

# St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Richmond Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7RR

**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Effective leadership for the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that, despite staffing changes, teaching is good and children make good progress. In linking letters and sounds (Phonics) and their personal, social and emotional development their progress is outstanding.
- Pupils of all ages make outstanding progress in reading because of the excellent start they have in Reception. Reading is very effectively taught throughout the school.
- Teaching is outstanding and gives pupils a passion for learning. Attainment in English and mathematics is typically well above average but standards in writing, although above average are not as high as those in reading. Some pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in mathematics.
- Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe because of the excellent family atmosphere. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding, as it was in the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has succeeded in motivating all staff to work as a team to improve all aspects of the school's work. As a result, overall effectiveness is outstanding. Staff make regular checks on teaching and pupils' achievement and have maintained high standards for the past four years.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors use their considerable expertise to ask senior leaders searching questions about how well the school is doing. This contributes to the excellent capacity to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Two were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the pupils' council, a group of other pupils from Key Stage 2, the Chair of the Governing Body, and staff with leadership and management responsibilities.
- A discussion took place with a representative of the local authority to assess the support and advice provided for the school.
- There were 91 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. The inspectors took account of these and also sought the views of parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from six staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress, planning for school improvement and records of checks on teaching and pupils' progress.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Joseph Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Connor

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Just under 20% of pupils are from a minority ethnic background but almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average but an above-average proportion are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. This is because the school has a small number of pupils who are on the autistic spectrum.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a part-time Nursery class every morning. A temporary teacher in the Nursery and two temporary teachers on a job-share arrangement in Reception are covering long-term illness and a maternity leave of school staff.
- The school has a before- and after-school club, called Kidzone, which is organised and managed privately. It is registered with Ofsted and was inspected separately in 2012.

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

- Maintain the focus on improving writing to enable pupils to achieve the same consistently high standards as they do in reading and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that all teachers plan more opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and other subjects
  - evaluating and sharing best practice in teaching writing skills throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because outstanding teaching ensures that pupils make better than expected progress in all classes, each year.
- Typically, by the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is a year ahead of national comparative data. Validated data shows that in 2012, results were six months ahead of national, as standards in English were above average rather than well above. This dip was because a few pupils' performance in writing was weaker than in reading. An analysis of other years shows that attainment in writing is slightly below that in reading. Writing is a current focus for improvement with the aim of improving standards. It is too early to fully assess the impact.
- Mathematics skills are promoted extremely well with high standards being maintained over time. In 2012, a small group of pupils attained standards well in advance of their age. Highly effective teaching, the use of computers and calculators, and planning interesting and challenging tasks are engaging pupils and making learning in lessons challenging and rewarding. All pupils enjoy solving mathematical problems such as discovering the pattern when numbers or shapes are rotated.
- Phonics teaching is a strength throughout the school, enabling all to achieve high standards in reading. Pupils build successfully on the excellent start they have when learning phonics in Reception. They demonstrate secure strategies to read unfamiliar words, such as sounding out letters or breaking up longer words. Excellent progress in reading results in consistently high standards by Year 6.
- Skills and understanding are broadly typical for their age when children start in the Nursery. Effective leadership and management by the headteacher for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the absence of the usual teachers, ensure that children in the Nursery and Reception continue to make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, most attain above age-related expectations in all areas as a result. All make outstanding progress in linking letters and sounds (phonics) and in their relationships with other children and adults.
- Children work well together on the good range of activities both indoors and outside in the spacious and well-organised outdoor area. All enjoyed investigating and playing with snow in the warm classroom and outside in the cold. A group searched for shapes outdoors and were keen to share their discovery that the hall roof was a pyramid shape. This investigation developed indoor learning from the previous day, when children discussed the properties of different two- and three-dimensional shapes.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. Pupils who are on the autistic spectrum are often supported individually, enabling them to be fully involved and included in lessons. The expertise of teachers ensures that barriers to learning are overcome and that all make rapid progress to attain expected or above expected levels in English and mathematics.
- Individual help in lessons is provided by the additional pupil premium funding. As a result, about half achieve expected progress with the rest making better than expected progress. There is no significant gap between the attainment of pupil premium pupils and others. This means that these pupils do much better at St Margaret's than similar pupils nationally.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and match work closely to the full range of ability. There is a good pace to learning in lessons and, because work is interesting, pupils have positive attitudes and concentrate fully on their tasks. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress and are well prepared to move on to secondary school.
- Links between Reception and Nursery, a previous issue, have been strengthened. The headteacher's Early Years Foundation Stage expertise ensures that staffing disruption is not affecting the consistently good, and occasionally outstanding, quality of teaching and learning. Children are supported closely by skilled and conscientious teaching assistants and all talk confidently to adults, accelerating their progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Teachers frequently check and accurately judge pupils' rates of progress. They invariably use this information well to plan relevant tasks for pupils of different abilities. Pupils know their targets for learning and what is expected for them to achieve at different levels.
- Marking is thorough and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. In one outstanding English lesson in Year 4, pupils discussed the criteria for high-quality written work and then edited their own work from the day before to make it even better.
- Pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in lessons and in half-termly homework tasks in specially prepared booklets which they are required to work through at home. Occasionally, pupils use whiteboards as slates for their writing and these limit the amount pupils write. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are always provided with sufficiently challenging work and supported effectively so that they can complete it.
- Pupils often use computers to complete their work, which helps to develop information and communication technology skills. Year 6 pupils, for example, demonstrated a high level of skill as they prepared information sheets which included text and pictures.
- Teachers successfully link skills from different subjects when planning work for pupils. Pupils in Year 3, for example, made volcanoes, researched facts about volcanoes in Indonesia and wrote survival guides for if there was an eruption. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils to use writing skills are missed when only the more-able pupils record group sessions rather than sharing this responsibility among each pupil in the group.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are thoughtful and polite, and this has a positive impact on the quality of learning and enhances the family atmosphere in school. 'The second anyone arrives, everyone looks after you' was a typical comment from pupils.
- Pupils are safe and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance and no exclusions over the past three years. Parents spoken to during the inspection agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe.
- Pupils are rarely concerned about bullying. 'I don't think anyone bullies in our school. It is not allowed' and 'We are always there for one another' are typical comments. All pupils have a good

