

St Margaret's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131349
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	381333
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Millward HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	513
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloria Warburton
Headteacher	Chris Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were observed taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the local authority representative, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan, pupils' work, progress data, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance data and safeguarding policies and records. They analysed 83 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those submitted by staff and pupils.

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

- How well pupils achieve in English and mathematics.
- How teaching and learning support the raising of achievement and the impact of the curriculum.
- The impact of leadership and management on improvements to pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

St Margaret's is a much larger-than-average primary school with nursery provision on-site. The school is located on a split site and is currently undergoing a substantial building project. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is in line with national averages, but the proportion of pupils with a special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school has a before- and after-school club run by the governing body. The school has Healthy School status.

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 Margaret's CE Primary School is a satisfactory school. Staff provide good care, guidance and support and as a result, pupils feel safe in school and generally enjoy their learning. Relationships are positive and staff genuinely want the best for the pupils in their care. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite and courteous. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and the headteacher and staff listen to their views and act upon recommendations.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and variable from class to class. Although pupils' overall attainment is average and they make satisfactory progress in mathematics, these are both less strong than in English. Some groups make better progress in their learning than others, for example some higher ability pupils make less progress in lessons as they are not always suitably challenged. While assessments made on pupils inform planning and teaching, this is not consistently applied by all teachers. Lessons are most effective when planned activities are closely matched to pupils' needs. The use of additional adults in lessons is also variable and hence the level of support for groups alters from class to class. Marking is inconsistent across classes and subjects. It mostly affirms the pupils' efforts, but does not always guide them to improve. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and at risk are well supported and strong links with external agencies enhance the experiences they receive. Procedures to improve attendance are rigorous and starting to improve, and attendance is currently average. Statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding are met well as are welfare requirements. Safeguarding records are very well maintained and safeguarding has a high priority in the school and among staff.

Links with the Church are effective and the parish provides spiritual guidance to pupils. Pupils show care for each other, supporting each other's learning and show respect for one other. Parents and carers are kept well informed about children's learning and opportunities are provided to welcome parental views and suggestions. Successful partnerships exist to enhance pupils' experiences in school, for example, family support workers provide well-targeted support.

The headteacher is committed to the school and is aware of the need to improve achievement. While leaders are aware of strengths and weaknesses, there has been a lack of rigour to some monitoring and evaluation procedures, with too little focus on pupils' learning and next steps. The governing body is aware of the school's

priorities and is supportive of the work in school. However, there are ways in which they could provide further challenge and hold the school to account to secure future improvements. Self-evaluation is, therefore, satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory with variable provision. Progress made by children in Nursery and Reception is satisfactory overall as is the quality of provision. Opportunities are sometimes missed to maximise learning and children do not always receive targeted support to extend their learning.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve rates of progress in English and especially mathematics, by:
 - ensuring the more able are sufficiently challenged
 - matching work to the needs of all learners
 - ensuring pupils' understand their next steps in learning in order to make better progress.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - ensuring teaching leads to pupils' making good progress
 - ensure all additional adults are focused on pupils' next steps
 - ensuring teachers are consistently secure in the assessment of pupils' learning and that their marking helps pupils to make at least good progress
 - ensuring that teachers' planning is more closely matched to the needs of the pupils in their class.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
 - monitoring and evaluation arrangements are rigorous and focused on pupils learning
 - action planning is more sharply focused on actions to drive forward school improvement
 - the governing body further holds the school to account and strategically develops self-evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' good attitudes in lessons and positive relationships result in most pupils enjoying learning. They behave well in lessons and generally are actively engaged in their learning. However, this picture is not yet consistent across the whole school. Children starting Nursery have levels of skills and knowledge which are generally below what is expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although progress varies in different areas of learning and from class to class. The analysis of national assessments and tests show that

attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave Year 6, although variations exist between groups and subjects. The school has prioritised the development of literacy skills and as a result, attainment in English has risen. Attainment in mathematics is less strong and results from testing show a slight decline in attainment. The school is well aware of this shortcoming and has implemented strategies to drive attainment higher in this subject. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory. The school tracks the progress made by all pupils and groups and while some make accelerated progress there remains some pupils whose progress is not quick enough. This is noticeable for the more able, for example, who are not sufficiently challenged during lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress which is commensurate with their peers nationally. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well and current data show these pupils making better progress. This indicates that the school is closing the gap with regards to their attainment and rates of progress.

Pupils feel safe in school and know who to turn to if a problem arises. Relationships are consistently strong and pupils are keen to help one other. Observations around school show pupils are well mannered, polite and courteous. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and the school provides a range of activities, clubs and projects to support a healthy lifestyle. Some pupils are involved with working in the local community and pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, for example, as a prefect or school council member. Team building events are encouraged through residential visits and development of satisfactory basic skills contributes to their future economic well-being. Attendance is average and the school monitors absence rigorously including text messaging parents and carers if a child is absent from school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show a good understanding of how to respect others, but there is a lack of understanding of their own heritage and that of others.

