

**Summary Report to the Governing Body – July 2021**

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| **School** | St Matthew’s C of E (Aided) Primary School | **Head Teacher** | Kate Clark |
| **Prepared By** | Chris Minton | **Chair of Governors** | Anna Hill |

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| **The quality of education areas such as curriculum offer and its implementation**. |
| **Strengths**  The school’s curriculum ‘intent’ is that, through “exciting, purposeful and engaging contexts”, the pupils will “be successful in being the best that they can be.” Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons, especially those which involve their practical engagement, such as PE, Music and Art. They say that the “enthusiasm” of teachers helps to make their lessons “interesting and exciting”. Year 6 pupils, across a range of abilities, all speak confidently, and as one voice, about their teachers helping them to do their best. The pupils’ comments about the quality of their education included, “They always provide you with the help you need.” If you struggle you can ask for help.” Hence the school is meeting its curriculum ‘intent’ well. Its Christian ethos of everyone working together to achieve success is tangible as you walk around the school.  School leaders have worked hard monitoring and evaluating the school’s curriculum model, led by the newly appointed Assistant Headteacher. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well aligned to the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are making on-going adaptations to their use of a published scheme. For example, the long-term plan has been modified to ensure pupils have enough time to practise and embed specialist knowledge and skills. Age-appropriate goals, which build new learning on what pupils’ have already achieved, have been set for each year group for each subject. In Art, for instance, the Year 1 pupils use line to represent a shape or outline and in Year 2 they use line and tone to draw shapes. In this way the pupils’ drawing skills are built up year by year. By Year 6, pupils use a variety of media to represent light, shade, form, pattern and texture. Teachers plan a sequence of lessons to help pupils achieve these goals.  The progressive development of pupils’ subject knowledge is supported through their introduction and use of subject specialist vocabulary. Pupils have access to vocabulary mats, which help them to recall and use the specialist vocabulary they have learnt. This adds depth to their explanations and evidences their level of understanding. This was demonstrated when pupils were discussing their history work, as they confidently and appropriately explained the merits of primary and secondary sources to “track down the evidence”. These terms were introduced by the pupils themselves without any prompting from an adult. In Art the older pupils confidently named and explained their use of shading techniques such as hatching and cross hatching. Their technical understanding of these techniques was very impressive.  Cross-curricular work, especially when it is of a practical nature, is beginning to help pupils embed subject specific knowledge and skills into their long-term memory, as they use and apply what they have learnt across a range of contexts. For example, in a Design and Technology lessons the younger pupils made moon buggies, having been inspired by a shared text about the moon. This required them to use the skills they had recently learnt related to the axles. In addition, whilst engaged in this model making, they accurately used this newly acquired specialist term as they helped each other to attach wheels to axles.  Motivational and engaging contexts are used well to ‘hook’ pupils into their learning. This was challenging this year due to the pandemic, which prevented school visits. However, when restrictions allowed, teachers invited visitors in to run workshops. A Year 5 pupil spoke very animatedly about her experience of a History workshop based on life in World War 2. Linked to this visit, a group of pupils shared their thoughts regarding the government’s use of propaganda (this word was independently introduced by the pupils and clearly understood) to shape people’s opinions. This shows that the school is very successfully meeting an Ofsted priority from its most recent inspection report, related to the teaching of specialist vocabulary.  Teachers have overseen and provided coached support to those support staff who at times provide too much help to pupils, resulting in them becoming over reliant on adult support and therefore lacking the confidence and resilience to work things out on their own. Subsequent monitoring by the Deputy-Headteacher shows support staff have adapted their practice, allowing pauses for pupils to think through their answers before speaking. This priority on the STSA 2020-2021 annual report is being met and further coaching will take place during 2021-2022.  The importance of Reading is explicit within the school’s overall curriculum ’intent’ statement. Reading, including the teaching of phonics, is done well in the school. During the pandemic, the school’s usual practice in the organisation of phonics teaching groups had to be modified due to restrictions that had to be put in place. However, pupils made good progress despite these challenges. The bottom 20% of pupils continue to be given booster sessions which include daily time to read to an adult. During the initial lockdown period the English subject leader spent a good deal of time auditing and re-banding reading books, in line with phonic stages and age-related expectations. In addition, extra books were purchased to fill genre gaps and to ensure all year groups had high-quality, suitably challenging, books. The pupils and staff are now better equipped to match a pupil’s reading ability to an appropriate book band. The impact of interventions to improve pupil’s phonics over the term has been highly successful, rising to 84% of pupils passing the screening assessment. This was achieved through pupils accessing, amongst other things, one-one intervention support. The new books have been welcomed by pupils and has successfully encouraged them to have a love of reading.  On return to school in September 2020, after lockdown periods, staff implemented a modified curriculum. This ensured pupils had a successful transition back into school full-time, in a new year group with a new teacher. The initial focus was to place the well-being of pupils and staff at the forefront of all planning. This included a strong focus on PSHE to support pupils’ mental health needs. This was supported effectively by a newly purchased scheme, which provided teachers with helpful age-appropriate guidance. By October 2020, the teachers were back on track, implementing the agreed long-term curriculum plans for each year group. This priority in the STSA 2020-2021 annual report has been met well.  **Key priorities for development**  Continue to adapt the use of the commercial scheme of work to ensure sufficient emphasis is given to age-appropriate knowledge. It would be helpful if the progression grids were amended, with age-appropriate expectations being listed under the sub-headings of Knowledge and Skills.  Pupils need to be clearer about the explicit knowledge and skills they are working towards as well as those they have already achieved. It would be worth adapting the pupils learning labels in their books to scaffold this for them e.g., using the terms - I know…. (knowledge) and I can…… (skills).  Develop further strategies which support pupils in remembering more of their learning, to help them appreciate that their new learning builds on the knowledge and skills they have already achieved. |

