

# St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	118708
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	379666
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Melanie Knowles HMI

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rachel Kerr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Faik
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	King Street Rochester Kent ME1 1YF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 843843
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 310067
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-margaretsattroytown.medway.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	3379666



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clive Reynolds

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, taught by seven teachers. Five of these were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the team made visits to six group 'phonic' (linking letters with the sounds they make) sessions led by teachers or teaching assistants. Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils from Key Stage 1 reading. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils from Key Stage 2, two governors and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documentation including data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, school development plans, key policies and evidence of the school's monitoring. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' work books and teachers' lesson plans. They analysed 74 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This school is an average sized primary school. It shares its site with a children's centre which is managed separately. The school has an integrated unit for the Early Years Foundation Stage for children of Nursery and Reception age. This facility was completed after the previous inspection in 2009. The school serves an increasingly diverse community. Three quarters of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The second largest group is of Asian or Asian British heritage. There are also increasing numbers of pupils from Eastern European heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and rising. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported at school action. The percentage of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Artsmark and Activemark.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has improved steadily over the last three years. The vast majority of pupils, parents and carers are very positive about the school, its caring Christian ethos and the quality of the provision.
- As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils is rising, but remains satisfactory overall. Teachers generally plan work in lessons that offers suitable challenge to pupils. However, teaching is still not consistently good across the school and there is some disparity between classes and in different subjects. The teaching of phonics (sounds and letters) is variable in quality and too few pupils make good progress in these lessons.
- Teachers do not make consistently good use of a range of strategies such as questioning, paired work and discussion to ensure that the individual learning needs of pupils are met, particularly those who are learning English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The integrated unit for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a well-resourced and stimulating learning environment for children. The continuity provided from age 3–5 has led to much improved outcomes for children entering Year 1. Teachers' assessments in 2011 indicate that most children reached age-appropriate levels in all areas of learning at the end of their Reception year.
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are all good, reflecting pupils' high level of enjoyment of school. Pupils feel safe, are welcoming and positive and behave considerately towards each other. The school's church foundation makes a significant contribution to the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to be reflective about beliefs and they show respect for cultural differences.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and senior staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan has appropriate priorities for improvement. However, both documents are very long and over-detailed. The complexity of the school development plan makes it difficult for school leaders and governors to measure their success in making improvements.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate rates of progress for all pupils to be at least good by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - consistently using teaching strategies in lessons that meet the needs of all pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure the teaching of sounds and letters is consistently good by:
  - developing the subject knowledge of all staff
  - ensuring that staff always articulate letter sounds correctly
  - ensuring that lessons are fast-paced, active and engaging for all pupils.
- Streamline development planning and self-evaluation and ensure that measurable outcomes and milestones are included in the school development plan so that progress can be tracked and evaluated effectively.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

A large majority of parents and carers say they are happy that their children are making good progress at St Margaret's at Troy Town. Work seen during the inspection in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that rates of progress are improving. However, across the school progress is satisfactory overall for most groups of pupils. There are some year groups where teaching is consistently good and this results in good learning and progress for pupils. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that every opportunity for learning is exploited to the full. The adults work with small groups of children and use skilful questioning to deepen knowledge and understanding. They plan an interesting range of activities that excite and motivate the children. As one boy said, 'We always have fun at school.' It is not surprising that most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from starting points that are generally below average.

The attainment of pupils in Year 6 has been broadly average for most groups of pupils over the last three years. However, the attainment of boys in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and girls in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has been slightly below national averages for all pupils. School tracking data and pupils' work in lessons and in their books indicate that attainment is rising and these gaps are now closing. The proportion of boys in Year 2 expected to achieve expected levels in reading this year is almost in line with national averages, and the girls in Year 6 are on track to achieve expected levels in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 dipped in 2011, but the school is confident that this will improve significantly in 2012. Overall rates of progress have improved, particularly in the last 18 months. The regular pupil review meetings that

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were introduced two years ago have become more effective and are now making a significant contribution to improving pupils' progress in most year groups. Senior leaders discuss the progress of all pupils with class teachers and agree strategies to address any underachievement.

The progress of pupils learning English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall, but variable across the school. These pupils generally benefit from high quality support when withdrawn from class for individual tuition, but this learning is not always built upon effectively by their teachers when they are back in class.

Pupils generally learn well in most subjects, though the teaching of sounds and letters to support early reading skills is less well developed, particularly in Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils are developing the skills that will ensure that they are prepared adequately for the next stage in their education.

### **Quality of teaching**

Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good across all classes and in all subjects, there are some good aspects to practice. A large majority of parents and carers express the view that their children are taught well. In all lessons observed during the inspection, teachers made learning intentions clear and shared criteria with the pupils so that they knew what they had to achieve and could judge their own success. Teachers promote pupils' moral and social development by consistently applying the school's behaviour policy and encouraging cooperation and teamwork. Teachers have imaginative ideas for lessons and seek to engage pupils in their learning and foster their enthusiasm and curiosity.

