

# St Margaret of Scotland Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109634
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	377957
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Brian Netto

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	527
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Fielding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Cassidy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Rotheram Avenue Luton LU1 5PP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 723430
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 481289
<b>Email address</b>	St.Margaret.of.Scotland.Primary.Admin@luton.gov.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Netto Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond Additional Inspector

Michael Lafford Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 31 lessons or part-lessons taught by 19 teachers. Three of these lessons were jointly observed with a member of the school's leadership team, and a joint work scrutiny was conducted. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and different groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and pupils' work. They analysed 125 questionnaires from parents and carers, those from a sample of pupils in Key Stage 2, and 20 from staff.

## Information about the school

St Margaret of Scotland is larger than the average-sized primary school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception Year. More than half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, around a third of whom speak English as an additional language, although few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased in size. There have been considerable staff changes, most notably the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers. The school runs a breakfast club, and some pupils attend a privately-run after-school club. The after-school club was not included in the inspection. The school is part of a wider Deanery Partnership of Catholic schools. The school has received a number of awards including Quality Mark and Investors in People.

## 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>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and securely as new leaders have taken effective action to eliminate weaknesses. The pupils’ behaviour and the school’s leadership and management are strengths. The school is not yet good because pupils’ achievement is satisfactory, and this reflects the fact that over time teaching has been satisfactory. The school’s performance dipped last year, but the inspection found that this decline has been addressed and weaknesses have been successfully tackled. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.
- Pupils enjoy learning because teaching, although satisfactory, is improving. There are no longer pockets of inadequate teaching so progress is more even across the school. Some inconsistencies remain, in particular, the support given to pupils who fall behind or encounter difficulties is not always tailored closely enough to meet their needs.
- Pupils’ behaviour and safety are good and this comes in part from the consistent strategies used by the school to improve behaviour, and the positive relationships built up between pupils and adults in the school. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning, and this is reflected in their improving attendance.
- Leadership and management are good as pupils’ achievement and teaching are improving strongly from a low base in 2011. The leadership team are exemplary role models for the staff, and are keenly focused on improving performance and tackling areas of weakness. The governing body challenges and supports school leaders well and meets its duties, such as keeping pupils safe.

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

- By July 2013, raise standards and increase rates of progress in English and mathematics to above national averages, by engaging pupils in a more creative curriculum so that they successfully apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of contexts.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - matching work more closely to the needs and abilities of all pupils
  - ensuring that pupils who fall behind are given specific support to

- accelerate their progress
- reducing the time teachers spend talking to give pupils more opportunities to work independently.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress so that they leave with knowledge and skills that are typical for the end of the Reception Year. A good range of outdoor activities as part of their 'free flow' and good opportunities for independent learning ensure that their needs are met. The children receive good support to learn letters and the sounds that they make.

In 2011, the progress of pupils from Key Stage 1 to 2 was below expectations but this was linked to turbulence in staffing, and inaccurate assessments of their prior attainment. Attainment in reading in Year 2 and in Year 6 was below national averages. However, discrepancies in assessment and in the quality of teaching have been quickly addressed by the school, and the current progress of pupils across the school is at least satisfactory, and in some cases good. Achievement is now satisfactory, and standards in English, including reading, and mathematics are rising. Pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Typically, pupils have good attitudes towards learning and are keen to take part in small group or whole-class discussions. Most parents and carers believe their children are making good progress. They are justified in saying that pupils are making better progress than previously; as one said, 'This year my child has been well informed about his targets and knows what to do to achieve them.'

Pupils' satisfactory learning and broadly average standards attained are evident in the records of progress they make over time and in the lessons observed during the inspection. Sometimes progress is accelerated when the work sets challenges appropriate to pupils' different abilities. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work well as teams, use questioning effectively and provide immediate and detailed feedback. In Year 1, for example, a lesson on non-fiction texts provided opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of how books are organised, and effective modelling and questioning helped them use and apply key words such as 'contents' and 'glossary'.

### **Quality of teaching**

Although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, illustrating improvements that have been made, these have not yet resulted in all pupils making sustained good progress. This is because sometimes teachers spend too much time talking and also because work is not always matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. As reflected in parents and carers questionnaires, the quality of teaching has fluctuated across the school because of instability in staffing.

Good teaching is characterised by effective planning using precise learning objectives and success criteria shared with the pupils and referred to throughout lessons. A brisk pace with effective questioning supports the learning. This level of precision is present in the teaching of reading, especially when pupils learn their letters and sounds, and this has led to good progress in this aspect of pupils' learning. High expectations of the use of language ensure that pupils are challenged and make good progress. Year 5 developed good use of persuasive language after a clear exposition by the teacher, and demonstrated effective use of different types of connectives in writing sentences. Similarly, pupils in Year 3 made good progress in understanding the differences between graphemes and phonemes in a session on letters and the sounds they make. Effective support from the teaching assistant helped a group of pupils using laptops to engage successfully with the task. In such teaching, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is typical of the support given to these pupils in most lessons.

