

St Margaret's at Troy Town Church of England Primary School

King Street, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1YF

Inspection dates

2–3 October 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.

- Pupils achieve well from below average starting points and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is at least in line with that found nationally.
- Standards have been steadily rising over the past three years. In the 2013 as yet unvalidated national assessments, attainment rose to above the average seen in the previous year, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in all years because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teaching engages and enthuses pupils who have good attitudes to learning and want to do well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and are well cared for. They enjoy coming to school, as shown in their above average attendance.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully improved the school from its position at the previous inspection.
- The governing body effectively supports the school and holds it to account for its performance.
- Senior leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning so they can identify strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate support to ensure improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure the best possible progress for all pupils.
- Not as many more able pupils reach the high levels of which they are capable in reading as in writing.
- Teachers' marking and feedback does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- Not all subject leaders ensure that teaching in their subjects results in the very best learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small group sessions, talked to pupils about their work and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, monitoring information on the quality of teaching and the safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to some parents at the start and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Whiteside

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest groups are from Bangladeshi or Indian backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Pupils' needs are mainly related to speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority, or are from other groups, is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in an integrated Foundation Stage Unit for children in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- A Children's Centre is located on the same site and is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and maximise more able pupils' achievement, particularly in reading by:
 - ensuring that the quality of marking and feedback is consistently effective in moving learning forward and provides pupils with opportunities to improve their work
 - making sure that all teachers use guided reading sessions to extend pupils' knowledge and develop their skills in reading at a rapid pace.
- Ensure that all subject leaders' planning and guidance promotes engaging and motivating teaching to improve teaching to the level of the best and embed this in the school's new curriculum plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start at the school in the Nursery or Reception Year with skills and knowledge below those which are typical for their ages. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and reach standards that are at least in line with those seen nationally by the end of Year 6. Standards are improving and the results of the 2013 national assessments in Key Stage 2 were even better than in the previous year. Children get off to a good start to school in the Foundation Stage Unit and make good progress from their starting points. The majority reach a good level of development and are well prepared to start in Year 1, especially in the prime areas of communication and language, and physical, personal, social and emotional development. Information shows that despite rapid progress, their reading and number skills are a little weaker than other aspects when they start in Year 1.
- Pupils' work and the school's records show that all groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good and improving progress over time. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and those who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs achieve particularly well when they are supported in small groups or individually. Although there remain some gaps between their achievement and others in the school, for example in their attainment at the end of Year 6, the gaps are rapidly narrowing because they make rapid progress as a result of effective support.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar good progress to other pupils. Their needs are assessed quickly and they benefit from the expertise of specialist teaching that supports their successful learning in English and mathematics.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check (the linking of sounds and letters) in 2012, the proportion achieving the expected result was below average and this was an area noted for improvement in the previous inspection report. In the 2013 check, the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected level improved considerably. This is a result of effective training for all staff and good, detailed tracking of pupils' progress so that they learn at an appropriate level for their ability. Pupils have a secure knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words and to develop their writing skills.
- In English, there has been successful work to narrow the gap between achievement in reading and writing. The renewed focus on group guided reading sessions has helped to improve pupils' comprehension skills. New books and other resources have effectively promoted more enjoyment of reading and have motivated all pupils, and boys in particular.
- By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in both reading and writing is above average. However, by the end of Year 6, while the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher Level 5 has improved in reading and writing from previous years, the proportion reaching the higher Levels 5 and 6 is stronger in writing. Some of these most able pupils who are reaching these higher levels in writing do not equal this achievement in reading. This is because a few pupils are not making rapid enough progress in developing higher order reading skills.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved because gaps in teaching were identified and remedied, for example in shape, space and data handling. A range of activities has been established to promote more rapid progress. These include a project involving pupils in Years 3 and 5 working together on problem solving activities, additional group work for the most able pupils and the introduction of an interactive online mathematics programme, which supports pupils' homework activities and helps to engage parents in their children's mathematical learning.
- In 2012, the attainment of the small number of pupils who benefitted from the pupil premium funding was 10 months behind that of other pupils in the school in English and around 18 months behind that of others in mathematics. Progress was close to that found nationally in English but slower in mathematics. However, in 2013 and for pupils currently in the school who benefit from the pupil premium, the gaps are narrowing, considerably in mathematics because of

