

# St Margaret's Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	354968
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marion Wallace

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>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	beryl maltby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Chew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Margaret Road Barnet EN4 9NT
<b>Telephone number</b>	02084495466
<b>Fax number</b>	02084499216
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-margarets.barnetmail.net

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 learning activities and observed the work of all four teachers and the Nursery practitioners. They held meetings with governors and staff of both the school and children's centre and had discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the Nursery and looked at a range of documentation including the Nursery improvement plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curricular planning and photographic evidence provided by the school. In addition, the responses of 60 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed and their content taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of children's progress in developing calculation skills.
- How well children progress in learning to link sounds and letters (phonics).
- How well children become aware of their own bodies and their health.
- How well adults use assessment to inform their planning for different groups of children, including those who are part-time and those in the extended day provision.

## Information about the school

St Margaret's Nursery School provides part-time provision for children aged three and four and some extended full day care provision for a few children. The school provides for children living in the New Barnet and surrounding area. Children generally spend between three and five terms at the Nursery according to their age. Children come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. An above average percentage of children speak English as an additional language. There are 27 languages spoken within the school community. Very few children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A minority of children are known to be eligible for free school meals. Since the previous inspection, a children's centre, which is based in the school, has been established. The children's centre is managed by the governors of the school but was not inspected within this inspection.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

St Margaret's provides an outstanding education for its children; this very high quality has been maintained since the last inspection. Children enjoy the school immensely. It is highly valued by parents and carers and plays a central part in the community. Parents greatly appreciate the excellent quality care and superb learning opportunities. One parent summed up the views of the vast majority saying, 'St Margaret's is a fantastic Nursery. My son loves coming and he is reluctant to leave. It provides a very stimulating, nurturing and caring environment inside and outside. It is an excellent springboard for his next school.'

These are the key outstanding strengths of the provision and outcomes for children.

Children achieve exceptionally well from starting points that are generally at the expected level. By the time they leave to join their Reception classes, they are confident and independent learners, with the vast majority reaching attainment much higher than is typical for their age.

The excellent atmosphere of care, nurture and support ensures children thrive in their personal development. Each child is fully included in what is offered and they and their parents are treated as individuals.

Children have a highly positive attitude to learning because relationships are outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they are extremely happy, interested learners.

Children's welfare is exceptionally well provided for and consequently they flourish in an extremely safe and secure environment. They thoroughly enjoy a highly varied and wide range of exciting and carefully planned activities. These encourage children to learn and develop exceptionally well. The quality of outdoor learning and physical development is superb.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop excellent awareness of other cultures, religions and ethnicities for their age because the school celebrates festivals and the diversity of the many cultures represented in the setting.

The school's planning and extended day provision is excellent and supports children, parents and carers extremely well. Children enjoy visits to local galleries, supermarkets, libraries, strawberry fields, farms, parks and many other places of interest. These visits provide opportunities for children to learn and understand new things well because they are based on first-hand experiences.

There are high-quality partnerships with support services and also with parents and carers, who are unanimous in saying that they are extremely happy with their children's experience at St Margaret's.

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All staff are highly experienced and skilful, they all contribute extremely well to the school's evaluation and each adult makes a valuable contribution to the development of the school. The headteacher's inspirational, thoughtful and wise leadership and management continues to ensure the success of the Nursery.

There is one main area for improvement:

Although attendance is good, a few parents and carers are not sufficiently aware of the importance of bringing their children to the Nursery more regularly. This includes when the weather is inclement and avoiding extended holidays during term time.

The headteacher and senior leaders provide outstanding vision and drive and this contributes very effectively to the success of the Nursery. There is very accurate evaluation of all aspects of the centre's provision and performance. This leads to actions that are well considered and highly effective in bringing about improvements. The school's track record in maintaining outstanding effectiveness since its last inspection, and clear development priorities demonstrate that the school has excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Raise awareness amongst some parents and carers of the importance of attending regularly, including during inclement weather, and to avoid taking extended holidays during term time.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

The vast majority of children, including those with special educational needs and /or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make rapid progress because their needs are identified and carefully considered individual programmes are developed. A very small minority who go on holiday in term time and are sometimes absent during inclement weather make less progress.

Children's speaking, listening, ability to link sounds to letters and their communication skills are extremely well developed. For example, a group of more able children identified the names of objects found in the 'special box' and skilful challenge by the teacher encouraged them to select the objects with the same rhyming sound. They placed the objects in pairs and gleefully named them, for example, dog/frog, house/mouse, twig/wig. This group read simple text in the story, recognising the rhyming words.

Adults continually challenge children to identify numbers and develop their calculation skills. Children also learn to be aware of other children's preferences. In one session, children learnt about democracy; for example they selected their favourite story book. The teacher skilfully made a tally to show the most and least liked story book. Children were challenged to count the number of votes for each book and to identify the story book with the most and the least votes.

Children enjoy opportunities to tackle challenging tasks, be creative and to use their imagination. A small group was totally absorbed making their own individual models using wooden blocks, coloured sawdust and coloured wood shavings. One child proudly showed his model; it was a dinosaur, it had wings and it could fly! When asked if the dinosaur had a name, the boy replied confidently, 'It's a dagasaurus!'

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Children learn to concentrate for long periods of time because they are thoroughly engrossed in the activities and there are excellent opportunities to talk through their observations with adults and other children. Practitioners seize opportunities to challenge children through skilful questioning, tasks and use of resources because planning identifies clearly different levels of challenge for different groups of children. In an outstanding session, children were challenged to paint the moon and draw the features on the moon. One child clearly explained about moon craters to her mother at the end of the session.