understanding of different types of bullying, such as making racist comments, name-calling and misuse of mobile phones.

- Behaviour is consistently well managed and any cases of inappropriate behaviour are normally dealt with immediately and effectively by staff. Mostly, pupils sort out any disagreements sensibly by themselves.
- A good range of after-school clubs in sport and music contribute well to pupils' achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils enjoy learning to play music. Religious studies and topics covering world religions give pupils a good understanding of their own and other faiths.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The strong leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by the longstanding partnership with the deputy headteacher, ensures that all staff have specific and clear leadership and management roles. All have shared the headteacher's vision of creating an outstanding school.
- The excellent reputation the school has in the local community means that there is always pressure for places. The school also attracts pupils who are on the autistic spectrum because of the warm, family atmosphere and recognised expertise of staff in teaching these pupils.
- Senior staff support the headteacher effectively to ensure that the school runs smoothly and efficiently. All are fully involved in evaluating pupils' progress. Any pupils who are falling behind in any subject are quickly identified and supported. Staff have identified the slightly lower standards in writing and this is a current focus for improvement.
- Teaching is checked in detail through half-termly lesson observations, helping to ensure that it is effective in promoting learning. There is some variation in the quality of teaching in writing, with some pupils having more opportunities to write in some classes than others. This is evident from the amount of completed work in pupils' books.
- Staff questionnaires show that all hold positive views about school. 'Pleasure to work here' and 'Fortunate to be part of the team' are typical comments. Professional development has a high profile, with many training events aimed at improving quality and standards.
- The leadership and management of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are outstanding. Parents are routinely involved in regular reviews and have nothing but praise for the coordinator. They are delighted with the learning support provided for their children by staff and specialists from a wide range of other agencies, such as educational psychologists.
- Leaders and the governing body ensure that progression through the pay scale is closely linked to teachers' performance in ensuring pupils' successful learning and progress. *Teachers' Standards*, issued by the Department for Education and effective from September 2012, are used effectively in judging teaching quality.
- A school strength is the way all pupils are treated equally by staff and every effort is made to fully include all pupils in lessons. The successful integration of autistic pupils reflects the school's principles on inclusion and equality.

- The local authority judges this is a continuously improving school because of the high quality of leadership and management and provides as much support as the school requests. Periodically, it checks the school's performance to ensure that it continues to improve.
- The school works well with parents and carers. A high proportion of parents responded to the online questionnaire. Most were very positive about their children's experience at school. All agreed that pupils are happy, and virtually all said that they would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how effectively the headteacher and staff are working. They know how well the school's performance compares to that of similar schools nationally. The governing body has a wide spread of expertise and governors are highly effective in helping the school to improve through their interest, support and by asking leading questions. Each year the performance of the headteacher and all teachers is checked using information about pupils' progress and standards achieved. Governors are appropriately trained, with most having recently attended training sessions. Financial resources, including pupil premium funding, are well managed. The governing body has a good knowledge of child protection and safeguarding matters and all current national requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104089
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	402935

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynne Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7065020
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