

# St Margaret's Nursery School

Margaret Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN4 9NT

**Inspection dates** 15–16 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Inspirational senior leaders, governors and staff, some of whom are long-serving, have been extremely successful in working closely together to sustain outstanding practice over the past six years.
- All staff have exceptionally high levels of expertise which are used to help children, whatever their background, home language or ability, to make outstanding progress.
- New ideas to help children learn, especially in literacy and mathematics, are considered carefully and staff agree the best ways to achieve their ambitions for children to do as well as they can.
- Children make the most rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly become independent and resilient learners who move confidently around school making decisions about what they would like to learn.
- Highly innovative and imaginative teaching methods capture children's curiosity and enthusiasm. Their individual needs and interests are met precisely. Consequently children are inspired to achieve highly.
- Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are exceptionally good. They become engrossed in their learning.
- Children make good friends, know how to take turns, share books and games, and help one another because they learn in a warm, caring atmosphere.
- Attendance is high and children are rarely late.
- Breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs provide excellent additional opportunities for children to develop their social skills.
- Strong links with the children's centre help children to settle quickly into school. The services it offers also help staff to support families in times of need.
- A wide range of excellent resources and a superb outside area enable staff to provide a rich, lively curriculum that promotes high levels of achievement and children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Staff take great care to ensure children are kept safe when out in the community, and when using tools and outdoor resources.
- The partnership with parents and carers is strong. Their views and those of their children about ways to improve the nursery are considered carefully. Staff are currently working on a better way to inform parents and carers about their child's progress.

- The governing body is exceptionally knowledgeable about the school. Governors challenge and support senior staff to maintain its high-quality provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight hours of teaching and learning, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher.
- Morning and afternoon sessions were observed. The inspector visited breakfast, lunchtime and after-school activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, three support staff, the member of staff with responsibility for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, and representatives of the local authority and governing body.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers whose older children had attended the nursery in previous years, to some parents and carers whose children returned in September this year, and to parents and carers who are new to the nursery. The results of the school's survey of parents' and carers' views carried out in the summer of 2013, one letter from a parent or carer, and 38 responses to the online survey Parent View were taken into account
- Some of the school's documentation was reviewed. The review included: the school's self-evaluation summary; the school improvement plan; reports from local authority representatives following their visits to the school; governing body minutes; arrangements for safeguarding; records of attendance; records of children's progress; and some of the new 'learning journeys' that record what children have been doing, what they have achieved and what they need to learn next.

## Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The nursery is similar in size to most nurseries nationally.
- Children usually attend in the morning or afternoon. The school provides breakfast, lunch and after-school clubs, and some children stay all day from 8.00am until 6.00pm.
- Approximately one third of the children speak English as an additional language. A few are at an early stage of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs who are supported through early years action is above that found in most schools. The proportion supported at early years action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is similar to that found in schools nationally. Among children's diverse needs are speech and language difficulties.
- The headteacher works with other nurseries and schools to improve the quality of education. She is also part of the local authority consultation group that advises on early years education.
- Senior leaders and some staff have been at the school for many years.
- Since the previous inspection, the admission arrangements for children entering primary schools have changed. This means children may stay at the nursery for five terms, but in most cases they stay for three. Most start when they are just three years of age, and leave at the age of four.
- The children's centre, which is an integral part of the school, is also the responsibility of the headteacher and governors. The centre is inspected separately and its most recent report is on the Ofsted website.

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

- Ensure that parents and carers gain a fuller picture of their child's progress by sharing with them their child's 'learning journey' book that records what they know, can do and what they need to learn next. Offer parents and carers the opportunity to contribute to this book by providing examples of their child's successes at home.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- From their varied starting points children of all abilities and backgrounds make rapid progress. By the time they leave the nursery to start in their Reception classes, most children have acquired the skills expected for their age, and in many cases have learned a great deal more. The most able children have already begun to read, write simple words, count in sequence and carry out simple calculations.
- Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They have high levels of independence and confidence, moving easily between the different rooms and outside. This allows them to make decisions about their learning and the activities they undertake, establish good friendship groups, and have high levels of respect for one another and adults.
- Although they have been in school only a short time, children's social skills are already highly developed. They listen to each other politely, share their ideas and play contentedly with their classmates.
- Staff are extremely adept at helping children to develop their spoken language. They engage them in conversations or ask probing questions that give children the opportunity to express their ideas confidently. Engaging activities, stories, role play and trips out broaden children's understanding of the world and give them many interesting things to talk about.
- There is no discrimination of any kind because all children have excellent opportunities to succeed. Children who start at nursery speaking very little English or with speech difficulties quickly gain the confidence to communicate very effectively with adults and their friends.
- Through their close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals, staff identify and meet the needs of disabled children and those with special educational needs extremely well. This ensures they too make rapid progress. One-to-one support for some means these children play a full part in all that the nursery has to offer.
- Children make an exceptional start with reading. Their fascination for reading is ignited by an excellent range of attractive fiction and non-fiction books. There are cosy corners where they can curl up with their chosen book and become absorbed by it. Some already know a few of the sounds that letters make and love searching the text for them.
- Staff make the most of every opportunity to develop children's mathematical skills. Computer programs and construction activities also contribute significantly to this area of learning.
- Children make great strides in their physical development. They are confident riding their bicycles, and show good coordination, balance and control when playing ball games or climbing over the 'obstacle courses'. Opportunities to explore different materials and mix paints add much to children's skills in expressive arts and design.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching over time is outstanding. It captures children's curiosity and thirst for learning so that they gain new knowledge, skills and understanding very quickly. Parents and carers who have known the school over a number of years, and those who are new to it are right to say that the teaching is exceptional.
- Staff are highly skilled and experienced in working with children of this age. Through their astute observations and meticulous assessments they know the children extremely well. They provide captivating and engaging activities that match children's abilities. These help children to build rapidly on what they already know and can do. Some, who only a few weeks ago could make simple marks, are beginning to read and write fully recognisable words, using their knowledge of the sounds letters make.
- Each session is carefully planned, but frequently adapted as staff allow children to follow interests that emerge. During the inspection an interest in animals led to children finding books