On arrival, children settle very quickly into the daily routine because the support and care are of high quality. Although children develop a close bond with their key worker, all adults provide excellent support and act as role models to develop children's confidence and consideration for others. Children enjoy taking responsibility, such as caring for the plants, tidying and clearing up. They show respect for each other and know the importance of caring for the environment. Children have an excellent appreciation of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and their growing confidence indicates that they feel extremely safe in school. Developmental movement sessions are excellent and develop children's physical skills and coordination alongside their awareness of the effect of activity on their body. The school has established links with Kaliro, a town in Uganda. Children have produced a book about water. They know that there is not much water in some places in Africa. Children suggest sending children in Kaliro bottles of water and salad. One child suggested, 'Let's paint their school silver and put lights in it. We can send the children envelopes so that they can write and tell us what they want.'

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<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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## How effective is the provision?

All children show obvious enjoyment in learning whether indoors or outdoors, in small-group work, independent learning or when taking part in a large group singing and movement session. This is the result of consistently high quality teaching, an exciting and well-planned curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support.

The large majority of sessions observed were excellent. Children make outstanding gains in all areas of their learning because sessions are extremely well organised and adults successfully use a range of methods to involve children in their own learning and ensure lessons are fun. Adults track each child's progress, and daily planning reflects this extremely well and takes account of children's individual needs in all areas of learning.

Practitioners have excellent knowledge of how young children learn and the next steps they need to take. Learning opportunities are excellent and consequently all children are challenged to experiment, collaborate and explore through a wide range of activities. This leads to extended discussions and problem solving. Adults are extremely skilled at knowing when to intervene and when to stand back to enable the children to find things out for themselves. Adults assess children's development carefully and develop a detailed picture of the children's skills and development. They are complemented by a wide range of photographs. Activities for the extended day children are extremely well planned; consequently, children learnt to count simple numbers while playing a bear hunt game, make their own bread for tea and sing a range of singing games.

There is an excellent balance between adult-directed activities and opportunities to learn through play and exploration. Children starting the Nursery settle in extremely well because of the excellent induction and highly effective home visits. The high-quality resources stimulate children's interest and encourage them to explore and investigate. In a support session to develop their speech, two children made excellent gains learning to take turns, make decisions, identify objects and express themselves clearly. There was a real sense of fun as one child who had been reluctant to speak learnt to instruct her teacher what to do with the balloon, saying, 'Bigger, bigger, finish, ready, steady, go.' She was thrilled as the balloon expanded on her command and ecstatic as it zoomed around the room. Care, guidance and support for families, as well as for children, are excellent. Links between the Nursery and the children's centre are extremely well established.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The high aspirations, superb efficiency and drive of the headteacher and senior leaders have permeated the school, ensuring outstanding leadership and management have been maintained over time. Leaders at all levels communicate ambition very effectively and there is a strong, enthusiastic commitment from all staff to provide each child with the best possible education. Teamwork is extremely strong and the monitoring and evaluation procedures, involving all staff, successfully drive improvement. Many staff, including the headteacher, have served the school for a number of years but they maintain a dedicated commitment to the needs of children, parents and carers.

All children are welcomed and included. Staff are very effective in tackling discrimination and ensuring equality for all. Links with a wide range of agencies are extremely strong and are enhanced through the children's centre provision. Child protection procedures are extremely robust and all arrangements to ensure that children are safeguarded from harm are highly effective.

The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well through its many partnerships with parents and carers, extensive community links, through the activities of the children's centre and the links with a school in Uganda. The school plans for community cohesion extremely well and rigorously evaluates the impact of the provision superbly.

The governing body are very active in the school and they check the impact of the Nursery very carefully, challenging robustly. There is an extremely clear vision of how to develop the Nursery and children's centre provision further. All statutory duties are met and governors are extremely supportive and fully involved in improvements.

*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>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

A large majority contributed to the views of parents and carers. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those who spoke to inspectors are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many wrote highly positive comments about how their children love attending, settle exceptionally quickly and flourish in both their personal and academic development. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were extremely positive and appreciative of the high quality support and the progress that their children make. All appreciate the high standard of education provided by the committed and talented staff and the superb resources, especially the garden and outdoor learning area. Inspection findings wholeheartedly support these views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at St Margaret's Nursery 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	92	5	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	90	6	10	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	80	12	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	80	11	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	83	10	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	68	18	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	77	14	23	0	0	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)	41	68	19	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	78	13	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	77	14	23	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	70	18	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	88	6	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	92	5	8	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



21 January 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of St Margaret's Nursery School, Barnet EN4 9NT**

Thank you very much for letting us visit your Nursery. We really enjoyed finding out about all the exciting things that you do and how well you all learn together. We particularly enjoyed watching you make your models from wood and seeing how confidently you were able to climb, balance, jump and swing on the outdoor play equipment. We think your Nursery is fantastic; we call this 'outstanding'. Here are the things that we liked most.

- The way you have so much fun and learn so many new things. This means that you know so many important things ready for your next school.
- You are all friendly and play together very well.
- All your teachers work very hard to make every day enjoyable.
- You all play so well by yourselves, with others in the role play areas such as the doctor's surgery and with children in the other classes.
- You behave very well and you know how to help each other.
- You really enjoy the healthy snacks and lunches. You all use knives and forks very well. You try hard always to do things in a safe way.
- Your headteacher does a fantastic job organising lots of helpful activities for grown-ups.
- The school cares for all of you very well.
- The school works very well with your parents and those who care for you.

We have asked the Nursery to encourage some parents to make sure that you come to school as much as you can, especially when it is raining and not very pleasant outside, and to take you on holiday in the school holidays and avoid school time. This will make sure that you do not miss any of the wonderful things that are happening at your school.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace

Lead inspector

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