

# St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104097
<b>Local Authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	355520
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Georgina Beasley

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dennis Jordan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Street
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Southfield Avenue Castle Bromwich, Birmingham B36 9AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7472025
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<b>Email address</b>	office@ss-m-and-m.solihull.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and eight teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff, and talked with parents and carers informally. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, assessment procedures, progress tracking, lesson and curriculum planning, policies and procedures, monitoring reports and the school improvement plan. They received and analysed 119 questionnaires from parents and carers, 130 from pupils and 16 from staff.

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

- How effective is the school in building on the good progress in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) to improve girls' achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2)?
- How well do boys achieve in writing across the school?
- What opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about different cultures in Britain and the wider world?
- How successful is the school's leadership in improving pupils' achievement, attendance and the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2?

## Information about the school

The large majority of pupils who attend this average-sized primary school are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from different minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly mixed backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. A below-average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly for speech and language and behavioural difficulties, and for physical disabilities. A small number have statements of special educational needs for specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children start in Nursery in the September following their third birthday and attend in the mornings. Some attend 'The Nest', which is registered childcare for three- and four-year-old children managed by the governing body, in the afternoons. A before- and after-school club (The Den), which is not managed by the governing body, runs every day. The school has Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

St Mary and St Margaret's is a satisfactory school. The headteacher gives clear and purposeful leadership. On appointment, he quickly made an accurate evaluation of the school's performance. His positive approach in recognising the school's strengths, as well as his sharing with staff those areas requiring immediate improvement, has built a whole-staff team that is committed to improving pupils' outcomes. He has worked closely with staff and governors to introduce improvements which are beginning to show success. Pupils' progress is tracked closely through comprehensive monitoring procedures. The school now has detailed information to more effectively support its strategic planning. The school improvement plan is fit for purpose, and priorities are relevant. However, the plan does not contain precise measures against which to evaluate not only whether it has been successful, but also whether it is on track to reach its challenging targets for raising pupils' achievement. Parents and carers recognise the improvement in their children's progress and how, in a short time, the headteacher 'has made a huge difference in moving the school forward'. Pupils' personal development is good, as is their behaviour. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and respect the feelings of each other. Pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about different religions and cultural events and celebrations, but their actual first-hand knowledge of different cultures in Britain and the wider world is limited.

Attainment is average. While pupils' achievement is satisfactory, learning and progress are good in Nursery and Reception and in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the school due to the good-quality and focused support they receive. The drive to raise pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is starting to show success in English. Teachers' use of relevant texts, film clips and drama has sparked boys' imaginations in particular and motivated them to write. As a result, the gaps between their attainment in reading and writing and between their attainment and that of the girls are closing. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. It is still not consistently good enough in mathematics in Key Stage 2 to sustain pupils' good achievement in younger years. Tasks are not always challenging enough for more-able pupils, and pupils are not always clear about their targets and how to improve. Teachers check pupils' learning at the end of lessons but do not always do this during lessons and through questioning to probe pupils' understanding and so enable them to adjust tasks. Pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly girls, are starting to make up their previous underachievement, but there has been too little time for recent improvements to show sustained improvement in attainment at the end of Year 6. The school's capacity to improve is, therefore, satisfactory.

Up to 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.

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

- Increase the proportion of good teaching in mathematics across Key Stage 2 to 70% by July 2011 by ensuring teachers:
  - plan consistently more challenging work for more-able pupils
  - share precise next-step learning targets with pupils so that they know how well they are doing and what to do next to move to a higher level
  - question pupils' understanding during lessons in order to refocus teaching if necessary.
- Sharpen strategic planning so that improvement targets are specific to improvement priorities and include benchmarks against which to measure progress.
- Broaden pupils' first-hand knowledge and understanding of different cultures in Britain and the wider world.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children's skills and knowledge when they start Nursery are within the levels expected for their age. Learning and progress are good in Nursery and Reception, and in Key Stage 1. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and has been for five years due to effective improvements in pupils' learning and progress. In lessons, pupils complete tasks that are matched well to their abilities. In one excellent lesson, pupils decided whether to use number lines, cubes and/or fingers to work out the total of two numbers. They were encouraged to talk about how they had worked out the correct answer which built their understanding extremely well.

Learning and progress are satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils are beginning to maintain their good achievement from Key Stage 1 in English. Pupils' attainment in English had been broadly average for a number of years but improved markedly in 2010 and is on track to reach above average levels this year. This reflects satisfactory progress for this group of pupils. Nearly every pupil asked said how much they enjoyed school because lessons are fun. Boys, in particular, are motivated to write because of relevant topics and increasing opportunities to write in other subjects.