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	3
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	3

¹The 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 overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with elements of good practice. As a result of this variation, pupils' rates of progress alter. Common strengths are the positive relationships between staff and pupils which promote cooperation and good behaviour. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use resources well. The most successful lessons are based on effective questioning, where continual assessment informs the lesson, and work which is sensitively matched to pupils' abilities. Pace is delivered in a challenging yet supportive manner and pupils are motivated to succeed. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not make full use of assessment information resulting in pupils of different abilities being given similar tasks. This results in some pupils not making the progress of which they are capable. Teachers' planning does not always support pupils' next steps and is not always suitably tailored to the needs of the class. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across classes and subjects and does not always guide pupils to the next steps in their learning. The use of additional adults is variable. In some instances adults support pupils well, ensuring they access learning at an appropriate level, but in other cases, they do not provide enough guidance.

The curriculum is satisfactory and mixes the teaching of skills with opportunities for pupils to use their skills across a range of subjects in a creative way. Links between subjects are developing but plans to improve the curriculum remain in their infancy. Increasingly, intervention groups are helping pupils catch up with their learning. This provides a good safety net for pupils not meeting expectations and is an important factor in improving their progress. Leaders monitor and evaluate the progress made by pupils who receive extra support.

The school takes good care of its pupils and has effective welfare systems in place. Staff know their pupils well and aim to provide careful guidance and support to ensure their well-being and personal development. Care for those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable is good and the school links well with a range of external agencies. The learning mentor provides valuable support and guidance to families and pupils which are well targeted to individual need. The well attended before-and after-school club provides a safe and supportive haven for pupils.

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 leadership team now collects a wide range of information on teaching and pupils' progress. The use of this information to drive improvement is developing, although occasionally is not rigorous enough. With a better use of information about pupils' progress and a developed shared understanding of expectations, some gaps

in attainment across the school are narrowing. An ambition to become a good school by maximising the outcome for all pupils is firmly embedded. To drive forward improvements the headteacher has created a new leadership team who are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. He has united the school with a common purpose and has correctly identified strengths and areas to improve. The headteacher's dedication and commitment to improving achievement is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, and together they are identifying priorities and galvanising a team to support their endeavours. While action planning is in place there are ways in which the rigour could be developed through more effective monitoring and evaluation and greater focus on pupils' learning. Leaders promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily for all pupils and are beginning to plan more carefully to check that all groups achieve equally well as they move through school.

The governing body is committed to the school. It fulfils all statutory duties and is aware of the school's strengths. However, it has not been sufficiently challenging in the past to ensure that the school accelerates the rate of pupils' progress. Furthermore, there are ways in which the governing body could hold the school to account to a greater degree, with a more in-depth involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's actions.

The school promotes community cohesion by a range of activities that link the school to the local community. The school is planning to extend its links to the wider community and globally. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and the school adopts good practice across all aspects of welfare and safeguarding requirements.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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 enter Nursery below national expectations and are exceptionally well supported and nurtured by a committed team of adults. As a result, children have high self-esteem and are proud to be the 'helper of the day'. They willingly talk to adults who are aware of their individual needs. Children are encouraged to interact and help each other. They increasingly and quickly learn to take responsibility for their own actions. Links with parents and carers are effective and they are

encouraged to be involved in their children’s learning through daily dialogue. Suggested activities to support learning are offered by the staff and valuable information and guidance is shared with parents and carers. Staff plan activities tailored to the developmental needs of the individual children and some make good progress. For example, nursery children enthusiastically hunted for shapes, correctly identifying circles and squares in the outdoor environment and then delighted in hiding them for their friends. However, this rate of progress is not consistent because as children move through the Early Years Foundation Stage opportunities are sometimes missed to promote learning. There remains a lack of consistency in the quality of provision and children in the Reception classes lack opportunities for independent access to the outdoor environment. As a result, overall, children in this key stage make satisfactory progress. The dedicated team under the leadership of the committed Early Years Foundation Stage manager is now well placed to make further improvements to ensure that there is consistency throughout the setting. Staff are vigilant and as a result, safeguarding and welfare arrangements are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received a lower than average return to the parents’ and carers’ questionnaires. However, the great majority who returned the questionnaire are fully supportive of the school. Almost all consider that the school keeps them informed about their child’s progress and that teaching is good. They feel the school keeps their children safe and are pleased that children are encouraged to have healthy lifestyles. One written comment summarised the view of many, ‘I have no problems at all with the overall learning and teaching at St Margaret’s. My child is extremely happy and the staff are fantastic.’ Parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors were pleased with the care, guidance and support offered by the school staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret's CE Voluntary 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 513 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	57	33	40	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	61	31	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	41	45	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	47	36	43	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	52	37	45	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	49	38	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	53	37	45	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)	42	51	33	40	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	48	35	42	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	45	39	47	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	37	44	53	3	4	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	39	47	36	43	4	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	59	30	36	1	1	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Margaret's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Warrington, WA2 9AD**

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. As you know we came to see how well you were doing and what you said helped us with our findings.

St Margaret's is a satisfactory school. We were very impressed by your behaviour; you know about healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. Your attainment is satisfactory and the leaders in school are determined to improve your levels of achievement. Teachers are developing a curriculum to help you learn better and the school makes sure you are safe and your welfare requirements are met.

It is our job to find out how schools can do even better. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to work on three things in particular. These are:

- to raise your attainment and improve your progress in English and especially in mathematics
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- to improve leadership and management in the school.

We know that you will want to help in every way you can, so please continue to try hard in lessons, keep up your very good behaviour and attend school regularly. I wish you every success in your education.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

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