

St Margaret's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road, Orford, Warrington, WA2 9AD

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have effectively managed significant changes to the school's accommodation and staffing structures. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils' achievement has improved and is now good.
- Pupils make good progress across the school from their individual starting points and leave Year 6 with standards that are broadly average.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They place a high emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics and this ensures pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are well supported by a range of adults. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they value learning that is fun. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility within the school and demonstrate concern for others.
- Senior leaders and governors check pupils' progress carefully. They ensure that improvement plans are consistently focused on raising achievement for all groups of pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching requires improvement. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to work on their own and find things out for themselves.
- Occasionally, teachers do not make it clear enough what they intend groups of different abilities to learn.
- By Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading is not as good as in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their reading skills across all areas of the curriculum and to read more widely across different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons, and a range of small group sessions in English and mathematics led by a range of support staff.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, and members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Twelve responses from parents via the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account along with the most recent parental and pupil surveys undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors reviewed 12 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: assessment data; the school's evaluation of its work; minutes from governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; reports written by consultants commissioned to analyse areas of the school's performance; information about performance management; monitoring records; and the school's improvement plan.
- Pupils read to the inspectors and inspectors also reviewed samples of their work.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Hilary Ward

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average and has risen significantly in recent years. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and looked after children.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Since the last inspection the school has moved from two sites to a single site and staff from both sites have been amalgamated and redeployed.
- The school operates a breakfast club during term time and a holiday club, which are managed by the governing body.
- The school is accredited with the Primary Quality Mark.
- The school meets government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all at least good and more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that in all lessons all teachers make it clear precisely what they intend groups of pupils of varying abilities to learn
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work on their own and find things out for themselves.
- Raise achievement in reading by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their reading skills across all areas of the curriculum and to read more widely across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start school displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are below, and sometimes well below, those typically expected of their age, especially in communication and language.
- From their varying starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Teachers and additional adults plan a wide range of activities to develop children's skills. They assess individual children's language skills very carefully and provide tailored support so that they make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result they are well prepared for learning in Year 1, with many displaying the skills expected for their age.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils now make good progress. Attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 has improved over the past three years. The proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected levels and is now similar to that nationally and represents good progress from pupils' previously lower starting points. Inspection evidence and the school's own assessment information show that the most-able pupils are now making good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Achievement in reading is not yet as good as in writing or mathematics, but it is improving. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the national check on how children develop their skills of linking letters with sounds, for example, has more than doubled in the last year. This proportion is now much higher than nationally. This reflects the improved quality of teaching. However, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to develop their reading skills across all areas of the curriculum and to read more widely across different subjects.
- Pupils in need of additional support or who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified quickly and are very well supported by a range of additional adults, including achievement mentors. The inclusion manager knows every pupil very well and monitors the achievements of individuals closely to ensure they do well.
- Pupils supported through the pupil-premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well. In Year 6 in 2012, their attainment in English and mathematics was about one term ahead of similar pupils nationally and at least in line with other pupils in the school. School information and inspection evidence shows that eligible pupils across the school are making good progress. This demonstrates that the funding is being spent to good effect and that the school effectively promotes equal opportunities for all.
- School leaders have employed a sports coach to improve the quality of teaching of physical education and pupils' physical well-being. More pupils now join after-school sporting activities. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils which are well attended.
- Parents and pupils consider that the school values all its pupils and that it supports them in making good progress and achieving well. One pupil said that it was 'a magnificent place!'

The quality of teaching is good

- School leaders have taken decisive action to address previous weaknesses in the quality of teaching and to improve it. Pupils' work in their books, lessons observed during the inspection, as well as information from the school's own assessments, confirms that teaching has improved and is now good. All groups of pupils are now making good progress.
- Teachers focus well on English and mathematics. They also ensure that pupils experience a wide ranging and enriched curriculum, supported by many visits and visitors. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and say that they think lessons are fun.
- The teaching of writing is good and sometimes outstanding. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were writing sentences inspired by a text set in Africa. The teacher provided images to

stimulate pupils' ideas and a good level of challenge, such as, to use new vocabulary in complex sentences. The teacher skilfully guided pupils' learning, directing pupils to different resources and encouraging them to consider the structure of their writing with a critical eye. As a result pupils' attitudes to learning were exemplary. Their eagerness to share ideas and encourage one another resulted in writing of exceptionally high quality.