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| **The effectiveness of subject leadership to drive forward improvements – capacity to improve** |
| The core subjects are led by strong experienced leaders. They use ‘deep dive’ monitoring activities effectively to identify what is going well in their subject and what needs to be improved. They use this information to write action plans with clear success criteria. Their knowledge of their subjects is strong. The Mathematics Leader has compiled very helpful documents on Reasoning. These have been shared at a consultant led training session and were very well received. This work has also been shared with other local schools as an example of good practice. The Mathematics leader is to be commended for his hard work in developing the school’s approach to the teaching of reasoning. The English Leader is a Subject Leader of Education (SLE), and in this role has supported schools in the West-Midlands region. She is an outstanding practitioner.  Foundation subject leaders are keen to ensure that their subject provides pupils with a good standard of education, aspiring for it to be ‘outstanding’. They understand the importance of deep-dive self-review / monitoring activities, although pandemic restrictions have limited their opportunities to carry these out. These skills will need embedding during 2021-2022. This priority in the STSA 2020-2021 annual report is being met well.  Subject leaders have undertaken a substantial amount of training; accessing this through STSA professional development sessions. They used this training to reflect on their subject’s practice, reviewing the quality of their subjects planning and progression. They recognised the need to do further work in separating key age-appropriate goals into those specifically related to knowledge and those linked to skills.  The subject leadership team as a whole has enhanced the school’s strong capacity to improve.  **Key priorities for development**  Subject leaders need to embed their use of ‘deep dive’ monitoring skills to inform their evaluative reports on the quality of education in their subjects. These reports need to be presented to a range of audiences, including senior leaders, the Governing Body and the STSA School Improvement Adviser.  Subject leaders need to exemplify pupil progress by collating, across a curriculum strand, recorded evidence which illustrates and exemplifies how year group expectations build new knowledge and skills on those pupils have already mastered. |

