

St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bowers Gifford

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115150
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357707
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Maurice Tooke
Headteacher	Mr Dean Moran
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
School address	London Road Basildon SS13 2DU
Telephone number	01268 552176
Fax number	01268 556299
Email address	admin@st-margarets-pri.essex.sch.uk

Inspection number 357707

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons taught by 11 different teachers in the 11 classes in school. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, checked arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised a range of documentation including development plans, records of progress, the monitoring of teaching and learning and minutes of the governing body's meetings. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 54 parents and carers, 144 pupils and 13 staff.

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

- Do all groups of pupils, including the higher attaining ones, make good enough progress in mathematics and science?
- Do all staff make effective use of assessment information to plan activities that challenge and motivate all groups of pupils?
- How rigorous and effective is the school's self-evaluation in identifying the quality of leadership and management and the further steps for improvement?

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. The large majority of pupils are White British while a small minority come from different minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is that of pupils who use English as an additional language. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school is much higher than average. The school holds Healthy School status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception classes. The school is situated in a geographically isolated area backing onto a very busy dual carriageway and a large majority of its pupils travel from over one kilometre away from the school. There is an onsite care service for pupils before and after the school day which is owned privately.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has improved markedly under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher and his senior team and demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. Successful teamwork of the leaders and staff in implementing a more rigorous system for monitoring progress has lifted the school out of its legacy of underachievement prior to 2008. Standards have risen from a significantly below average level from 2005 to 2007 to an average level over the past three years in English and mathematics. Attainment in science is still low as this was not an area of focus until the current year. There has been a high level of staff turnover over the past two years, with more than half the staff being new to the school. This, coupled with high pupil mobility and a high proportion of pupils who find learning difficult, has resulted in attainment remaining at the average level over the past two years. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress in all subjects in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 progress is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics, and there is an improving trend. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, with some making good progress. Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They reach expected levels and make good progress in all areas of learning.

The leaders have implemented an effective monitoring and evaluation system to raise standards in all areas of the school's work. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and provides a secure basis for development planning. The assessment system has been revised and is now more rigorous in tracking pupils' progress. There is a focus on monitoring the quality of teaching to ensure effective support for the new and existing staff. The role of subject leaders has improved but high staff turnover means that some of the leaders have not had enough time to develop their roles sufficiently. The governors have secure understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. They work closely with the leaders and staff to improve all areas of the school's work.

Staff work well together to ensure an effective level of care for all pupils. They work efficiently in close liaison with outside agencies to support all pupils, including those who are identified as being vulnerable. Behaviour has improved and is good. Pupils develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners because of the caring ethos of the school. Views taken from parents reveal that the large majority are happy with their children's experience in the school. One parent commented, 'My child started at St Margaret's last January. She is doing so well in reading and writing. She looks forward to going to school.'

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, several good lessons were observed during the inspection. This is because of more rigorous monitoring of teaching over the last term. The impact of the current improvement in teaching is not yet fully evident in pupils' overall

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

progress. Staff have good relationships with the pupils and make good use of interactive whiteboards and other resources to support learning. In the lessons where teaching had the most impact on learning, it was clear what pupils were expected to learn. Here, tasks were well matched to individual needs. However, assessment information is not always used effectively enough to plan lessons to meet the varying needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. In some lessons, the teaching input is too long and means that pupils are not engaged fully in their learning. The investigative approach to teaching science is less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that the more able pupils are consistently challenged so that they achieve as well as they can
 - increasing the opportunities for investigative work in science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons with clear objectives to move the learning of all pupils forward
 - engaging pupils fully in their own learning through a better balance between teaching input and the time for pupils to work independently
- Extend the roles of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating their subjects.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Observations of lessons show that pupils learn, develop understanding and acquire new skills at a satisfactory rate. Pupils' progress in English has accelerated over the past two years because of strong focus on developing pupils' reading and writing skills. The Book Week event during the inspection demonstrated clearly pupils' enjoyment in reading a wide variety of books and writing their own stories. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils read a range of stories to identify the effective features of a synopsis. They wrote their own account ensuring that their writing is interesting enough to attract readers. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. When given the opportunity, they enjoy discussing their ideas with others and working cooperatively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make thoroughly satisfactory progress year on year as a result of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from all support staff. There is no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and take part eagerly in a wide range of sporting activities. Their good levels of social and moral development are evident in their good behaviour around the school and their contribution to the school community.

