

St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105705
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	362716
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Brenda McIntosh

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev D Hawthorn
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Keiran
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
School address	Hive Street Hollinwood, Oldham Lancashire OL8 4QS
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Introduction

When St Margaret's was last inspected in October 2009, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Subsequently, the school received three monitoring inspections. This inspection was carried out at no notice by two additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed and 10 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with a small group of parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' work, monitoring reports and the school's self-evaluation.

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

- Pupils' current progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching in lessons and how well assessment is used to support the learning of all groups of pupils.
- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The capacity of the school's leaders and managers to sustain the good improvements seen on the third monitoring inspection in December 2010.

Information about the school

St Margaret's is larger than the averaged-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority-ethnic backgrounds is slightly above average and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Since the last section 5 inspection the school has created an Early Years Foundation Stage unit where the Nursery and Reception children are taught alongside each other. A new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage was appointed September 2010. The school offers flexible provision for the Nursery children. The Key Stage 1 accommodation has been refurbished. A business manager was appointed January 2011.

There is privately run before- and after-school care which was not part of this inspection. A separate inspection report for this provision is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school has improved significantly over the past year and St Margaret's now provides a good education for its pupils. The strong determination and clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in driving improvement. Senior leaders are effective in their roles, set higher expectations than previously and have a thorough grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There has been a sharp and successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and increasing the effectiveness of the school's system for tracking pupils' progress. This has been key to accelerating the progress of all groups of pupils and raising attainment to broadly average levels. As a result, pupils' achievement is now good. Actions put into place are addressing weaknesses systematically and effectively. This is because they are rigorously monitored and next steps for improvement are identified accurately. Teaching and pupils' progress are good although senior leaders are well aware that the focus on improving the quality of teaching needs to be sustained to raise attainment and progress further.

The school is in the early stages of redesigning the curriculum and developing an approach which links subjects through cross-curricular topics. There are plans to improve this area further and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects. The Early Years Foundation Stage has been transformed into an effective unit which enables children to make good progress in their learning and development.

Pupils are well-behaved and increasingly enjoy their learning as they see the significant improvements in the quality of their work. They are well-cared for and guided in their learning. Rigorous analysis of assessment data means that interventions and support programmes are well-matched to the needs of individuals. These are monitored closely to ensure they have maximum impact on accelerating pupils' progress.

Much has been achieved by strong teamwork and close cooperation between the school, governing body and the local authority. The governing body has been very determined in its support for the school and provides a high level of challenge. The school has built a good capacity for sustained improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous and future planning is underpinned by robust evidence and increasingly accurate data. Staff are reflective and respond positively to training and advice in order to improve their practice. The school now decides for itself when and if external support is needed and has developed some effective partnerships during the past year. For example, its partnership with a school that has particular expertise in assessment has resulted in a much sharper approach to monitoring the impact of teaching on learning. Staff, pupils and the governing body have

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worked hard to meet the high expectations set by senior leaders and are justifiably proud of what has been achieved.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress further by:
 - sustaining the focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects
 - ensuring pupils have sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning in lessons
 - ensuring work is always matched to pupils' needs to improve their skills and knowledge
 - ensuring that teaching is flexible to account for pupils' different abilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the school with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning have improved as lessons have become more interesting and engaging. They enjoy talking about what they are going to write and this helps to improve their written work. Pupils are industrious and apply themselves well to their tasks. For example, pupils in the Year 1/2 class drew pictures of imaginary aliens and then described them using correct punctuation and connectives, introducing new vocabulary alongside familiar words to make their writing more interesting. The work was of good quality for their age and typified the impact of the school's actions to raise attainment in writing. In a Year 4/5 lesson, inspiring teaching led to outstanding progress in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and enthusiasm. Staff skilfully created a powerful forest atmosphere within the classroom using a range of resources and sound effects as a stimulus which successfully extended pupils' vocabulary and improved the quality of their work.

Results in the 2010 Key Stage 2 national tests were broadly average overall and the school's best for a long time, particularly in English. The school's own robust data show that progress continues to accelerate in almost all year groups and, as a result, attainment is rising significantly across the school. Remaining weaknesses, which are mainly as a result of previous underachievement, are being tackled rigorously. Progress has accelerated because overall learning is good, expectations are higher and challenging targets are set. Pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to reach their challenging targets. Much has been done to ensure the different groups of pupils achieve as well as they can through additional, closely-matched programmes of support to boost attainment and progress. For example, across the school more pupils are working at the levels above those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are also making good progress. This is because their needs are now identified quickly and intervention is timely.

Pupils behave well and say they feel safe in school. They are friendly, polite and orderly around school. In lessons they collaborate well and enjoy discussing their learning with

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each other to improve their work. They develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and take part in a range of sporting activities. They take on responsibilities well, such as school councillors and student teachers, where older pupils support younger ones to improve their reading skills. Pupils' preparation for the future is satisfactory and improving as their basic literacy and numeracy skills improve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and evident in the respect pupils show to adults and each other and in the way pupils from different backgrounds get on well together.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

In the lessons observed the quality of teaching varied from outstanding to satisfactory but was mostly good. On the whole, teachers are now more confident in teaching English than mathematics and they are particularly effective in accelerating pupils' progress in writing. Typically, teachers have good relationships with pupils, share clear learning objectives with them and provide good opportunity for discussion. Teachers use resources well, including ICT, to capture pupils' interest, although pupils themselves do not have enough opportunity to use ICT to support their learning in lessons. The most effective lessons move along at a good pace and set high expectations with good challenge for pupils of all abilities. Skilled questioning helps pupils to think and extends their learning well. Where teaching is satisfactory work is not always tailored well enough to match pupils' range of

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abilities to accelerate progress. Occasionally, the teaching is not flexible enough to allow pupils of different abilities to make the best possible progress; this can either be at the start of a lesson where teachers talk for too long to the whole class, limiting the time for independent work, or at the end of the lesson when the review of learning is not always relevant to all pupils. Teachers' marking is having a good impact on improving the quality and quantity of work.