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| **The effectiveness of senior leadership, including governors** |
| **Strengths**  The senior leadership team has changed through the course of the year, following the Deputy Headteacher’s successful promotion to a Headship. Both the new Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher were promoted internally from within the current strong staffing team.  The Headteacher provides an outstanding model of leadership for her colleagues to emulate. Her creative solution focused response to challenges is second to none. At all times she makes decisions which are in the best interests of the pupils. She constantly models the school’s Christian values and Team spirit through her words and actions. She is fully committed to the school’s ‘intent’ statement in: “…developing each child’s unique potential, within a secure and caring environment where every child’s health and wellbeing is strengthened.”  The Early Years Leader is an ‘outstanding’ leader and practitioner. She leads by example, and her strong vision is evident in the highly motivational learning environment she has secured. Her pedagogical and subject specific knowledge is very strong. She trains her staff team well, and they flourish under her guidance. Aspirational targets are set and in ‘normal’ times have been consistently met; taking pupils who are significant below the standard expected for their age, to reach national expectations and beyond. This year, due to pandemic restrictions and lockdowns, the children have not attained as well as they have in the past. However, progress data remains outstanding. Assessment data is used well to identify gaps in children’s knowledge and understanding. Group or individual interventions are then put in place to address these areas. The Early Years Leader is a SLE and has supported many schools both locally and further afield. Her advice is received well, and there is lots of evidence to show the positive impact she has made on the quality of education in other settings.  The Deputy Headteacher, who is also the SENDCo, demonstrates ‘outstanding’ leadership qualities. She uses an evidence-based approach to identify areas which need to be improved, across all areas in the Ofsted Framework: Quality of Education, Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Attitudes and Personal Development. Strategic decisions are made in a balanced and well thought through manner. The approach used is, like the Headteacher, one whereby pupils and staff are encouraged to be part of the solution to a problem. In this way an inclusive and affirmative ethos has been developed, especially in relation to the support provided for pupils with SEND. These pupils flourish in an environment where they feel safe and understood. This ‘outstanding’ practice led to the Deputy Headteacher being selected to support other schools who need to improve their SEND provision. This work has been well received by colleagues in other schools.  The newly appointed Assistant Headteacher has a key role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school’s curriculum offer. In this role she has secured a good overview of what is going well and what requires further adjustment. Her findings show that modifications are needed to the way in which age-related expectations are presented in each subject’s progression documents. Key curriculum knowledge goals and key skills need to be separated out. This will help staff and pupils to be clearer about the age-related knowledge and skills they have achieved, and those they are now working on to achieve. At the moment pupils are not clear about the difference. This judgement by the Assistant Headteacher, based on the STSA adviser’s evidence base, is accurate.  The Senior Leadership team work positively and strategically to address challenges. They have supported their pupils and colleagues unstintingly during this pandemic period. They have supported staff to successfully deliver the school’s curriculum ‘intent’ despite the restrictions and turbulence of the past year.  The Governing Body are kept well informed by school leaders and the Chair of Governors as to school’s strengths and priorities for development. The Chair of Governors takes an important and active role in all termly meetings, led by the STSA School Improvement Adviser. At these meetings, the school’s actions to address priorities for development are evaluated in relation to their impact. The Chair of Governors asks questions when clarification or additional evidence is needed to support judgements. Governors have also undertaken monitoring activities alongside school leaders, to deepen their understanding of the school strengths and development areas. Their commitment to the school and its on-going improvements means that the Governing Body adds further strength to the school’s overall capacity to improve.  **Key priorities for development**  Senior leaders need to ensure that the subject leaders in the Foundation subjects are provided with professional development support to ensure their judgements on the quality of education are accurate by:   * implementing a coaching programme which incorporates internally and externally led support from experienced subject leaders and the STSA school adviser. |