- In reading, although the teaching of letters and the sounds they make is good, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for developing and extending pupils' reading skills through other curriculum subjects.
- The school has reviewed the teaching of mathematics and has developed a new framework which is better designed to meet the needs of all pupils than previously. This has led to improvements in achievement so that it is now good.
- Most lessons are well planned to meet the needs of varying pupil groups. Teaching assistants and other adults, for example, support pupils with disabilities and special educational needs well through individual interventions or small group work. Support for the less-able pupils is well organised. Teachers and other adults question pupils skilfully to develop their understanding, particularly where pupils' language skills are weaker. The needs of the most-able pupils are usually met well, such as by providing more challenging activities and, as a result, they make good, and occasionally outstanding, progress.
- In a small minority of lessons, teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always make it clear enough what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn. This means that some pupils sometimes spend time completing tasks which are too easy before moving onto harder work.
- There are not always enough opportunities for all pupils to explore or investigate during lessons, or for pupils to take control of their own learning by suggesting themes or topics that classes might study.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know which National Curriculum Level they were working at and exactly what they needed to improve. In lessons, high-quality marking and feedback helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils assess their own work, discussing it with teachers.
- Pupils' progress and attainment is regularly monitored and groups are organised according to need.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are polite, well-mannered and welcoming. Their attitudes to learning in the best lessons are excellent. In a small minority of lessons where teaching is not yet good or when pupils are not given opportunities to work on their own and find things out for themselves, a few pupils are not as keen to set about their learning.
- Pupils working alongside support staff, such as in small groups, are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. They often demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning.
- The school has a very positive atmosphere and this reflects in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a strong sense of being part of and contributing to the school and wider community. In school, older pupils take on many responsibilities which they particularly enjoy. Clear systems are in place to support any pupils who might feel lonely at playtime. They clearly understand the rewards for behaving well in school. Prefects enjoy being role models for younger pupils. Beyond school, pupils are keen to represent the school in a wide range of extra-curricular and community events. They make a particularly strong contribution musically through the chapel choir.
- Pupils know how to keep safe in and out of school. They are adamant that on the very rare occasions when bullying happens at school it is dealt with effectively by school staff.
- Most parents agree that the school ensures pupils behave well and the majority agree that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- The school works exceptionally well with a range of external agencies to support pupils who may be vulnerable. Pupils in need of additional help are identified early, often during the Early Years Foundation Stage. A number of school staff take on specific pastoral responsibilities, such as

providing counselling for pupils experiencing challenges both in and out of school.

- Attendance is average and has improved over recent years. The school places a high emphasis on the importance and impact of good attendance on learning, monitoring it very carefully. The previous low attendance by some pupils has been successfully tackled.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have successfully managed the many recent changes in the school structure, staffing and premises. Good quality appointments in teaching and other non-teaching staff, and to leadership positions, have had a significant impact on raising pupils' achievement and improving the standard of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers have a well-informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement and take effective action to raise achievement in key areas. They are very clear about how to make the school even more successful.
- Since the previous inspection, the way in which pupils' progress is tracked has strengthened. Senior leaders now set highly ambitious targets for pupils' progress. They work closely together to ensure individual pupils and groups of pupils who may be at risk of underperforming are quickly identified and ensure that effective support is put in place.
- Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching. Teaching is now monitored more regularly across the school. They take effective action to address any weaknesses and further strengthen good performance through the arrangements to manage the performance of staff. Leaders, along with governors, are strongly committed to ensuring that staff at all levels continually access a range of high-quality training and development opportunities. They work well in collaboration with other schools and commission support from other organisations to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement.
- The school has been well supported by the local authority through a range of staff development programmes, visits and regular monitoring to ensure that the quality of education it provides has improved.
- The curriculum is good and has improved since the previous inspection so that it meets pupils needs more closely and engages them. It is currently under review in preparation for future changes. It engages pupils well and pupils say that their lessons are fun and enjoyable. However, leaders are yet to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities develop and apply their reading skills, such as, through the different subjects and as a result, pupils' achievement in reading is not as good as in writing or mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to raising achievement and improving outcomes for pupils. They have an accurate picture of the school's performance and are well informed about progress towards achieving targets in the school's improvement plan. Governors are well trained and are able to effectively hold the school to account and to challenge school leaders about areas for improvement through their monthly meetings. In partnership with senior staff, they monitor the effectiveness of the school's performance-management systems. They clearly understand the impact of improving achievement on pay progression of staff. They check the performance of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil-premium funding to ensure that it is spent effectively and that these pupils have the same equal chance of success as their peers. Governors meet their statutory duties, including safeguarding, well.

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

Unique reference number	131349
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	426166

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	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloria Warburton
Headteacher	Chris Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
Telephone number	01925 634207
Fax number	01925 243342
Email address	office@st-margarets.warrington.sch.uk

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