and drawing a picture of their favourite animal from their chosen book. These were sent in a letter to the 'owner of the zoo'. At story time, to the children's amazement a parcel arrived from the zoo keeper with models of their chosen animals. This opportunity richly contributed to children's reading, writing and communication skills, and their knowledge of the wider world.

- A superb range of adult-led and child-initiated activities, supported by excellent resources, allows children to be independent and resilient, to make decisions and to pursue their own ideas. Staff give children time to make the most of every activity. Often they extend children's learning by asking questions that challenge them to think hard.
- Innovative and highly amusing activities, stories and rhymes provided in small-group sessions help children who speak English as an additional language and those with speech difficulties to develop the vocabulary they need and the confidence to learn. These are built on very effectively in other activities because staff model high-quality spoken English for them.
- Relationships between staff and children are excellent. There is a consistent approach in the ways in which staff help children to learn and to manage their behaviour. The nursery has a warm, calm and caring atmosphere where children often become engrossed in the activities provided for them.

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

- Parents and carers, governors and staff are right to consider that children behave extremely well for their age. Staff make clear how they expect children to behave, and how to successfully deal with situations that make them feel unhappy. Children know how to take turns and are confident to ask one another or an adult for help. They invite others to share a game or a book, and ask their friends, in a polite way, to stop doing something they do not like.
- Children have exceptional attitudes to learning because they are curious about all the activities set out for them, and they make important decisions about what they would like to do on their own. They spend as much time as they need, exploring each task to the full, and concentrating for long periods of time. When adults invite children to undertake an activity with them they respond enthusiastically.
- Breakfast, lunchtime, and after-school clubs are high-quality social occasions. At mealtimes, children sit together at the table, usually with an adult. They have excellent manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you', and enjoy talking about things that interest them.
- No child has been asked to stay away from the nursery because of poor behaviour. Those with challenging behaviour are managed very well so that they participate fully and do not interrupt the learning of others.
- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection and is now high. This is because parents and carers know that if their child is often absent they lose their place. Children are so eager to get to school they are rarely late.
- Staff teach children to be safe when out in the community, and when using tools such as scissors and knives, the climbing equipment and wheeled toys. The close links with the children's centre mean the school can also offer services to families that ensure children who are vulnerable are cared for extremely well.

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

- Outstanding leadership and management at all levels, including governors, have ensured that the school has sustained children's high levels of achievement and personal development over a considerable period of time. All work closely together as a strong team, agreeing the best ways in which they can realise their ambitions for children to do as well as they possibly can.
- Rigorous self-evaluation takes into account detailed analysis of the data about the children's progress and the views of parents and carers, staff, governors and children. This, together with a well-defined development plan and staff training, has helped to make the school even better.

New resources have been purchased to further improve the development of children's mathematical skills and their knowledge of the sounds that letters make. As requested by the children, they now have bicycles without stabilisers and this enhances their physical development.

- A recent survey showed that parents and carers would like more information about their children's progress. In response, staff have revised children's 'learning journeys'. These books give a clear picture of what they know, can do and need to learn next. They are shortly to be sent home for parents and carers to see, and to add their views of their child's successes away from school.
- All staff undergo appraisal each year to maintain high-quality teaching. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching, and evaluate rigorously whether new methods are helping children to learn as quickly as they should. The strong commitment to improving the way they work means staff have gained a wide range of skills and qualifications relevant to this age group and to disabled children.
- The range of activities that children undertake is rich, vibrant and promotes a thirst for learning. Children who stay all day enjoy a wide variety of different and enjoyable experiences that add very successfully to their development. Imaginative activities, opportunities to watch chicks hatch from eggs, trips out and celebrations of the different cultures within the nursery promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding nursery.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are exceptionally skilled and very well trained for their roles. They are fully aware of the quality of teaching and children's achievements as they often visit. They use their expertise in education, business and welfare to benefit the children. Governors challenge and support the school in sustaining high levels of achievement. They are involved in the robust appraisal systems for staff, and reward high-quality teaching and leadership within the constraints of the budget. Finances are checked carefully and used to target improvements and sustain high-quality resources. Statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding children.

## 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>	101254
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	425581

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Chew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19–20 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8449 5466
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8449 9216
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-margarets.barnetmail.net

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