, visits, visitors and residential trips, all contribute to the exceptional quality of the curriculum. As a result, pupils really enjoy their learning and their personal development is very well enhanced.

All aspects of care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. The school always goes the extra mile to ensure pupils, especially the more vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are very well looked after. Teachers and support staff use the training they have received in aspects such as child protection, visual impairment, family bereavement and specific learning difficulties, to excellent effect in order to help pupils to make good progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>
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## How effective are leadership and management?

It is a measure of the quality of the leadership of the school that the drive to raise expectations and improve provision has been unstinting. This has been despite several changes to the senior leadership team, arising when individual staff leave because of promotions. School development planning is keenly focused on raising pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation, through regular reviews, addresses any shortcomings quickly and decisively. The work of the governing body continues to be of a high standard and now includes a review of their effectiveness by an outside consultant. This is excellent practice and means that governors provide a high level of challenge, as well as support, for senior leaders of the school. All aspects of safeguarding, child protection and the safe recruitment of staff are outstanding. The school looks after the interests of all pupils exceptionally well and makes sure none is discriminated against. There is an excellent focus on how the school can contribute to community cohesion. For example, it has a strong role in reducing anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood, especially through its links with the local police. The curriculum contributes very well to the pupils' understanding of other ethnic groups and different faiths and there are effective international links with schools abroad.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children's attainment on entry varies from year to year but in the past has been

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mostly well below average. Attainment on entry of the current year group was better, although below average. Relationships with adults are good and most children learn to play together well. They learn how to play and use equipment safely. They make most progress in their personal and social development. Their language skills also develop well. For example, children talked about 'wavy grass', 'the cold river' and 'bozy mud' to describe conditions when they were pretending to go on a 'bear hunt'. Most of the Reception-aged children are currently working at or just below levels expected for their age.

All adults have a good awareness of the curriculum for this age group and planning is of high quality, ensuring that children are appropriately challenged. However, activities are often directed too much by the staff and do not allow enough opportunity for the children to explore and pursue their own ideas. This has an adverse impact on their natural curiosity and imaginative play. Both indoors and outdoors, the learning environment is interesting and well resourced.

Leadership and management are good. The key stage leader also oversees Key Stage 1 and has good specialist knowledge. She teaches in Year 1 and, therefore, helps the transition process from the Early Years Foundation Stage very well. All procedures to ensure safeguarding and health and safety are robust. There are strong links with parents and carers and regular opportunities to inform them of how well their children are doing. Keeping track of the children's progress is a real strength of the provision, with very attractively presented booklets called 'Learning Journeys' that are shared with parents and carers.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very positive in their views, indicating a great measure of support for and satisfaction with the work of the school. In addition, approximately 25 spoke to inspectors during the inspection. Strengths they pointed to include the good progress their children make, the school's high reputation in the neighbourhood, the excellent behaviour of the pupils and the approachability of staff. A comment typical of many is, 'I couldn't have picked a better school'. Particular praise was singled out for the school from parents or carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors agree with these very positive views. There were no significant areas of concern expressed by those who



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completed the questionnaire or spoke to inspectors.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 341 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	68	35	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	75	28	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	50	51	46	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	60	44	39	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	69	34	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	63	39	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	50	51	46	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	39	51	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	60	43	38	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	54	44	39	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	51	48	43	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	63	39	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	71	31	28	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L4 8UA

It was such a pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with an outstanding education. We could tell from talking to you that you are really proud of it and enjoy coming to school. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you have achieved well in English, mathematics and science. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work very hard. You behave exceptionally well and look after each other, for example in the buddy system. The older children are a fine model for the younger ones. You have learnt a great deal about how to stay safe and healthy and you take part in many events in the community. We think the opportunities you have for trips out of school, events in school and residential trips are outstanding! We were very impressed by the choir and how they have performed at important places in the city and at the International Eisteddfod. Your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you all and make sure that you all feel safe and secure.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are two improvements to make.

- When teachers mark your work, some miss opportunities to say what the next steps in your learning are and do not give you the chance to comment on how well you think you are doing.
- Children in the Reception classes need more opportunities to use their natural curiosity and imagination to decide for themselves what they want to do.

Please continue to work hard. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Frank Carruthers

Lead inspector

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