The picture in mathematics is less positive. Attainment remains average. This represents a dip in pupils' attainment from Year 2. Girls, in particular, have not made the expected progress. More-focused small-group and individualised teaching is accelerating the progress of targeted pupils, mostly girls, but there has been too little time for pupils to compensate for their underachievement in previous years. Good learning and progress occur in some lessons when pupils are given tasks that challenge their thinking and enable them to reach higher than average levels. For example, pupils in Year 6 built on their understanding by successfully working out the change of direction of a line graph if one of the two bike-racing competitors had a puncture and had to stop for ten minutes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Focused support, both in lessons and when pupils work in small groups outside the classroom, results in good learning and many reach at least average levels by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' personal development outcomes are good. Almost all pupils feel safe in school because they are confident that any concerns or worries will be dealt with immediately by

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staff. Pupils are polite and generally considerate about each other's feelings. Pupils lead healthy and active lifestyles, hence the school's successful Healthy Schools status. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local communities. Pupils involved in the SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group) have improved school lunch menus, and school and class councils give pupils a voice in the school's decisions. Pupils' contribution to their learning through planning topics and agreeing personal targets is satisfactory. However, almost a quarter of the responses to the pupils' questionnaire showed pupils are unsure about how well they are doing and how to improve their learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Through the 'Worship Committee' pupils develop an insight into prayer and reflection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different religions is satisfactory, but their first-hand knowledge about different cultures in Britain and the wider world is limited. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Pupils' average literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills give them satisfactory skills for later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory, but improving, in Key Stage 2. Across the school, teachers use varied methods to engage pupils' interests and promote enjoyment. Teaching assistants give pupils effective support during lessons. They ask questions to check pupils' learning and understanding, and give additional guidance

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when necessary. This helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in particular to make good progress. When teaching is good, teachers plan tasks that meet the learning needs of all pupils in lessons, including providing challenge for more-able pupils. Teachers assess pupils' learning consistently at the end of lessons to inform the next day's plans. Teachers do not always assess learning during lessons, and so tasks are not always adapted quickly enough to move learning forward at a faster rate. Sometimes, assessment relies too much on pupils saying how well they think they have done rather than the teacher asking questions that delve deeper into pupils' thinking to check their understanding. Pupils value teachers' feedback and say that it helps them improve their work. Teachers' written comments do not always say why a piece of work is good and, when next steps are given, pupils are not always given time to respond in order to make the improvements.

A varied range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs and events enrich pupils' learning. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and to speak another language. Pupils enjoy taking part in the numerous sporting events with local schools in which everyone is included. Opportunities for pupils to practise skills in different subjects are developing as teachers identify relevant and linked activities, such as researching historical figures and events and writing up scientific investigations. Opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning are satisfactory but are good in Years 1 and 2 because of the permanent availability of computers in the classroom.

Pastoral care is good. Safeguarding arrangements ensure pupils' safety and well-being at school and when they attend 'The Nest' in the afternoons. Staff supervise the start and end of every day closely to ensure a smooth start and finish to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support to enable them to be involved in all activities and to make good progress in their learning. Targets in some individual education plans are sometimes too random and do not always build consistently on those in the previous plan. Play pals give effective support to new pupils who need an extra hand to develop new friendships.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and brought everybody on board in the drive for improvement. In a short time, he has put systems in place for tracking pupils' progress and has initiated effective strategies for raising attainment by the end of Year 6, especially in writing. The school

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improvement plan includes challenging targets for pupils' achievement. Priorities are relevant and focused on what the school needs to do to improve. While improvement is measured securely by pupils' progress and achievement, priorities do not include precise measures of success against which to evaluate whether the rate of improvement is fast enough to achieve the targets. There is strong evidence to show initiatives are effective in accelerating the progress of targeted groups. The school is taking effective steps to improve the quality of teaching. Much of the drive for improvements relies on the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher as the monitoring roles of subject and middle managers develop.

The governing body knows the school's strengths and knows that pupils are capable of achieving higher standards. As it becomes better informed, it is asking more challenging questions and holding the school to account. The governing body and school staff ensure all statutory responsibilities are met, especially those relating to safeguarding. Staff are diligent in ensuring pupils' safety and make sure that if someone is absent or unavailable to carry out their supervisory role, someone else steps in. Parents and carers are supportive of the school's drive for improvement and most feel that they are able to make a positive contribution to their children's progress. The crèche facility in 'The Nest' gives good support to parents and carers attending parenting courses run by the school's child and family support worker in partnership with the local children's centre. Partnerships with other schools promote pupils' learning well. Strong partnerships with specialist agencies give effective support to the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school ensures pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all activities and relevant events. Small-group and individual teaching help targeted pupils to make up lost ground because of previous underachievement. More-able pupils do not always receive enough challenge in lessons to enable them to reach their potential. Through an effective personal, social and health education program, the school has created an ethos where all discrimination is challenged. The school has completed an audit of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and has subsequently developed first-hand links with schools in Sweden and Dominica to broaden pupils' first-hand knowledge of different cultures. The small number of pupils involved have a secure knowledge of different cultures abroad and are starting to share this knowledge with all pupils during assemblies.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children start Nursery with knowledge and skills at levels expected for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception because teaching is good. The large majority reach the levels expected by the end of the Reception year, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are confident learners by the time they start in Year 1.