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

Pupils respect others' values and beliefs. They undertake jobs responsibly around the school, such as representing others on the school council. They raise funds for charities and recognise the need to do so. Attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, it is more effective in Years 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy discussing their ideas with others, although sometimes opportunities are missed to engage them in this way or encourage them to take responsibility for aspects of their learning and so become more independent. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate each other's work, such as evaluating each other's reading skills, as seen in an English lesson in Year 2. They only become restless on those occasions when they have to wait a long time to get started because the introduction to the lessons has gone for too long. Although planning takes account of the different ages and abilities in classes, it does not always provide sufficiently challenging tasks for more able pupils. Children start in the Reception classes with lower than expected skills and abilities. They make good progress during the Reception Year and achieve the levels expected of them when they enter Year 1. There is a satisfactory range of after school clubs including, sports and arts but the wide geographic spread of pupils' homes means that after school activities are restricted. Curriculum planning is satisfactory but does not ensure sufficient coverage in science across the school.

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

The school provides good pastoral support for all its pupils and its good links with the external agencies strengthen the pastoral system continually. The improved use of assessment data is particularly effective in identifying and supporting the precise needs faced by pupils with special educational needs and the vulnerable groups. The arrangements for transferring to secondary schools are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders are driving improvement successfully. They have introduced strategies by which they can improve the teaching and raise pupils' learning and achievement consistently. They make good use of the information they gain from tracking pupils' progress and evaluating teaching to identify weaknesses and set clear improvement goals. The thorough analysis of data enables the school to identify the action that is needed to maintain recent improvements. The governing body has gone through several changes and has a new Chair, a new vice-chair and several new members. They are being increasingly involved in shaping the school's direction.

The school has developed good partnership with parents involving them increasingly in their children's education. It is committed to equal opportunities and is consistently seeking ways to raise standards of achievement for all groups of pupils. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Pupils' have an understanding of the lifestyle in Africa through the school's link with several schools in Africa, but its engagement at the local level is limited. Safeguarding procedures and those for child protection are rigorous in ensuring that all pupils are safe.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education as a result of a well-organised curriculum and good teaching. A positive learning environment with attractive displays and a good range of resources ensures that children make good progress during their time in the Reception class. Children make good progress in Reception, and by the end of the year, the majority reach expected standards.

Children respond well to the vibrant displays and benefit from well-planned adult-led sessions. They quickly engage in their chosen activities with interest and enthusiasm. Children's welfare and safety are given the highest priority. They enjoy playing and learning in the secure, spacious and well-equipped indoor and outdoor areas and develop good coordination and personal skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.

A wide range of practical activities are planned effectively to stimulate children's imagination and to extend their speaking and listening skills. This was evident in a session where children read the story of 'Three Little Pigs'. Here, they chose different activities and were purposefully engaged in role plays, developing good language, imaginative and social skills. Regular teaching of the link between sounds and letters results in children making good progress in reading and writing. Occasionally, however, children spend too long in the carpet area and have, as a result, limited opportunity to develop their independent learning skills.

The school ensures good relationships and close contact with families through an effective induction system. Children are assessed consistently and effectively. Leadership is effective in providing children with an enjoyable, safe and secure environment for learning.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The very large majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaires are very positive about the school and are pleased with their children's experience. They appreciated that the school keeps their children safe and it ensures that pupils develop good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Most parents feel that they are sufficiently informed about their children's progress. Within these positive views, a small minority raised individual concerns about the management of behaviour and that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team found that the behaviour of pupils is managed well and it is good. They also found that the school works hard to involve parents and carers to their children's education and in all aspects of its work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bowers Gifford 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 268 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	65	15	28	4	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	57	18	33	5	9	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	41	25	46	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	44	23	43	2	4	4	7
The teaching is good at this school	26	48	23	43	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	32	30	57	2	4	4	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	36	34	63	1	2	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)	26	48	20	37	2	4	3	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	35	26	48	4	7	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	24	31	57	3	6	6	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	17	30	56	7	13	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	21	39	23	43	7	13	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	59	15	28	4	7	2	4

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



11 October 2010

Dear pupils,

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, SS13 2DU

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that the school takes good care of you. You behave well and are keen to help each other. You carry out your duties, including the special jobs as school council representatives, responsibly. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection and sharing your views with us.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. As a result you make satisfactory progress and the large majority of you reach the standards expected by the time you leave Year 6.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- help you to improve your work further in mathematics and science
- give you more opportunities for investigative work in science
- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible
- make sure that the teachers with special responsibilities help you achieve even better.

I am sure that you will work hard and attend regularly to help the school make these improvements.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.