Generally, there is a good balance between teacher-directed and independent work in most lessons. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson, pupils re-enacted the story of Henry VIII's accession to the throne, worked as a class with the teacher to sequence pictures of the key events and then, after 20 minutes, settled to independent work. In the best lessons, there is a good level of pupil involvement in whole-class discussions and the pace of learning is maintained throughout.

Teachers do not always allocate clear roles to other adults working with them, particularly in whole-class sessions. When working with groups, teaching assistants tend to supervise the completion of tasks rather than support or develop pupils' learning. The teaching of sounds and letters is not well developed in Key Stage 1. Although pupils are taught in ability groups, progress is limited because too many of the adults do not have sufficient subject knowledge to articulate letter sounds correctly or vary teaching strategies. Lessons are not well structured and the pace of learning is too slow.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are supported to assess the National Curriculum level that they are working at in English and mathematics through the use of 'I can' statements. Guidance for pupils given through teachers' marking is inconsistent across the

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school. Although teachers often write comments in books, these do not usually tell the pupils what they need to do to improve or what their next steps in learning are.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Almost all parents and carers say that their children feel safe at school, and the pupils confirm this. Pupils say that bullying in any form is at a low level and are confident that incidents will be dealt with quickly, and inspectors agree. A few parents and carers disagree and express the view that school leaders do not always deal effectively with bullying. Older pupils are able to assess risky situations and understand how to take actions to minimise risk, for example in using the internet.

The behaviour seen in lessons and around the school during the inspection was consistently good. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions with pupils confirm that behaviour in lessons is generally good over time, but pupils say that occasionally teachers have to intervene because pupils are 'too chatty'. Staff agree that behaviour is good. In the playground, pupils are typically courteous and respectful to staff.

Attendance has been above average for two of the last three years and punctuality is generally good. The school has been successful in improving punctuality by changing procedures for the start of the school day.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, together with other senior leaders and governors, has been effective in securing sustained gradual improvement since the previous inspection. Staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire indicate that morale in the school is good. Since the previous inspection, school leaders have set up an integrated unit for three- and four-year-olds which has had a clear positive impact on outcomes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have focused on improving the quality of teaching and have ensured that teachers have had ready access to training and professional development. The increased proportion of good teaching is making a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, but school leaders recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that all teaching is consistently good in all subjects and that pupils' progress is accelerated further. The improvements to teaching and trend of improvement in achievement demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders have worked closely with the on-site children's centre to ensure that there is coherent provision for local families. The recruitment of a family liaison worker has enabled the school to work with families facing potentially challenging circumstances and ensure that all pupils attend school regularly. A very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school helps them to support their children's learning and keeps them well informed.

The topic-based curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and is generally

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well matched to pupils' needs and interests. Teachers make good use of the outside 'wild area' on the school site and pupils have access to a 'spiritual garden' which encourages reflection and contemplation. Enrichment opportunities, such as outings to local places of interest, are carefully matched to each topic to give pupils high quality cultural experiences that enhance learning.

School leaders and governors ensure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are good and that child protection procedures are well understood by staff. They have good regard to the need to promote equality and have identified groups that may be vulnerable to underachievement, such as pupils eligible for free school meals or those who are learning English as an additional language. School leaders track the performance of all pupils and have made particular efforts to extend the learning of gifted and talented pupils and those who have speech and language and communication difficulties.

Governors have a good relationship with the headteacher and are developing their knowledge of the school and its work. They are increasingly able to ask challenging questions and hold school leaders to account. They are keen to develop their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. However, at present they are hampered in this work because the school development plan is rather unwieldy and the planned actions do not have clear, measurable criteria for success.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Rochester ME1 1YF**

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting some of you, reading your views about the school in the questionnaires and listening to some of you read. All this has helped us to understand how well your school is doing and what would help it to improve.

You told us that behaviour is good in your school and that you get on well together and we agree. In the questionnaires you completed, you said that staff at the school care for you well, and this helps you to feel safe. We found that you come to school when you are supposed to and arrive on time for your lessons. This helps to make sure you make the most of your education and also shows that you enjoy coming to school. We saw that your teachers encourage you to be respectful to others, develop curiosity in your learning and provide good opportunities for you learn about different cultures around the world.

We have asked your school to do three things to help it to become even better.

- Make sure that all of you make good progress in all the subjects you learn.
- Improve the way that sounds and letters are taught.
- Improve the way the school development plan is written so that senior leaders and governors can check that the school's plans are helping the school to get even better.

I know you will continue to work hard and do your best. Thank you for an enjoyable visit to your school, and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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