Attainment in English was a weakness at the last inspection and it has been the key priority over the past year, developing the curriculum as a whole has not been a priority. The school is developing some good links between different subjects through themes and topics; this aspect of the school's work is at an early stage of development. Increasingly the curriculum is more responsive to pupils' contexts and their views. A wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities support pupils' learning and development effectively. Recently, the school has engaged specialist teachers to teach a foreign language and music across Key Stage 2 but it is too early to judge the impact.

Pupils are well cared for and the support for the most vulnerable is tailored well to their needs. Attendance is closely checked and improving. Unauthorised and persistent absences are now pursued more rigorously and, as a result, have reduced significantly. The arrangements for transition through school and on to secondary education are good. Careful consideration has been given to the transfer from Reception to Year 1 to ensure the curriculum meets individual needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 drive, determination and ambition of senior leaders have got the school successfully back on track. The pace of improvement increased over the year as leaders became more confident and effective in their roles. Teachers are now far more accountable for their work and the progress of pupils in their classes. There is a rigorous and systematic approach to improving the quality of teaching. Senior leaders link all the information gained from their monitoring to pinpoint precisely the strengths and the next steps for improvement. Subsequent actions are checked regularly for impact. The school's effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity is good and evident in the rigorous analysis of data and identification of the needs of the different groups of pupils. As a consequence, all groups of pupils progress at an equally good rate.

Right from the start, the governing body demonstrated a strong determination and commitment to school improvement. It has supported and challenged senior leaders and has developed a good understanding of assessment data, and its influence on improving

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the quality of teaching. The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents and carers have responded well to supporting their children's reading at home but the school is seeking further ways to involve them more in their children's learning and in its work. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and appropriate systems are in place to check on the suitability of staff to work with children. The new business manager is already bringing greater rigour to health and safety arrangements and contributing effectively to the day-to-day running of the school. The appointment has freed up time for the headteacher, enabling her to concentrate her attention more to the strategic leadership of the school and raising attainment. Community cohesion is promoted soundly and the school already has plans in place to develop this aspect of its work further. The school provides good value for money.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception age children work effectively alongside each other and make good progress in their learning because the teaching is good. Their attainment at the end of Reception is rising and moving closer to that expected for their age. The learning environment is bright, attractive and well-organised to allow children easy access to resources that promote independence. Activities are well-planned and stimulating with lots of opportunity to develop early reading and writing skills. Children settle quickly into routines because they are well-cared for and supported. They enjoy their learning and develop good levels of engagement both in the activities led by adults or those they choose themselves. Pupils are challenged and adult intervention is consistent and flexible. Adults skilfully build on children's suggestions and balance this with appropriate questioning. Children are encouraged to expand on their responses and most do so well. The reluctant speakers are given sensitive encouragement and, as a result, they are

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confident to join in. Children learning English as an additional language receive effective bilingual support.

Much has been done already on developing the outdoor provision with firm plans in place to improve it further. While the activities reflect those indoors they are not always as sharply planned to enable children to make best possible progress. The unit is well led and managed. Staff work well as a team and much has been achieved in developing effective procedures for assessing children's achievement and planning their next steps in learning. Training for staff has led to a good awareness of the learning and welfare requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage practice.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed by Ofsted for special measures monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Views expressed by parents and carers were positive about improvements and gave examples about how their children had been motivated to work harder and they had improved the quality of their work. They were pleased that homework is more consistent and matched to different abilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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).

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">■ 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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's C of E Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Oldham, OL8 4QS.

As you know, I have visited your school on a number of occasions over the past year and recently with another inspector. I am very pleased to tell you that on this visit we judged that your school no longer requires special measures. St Margaret's is now a good school. Your headteacher, governors and all the staff have worked hard to make sure that things have improved. Now:

- you attain higher standards in English; the quality of your written work has improved significantly and you are more confident in reading
- teaching is good and is helping you to make better progress in lessons
- there is a new leader in the Early Years Foundation Stage and much has been done to make sure the children get off to a good start in their learning
- the headteacher and other leaders monitor the work of the school closely so they know what is done well and then make precise plans to improve the things that are not done as well
- the governing body asks the leaders more challenging questions to make sure they are doing a good job.

We were pleased that you told us that lessons are more interesting, you have a better understanding of your targets and how to improve your work. On all my visits you behaved well and I know you are proud of the improvements to the quality of your work. Congratulations to everyone for all the hard work.

As you know there are always things that can be improved. Therefore, we have asked the headteacher and staff to help you reach higher standards and improve your progress further by maintaining their focus on improving the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics. We would also like you to have more opportunities to help you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and to make sure you have more chances to use computers or laptops yourselves in lessons. We have also asked that the work set in lessons is always suitably matched to your different abilities. We wish you all well for your future success. Keep working hard and enjoy your time in school.

Yours sincerely

Brenda McIntosh

Lead inspector

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