Adults use assessment information to plan activities that meet the children's specific needs. For example, adults worked with a small group of less-confident speakers to create and act out the journey taken by the characters in the story *We're all Going on a Bear Hunt*. A range of activities and resources support learning well. Children enjoy choosing what and where to learn and are generally supported well at these times. Sometimes, however, adults are engaged in adult-led activities rather than giving time to interact with the children's learning and so extend and develop skills and knowledge. This is especially so when the children choose to learn outside. Children who go to 'The Nest' in the afternoons receive the same positive welcome. They benefit from a good range of toys and resources, and good teaching enables them to enjoy playing and learning indoors and outside and having the opportunity to relax if they wish after a busy morning at Nursery.

Leadership and management are good. The new system for tracking the children's progress has helped adults to identify gaps in the children's learning and plan activities that more closely match individuals' needs and to tackle weaknesses in the curriculum. To tackle the weaknesses in boys' writing, adults plan numerous interesting ways to motivate them to write. In order to raise children's achievement in problem solving, reasoning and number, activities focus on the children talking through how they reach a particular answer, for example, when adding one more to a number. This helps adults probe the children's understanding which, in turn, help the children to learn how to solve problems independently. All adults follow procedures consistently to ensure the children's safety and

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welfare. Parents and carers of children who go to 'The Nest' in the afternoons are given information about meals and snacks to ensure a balanced diet.

Parents and carers are welcomed into Nursery and Reception, and to 'The Nest' and enabled to make a positive contribution to their children's learning. Children are confident to start in Reception as a result of the positive relationships they build with adults who work in both 'The Nest' and in the school Nursery.

*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 half of parents and carers, a larger proportion than average, returned questionnaires. The overwhelming majority are satisfied with the school, especially those with children in Nursery and Reception and in Key Stage 1. Many recognise the positive impact of the new headteacher in 'enhancing the feeling of community within the school' and the improvements which have taken place since his arrival. Almost everyone feels that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe and that it helps them to lead healthy lives. Inspectors looked closely at how the school manages behaviour in response to some concerns expressed and found the school's systems for managing behaviour to be good. Pupils behave well in class and when playing outside. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about their children's slower progress in Key Stage 2. The inspection found that progress is slower in Key Stage 2, but it is improving. Parents and carers receive satisfactory information about their children's progress and targets so that they can support at home.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided 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 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 258 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	75	29	24	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	71	33	28	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	63	53	48	40	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	47	54	45	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	55	47	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	48	53	45	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	62	43	36	1	1	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)	53	45	57	48	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	51	48	40	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	41	49	41	10	8	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	39	59	50	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	68	57	45	38	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	71	29	24	3	3	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.**



16 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School, Birmingham, B36 9AX**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you to those who told us about all the things you enjoy most about the school and how the teachers help you learn.

We have decided that your school is satisfactory because some things are good and some things could be better. Your behaviour is good in lessons and when you are playing outside. You make a good contribution to the school, especially through class and school councils and other committees in which you take part. Most of you told us that you feel safe in school and that the school is helping you to lead healthy lives. Certainly, a good number of you take part in numerous sporting events and after-school clubs. Well done to those of you who have helped improve the school lunch menus. You make good progress in Nursery and Reception and in Years 1 and 2 and reach above average levels. Your progress slows when you are in the older classes, especially in mathematics, because some of you are not given hard enough work. Your achievement is satisfactory but improving in reading and writing and, as a result, you reached above average levels last year. Your headteacher has introduced a new system for checking your progress more regularly. This is helping your teachers plan lessons that most of you enjoy and that help more of you to make good progress.

We have asked the school to improve your progress in mathematics in the older classes by giving some of you harder work, to ensure you know how well you are doing and how to improve your work, and to check during lessons that you really understand what you are learning and why. We have asked your headteacher to plan in more detail how the school is going to raise your attainment and to introduce ways to improve your learning about different cultures in Britain and the wider world. You can help by always doing your best and telling your teachers if you find the work too easy in mathematics. Thank you again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector

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