higher expectations and well-targeted support, and they make similar progress to others.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics over time is good, with some teaching that is outstanding. As a result, pupils from different groups learn successfully and achieve well.
- Pupils learn well because teachers have high expectations. Teachers' commitment, subject knowledge and a good awareness of their pupils' academic and personal needs mean that most lessons engage pupils well and enable most to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are good role models for pupils and they promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Very positive relationships foster pupils' good attitudes to learning so that they work hard and want to do well.
- Lessons are well planned so that all groups, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, are fully included and have full access to the same good quality learning opportunities as their classmates and progress equally well.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning and, in particular, through well-targeted support, enable pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties to make good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have lots of opportunities to discuss their thoughts and ideas with each other and teachers' and teaching assistants' skilled and targeted questioning helps pupils of all abilities to extend their thinking and learning. Pupils in Year 6, for example, tackled the problem of how to construct a circle using string, a pin and a pencil with great determination and perseverance and succeeded because they learned well from each other.
- There are some very good examples of marking and feedback on completed work and, during the course of lessons, this gives pupils useful pointers on how to improve; this is not, however, as effective in all classes.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and is skilled and confident. Specific reading skills are taught in small guided reading groups and pupils are encouraged to read at home and read for pleasure and enjoyment. Sometimes teachers do not build rapidly enough on pupils' understanding and are not explicit enough in teaching higher order reading skills to the more able pupils.
- Children in the Foundation Unit are taught well and children of different ages benefit from learning and playing together both indoors and outdoors. There is a strong teaching team that provides a broad range of exciting opportunities that promote children's independence and helps them develop enquiring, curious minds. For example, children were very excited to experiment with torches to see how shadows fall inside a dark tent that they helped to set up with a teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Many who spoke to the inspectors said how much they appreciated the friendly caring atmosphere, where they feel safe and secure and can learn and play without fear of any discrimination. They are polite, enthusiastic and confident when sharing their views about school. They show respect and consideration for each other and work and play together well.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and school records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Pupils behave equally well in class lessons and when they are working with teaching assistants and other adults outside of class lessons. On a very small number of occasions, where pupils' attitudes are not as focused as they might be because teaching does not fully engage or motivate them, a few pupils can become distracted and inattentive, preventing more exemplary learning and behaviour.

- Pupils who attend the breakfast club get a good, healthy start to their day and enjoy the opportunity to socialise with different age pupils in a calm, caring and friendly environment.
- In discussions, pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school but that they are confident to speak to adults should they have any problems and they know that any issues would be dealt with quickly and fairly. They have a good awareness that bullying can take different forms, including name-calling, physical bullying, cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe in school and in a range of situations. For example, they understand about keeping safe when using the internet at home and school. They have a good awareness of road safety and the potential dangers of building sites from a project involving a site just by the school.
- Attendance has been above average for some time. The school is constantly reminding pupils and their parents the importance of regular attendance and carefully monitors and follows up any unexplained or persistent absences.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online survey agree that their children feel safe at school and most agree that children are happy and well behaved. Inspection findings support parents' positive views.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Senior leaders and the governing body know exactly how well the school is doing, its strengths and the areas that need further development and this is recorded accurately in its self-evaluation. This is because the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is rigorous and accurate. Where any weaknesses are identified, effective support is given and rapid improvement is expected.
- Leaders and managers have a clear, ambitious vision for the school's future that is shared by all staff, and expectations for pupils' achievement are high.
- The information gathered about the school's performance informs improvement planning which gives a clear steer for future work with measurable targets to ensure that progress can be tracked and evaluated effectively. This was an area for improvement flagged in the previous inspection report, which has been given good attention.
- Arrangements for judging teachers' performance are rigorous. Performance management procedures ensure a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. Targets are set for teachers that are linked well with the progress pupils make and teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress and maintaining the aspects that are 'non-negotiable' minimum expectations. Teachers said they find the performance management process useful, positive and inspiring.
- The roles of key leaders are well defined and leaders at all levels make a positive contribution to whole-school improvement as well as providing skills and expertise in their particular areas of responsibility. Leadership roles of staff with subject responsibilities are being developed but they are not yet fully effective in promoting the highest quality teaching and learning through their subject planning and guidance. School leaders have set out their expectations for best practice, which has yet to be included in the new curriculum plans.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well, as it is firmly embedded in the ethos of the school and permeates all that it does. The school promotes its values as a church school and fosters pupils' understanding and respect for different cultures and faiths, through, for example, visiting a Gurdwara to experience Sikh beliefs and practice.
- The school ensures that all pupils have access to the full range of subjects and activities and learn without fear of any type of discrimination. There is a broad curriculum with a good range of sporting and arts activities. The school has just received its second Artsmark award and a school games bronze kitemark award. Pupils' personal, social and health education has a strong focus and underpins the importance the school places on promoting pupils' well-being. All pupils

engage in regular physical education lessons and understand the benefits of physical activity for staying healthy. There is a good range of additional sports activities in after-school clubs that have a good take-up by pupils.

- The school is expecting the new primary school sports funding soon and already has plans for its use, including involvement in a sports partnership to promote competitive sports, training for midday supervisors and an expansion of after-school and lunchtime sporting activities.
- Parents, including those to whom inspectors spoke, are very supportive of all aspects of the school's work and particularly positive about the fact that all staff, including the headteacher, are accessible to parents at all times.
- The local authority works well with the school and has in the past supported its improvement by brokering support from a headteacher who is a national leader of education to work with the school. The local authority now provides 'light touch' support to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well, have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and are committed to its further improvement. The governing body has improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection. Governors know how well the school is doing when compared with other schools nationally and use the published school data and reports from the headteacher and senior leaders to question and challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance. Governors know about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. Effective performance management systems are in place to ensure that teachers and the headteacher fully meet their responsibilities and the targets set. Staff pay is linked to performance. The governing body has a good knowledge of how the school uses the pupil premium funding to support pupils' academic and personal needs, including, for example, funding for the home-school support worker, additional teaching assistants, training for staff and subsidised and free places on visits and residential trips. They evaluate the impact of the spending and ensure that pupils' well-being and achievement are successfully promoted. They have fully discussed and agreed the plans for the new primary sports funding. The governing body ensures statutory duties are met, including those for safeguarding.

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	118708
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	426482

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Parsons
Headteacher	Jennie Faik
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2012
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