The impact of the planned curriculum is satisfactory. Some activities help pupils see the links between different subjects, and support the development of important skills, including team work. In these cases, the impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their core skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as problem-solving and extended writing.

Marking and assessment of pupils' work are consistently good across the school. Pupils are provided with detailed and frequent guidance on what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work, and are provided with opportunities to respond to these guidelines. Precise targets are set against clear criteria.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school's rigorous monitoring and consistent approaches to managing behaviour have resulted in few incidents of racism and bullying. Behaviour is typically good. Pupils, both in discussions and in their own questionnaires, agree that behaviour has improved and is good. The respect they show towards each other comes from an understanding that any form of bullying, including name-calling, is not to be tolerated. Pupils say they feel safe, and their parents and carers agree that the school keeps them safe. The breakfast club provides a secure start to the day, and a separate club for Year 6 pupils run during the week of their tests provided sustenance and support for the challenges ahead. Pupils are confident that adults will deal quickly and effectively with any concerns, but also say that they are able to sort things out for themselves, especially in dealing with minor incidents of name-calling. Trained specialists in the school's 'nurture base' effectively support specific emotional and behavioural needs. As a result, pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive good care and support, and staff provide expert care and guidance. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about disruptive behaviour and bullying. Evidence from the inspection found that the school provides a safe and calm environment where the pupils thrive. 'The school creates a positive and safe environment in which my child feels settled, safe and supported'; this view

reflects the views of the vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey.

Pupils understand how to recognise and manage risks, for example, through the 'bike-ability' road safety awareness training, and through the school's guidance on internet safety.

A concerted approach to reducing the numbers of pupils with persistent absence has resulted in significant improvements in overall attendance which is now above average.

## **Leadership and management**

The school has undergone significant change over the last 18 months, with the appointment of all the current senior staff, and high turbulence within the staff as a whole, as well as an expansion in the numbers on roll. This turbulence was recognised by both pupils and parents and carers as a cause for concern as it disrupted the learning. However, effective succession planning has resulted in a more stable staff, and a strong leadership team that models good practice. One pupil put it, 'My school is getting better all the time because they have caring teachers.' The quality of teaching has improved rapidly over this period of 18 months as a result of a combination of strategies. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated; much of it is now good. For example, effective team teaching resulted in Year 4 pupils making outstanding progress whilst being challenged to understand how factors work. As a result of these strategies, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils in other year groups are making satisfactory progress. Teachers are coached and supported, and have opportunities to observe good practice. Performance objectives, together with a planned programme of professional development, team teaching and demonstration lessons, are accelerating pupils' progress. These improvements, along with those in pupils' behaviour and attendance, show the school's capacity for further improvement.

Leadership is shared throughout the school, with subject leaders new to the post actively involved in monitoring and sharing good practice. The school benefits from partnership arrangements with a secondary school and a number of primary schools within the deanery. This facilitates shared professional development, and has helped the school to improve its systems for monitoring standards. Governors make a good contribution to the leadership of the school, and ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet the government's requirements. They know the school well, and use this to help support and challenge school improvement.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn, in and out of school, for example through residential trips and visits, and through after-school clubs. As such the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This reflects a good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, though opportunities within the curriculum to explore the diverse nature of the local and national community are more limited.

External consultants are used effectively to demonstrate good practice. No groups of

pupils demonstrate less than satisfactory progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and this shows the school leaders' and staff's commitment to equality of opportunity and intolerance of discrimination.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



17/5/2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Margaret of Scotland Primary School, Luton, LU1 5PP**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being told how much your school is improving and how much you enjoy going there. We were impressed by how much you like taking on extra responsibilities, and how the older pupils look after the younger ones. We were also impressed with your behaviour and the respect you show towards each other.

We would like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree that your school is improving quickly. It is a satisfactory school, and it has some good features. You behave well and enjoy taking part in lessons. Your headteacher and the senior leaders are helping the school get better. You make progress similar to pupils of your age around the country.

Your headteacher and the staff are working to improve the school further. We have asked your leaders and teachers to help you make faster progress by doing the following things.

- Improve how well you do in English and mathematics by ensuring that what you learn gives you more opportunities to use your skills in writing and problem solving in a wider range of contexts.
- Improve teaching so that when you need help teachers concentrate more on helping you to learn, provide you with work that meets your interests and abilities, and gives you more opportunities to work independently.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to make your school better.

Yours sincerely

Brian Netto  
Lead inspector

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