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| **Behaviour and attitudes** |
| **Strengths**  Visitors to St Matthew’s Primary School and Nursery are met by warm and welcoming staff and pupils. The school environment is a place of calm, harmonious and purposeful activity, where pupils say they love to be. As a pupil with SEND put it, “They give me help when I need it but not before”. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and responsible for their own actions. This includes their behaviour choices. Exclusions are very rare, but on the rare occasions when this may be needed a pupil is swiftly integrated back into their class.  The pupils understand the importance of rules and they say that these are applied fairly. They recognise that rules ensure that the school is a safe and secure place to be. Pupils appreciate that to break the rules means consequences have to be put in place, such as having to stay in class during break times. However, they say that misbehaviour is infrequent and that there is no bullying in the school. They are confident that if bullying did occur it would be dealt with swiftly by adults. They have a good understanding of what cyber-bullying means and how this should be dealt with if it happens.  Pupils make an active and positive impact in securing a school environment where positive behaviour and attitudes are celebrated and secured. They do this effectively through a range of representative groups, such as the School Council and Safeguarding and Well-Being Boards. These groups provide pupils with a voice to air their concerns and worries so that school continues to be a happy, safe and secure place for everyone.  Attendance is good, although understandably turbulent across this academic year due to the pandemic. Any concerns regarding attendance are followed up as a matter of urgency.  **Key priority for development**  Senior leaders should collate evidence to demonstrate how pupils in the various representative groups have made a positive impact on quality of provision in the school, especially in terms of pupils’ behaviour and attitudes. |

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| **Personal development** |
| **Strengths**  Pandemic restrictions have had a considerable impact on the range of opportunities pupils have had to engage in learning away from their immediate environment. The usual wide range of memorable activities to engage pupils and develop their cultural capital have been curtailed. However, pupils have had the opportunity to welcome visitors to the school who have enriched the curriculum offer. This included a highly effective History workshop which was thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils, as they engaged in activities, such as taping up windows as a safety precaution against the impact of falling bombs! Through their lessons, pupils are introduced to the works of a wide range of famous and influential people, including authors and artists. The Year 6 pupil could name Henry Moore as a sculptor and artists such as Monet and Banksy, explaining that Picasso was an abstract artist.  Leaders constructed a recovery curriculum based on the values of the school to reintegrate pupils back into school full-time, addressing their emotional health and wellbeing needs following COVID 19. This included offering early intervention to any pupils who required further support for their mental health. This priority in the STSA 2020-2021 annual report has been met well. Much has been accomplished over the year in terms of supporting pupils’ mental health and wellbeing. Pupils know that if they are worried or anxious, they can tell a trusted adult, like a teacher. They also have access to a worry box, in which they can put written notes identifying any worries they may have. This is then followed up with individuals or the whole class, depending on the nature of the worry. One Year 6 pupil said that she manages her worries by “writing it on a piece of paper, screwing it up and throwing it away.” Another pupil said she would read a book to take her mind off her worries. Pupils explained that they had enjoyed the activities they had done during Mental Health Week. They also understand the importance of staying physically healthy. They know that they need to have a balanced diet, with fruit and vegetables, and that they get this if they have a school lunch. They say that their PE lessons also help to keep them fit, and they like the fact that they have two of these lessons each week.  The school has adopted a published scheme to support staff in teaching their PSHE lessons. This provides them with age-related expectations so that they can plan lessons which build on what pupils already know and can do. The statutory Relationships and Sex Education Policy has been adopted by the Governing Body, aligned to advice from the Diocese. This followed a consultation meeting with parents and a team of governors. This priority in the STSA 2020-2021 annual report has been met. At the very start of the Autumn term 2021 a PD Day will provide staff training on the implementation of the policy. School leaders are incorporating the Expect Respect guidelines into their PSHE scheme to ensure that it is fully compliant with statutory requirements.  **Key priority for development**  Senior leaders, alongside the PSHE leader, need to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new PSHE scheme of work and the Expect Respect document to ensure new learning is successfully building on what pupils already know and can do. |