

Margaretting CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Penny's Lane, Margaretting, Ingatestone, CM4 0HA

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Relationships across the school are strong. This results in a caring, happy and supportive environment where all pupils are valued and are given the opportunity to succeed.
- The work seen and the school's data show that achievement is improving and pupils are now making good progress in all age groups.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to school. Teaching is consistently good and teachers make careful and accurate assessments of children's progress.
- Teaching is good or better throughout the school, and the support given by teaching assistants is highly effective.
- Outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6 helps pupils to make particularly good progress in reading and mathematics.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team in leading staff to make changes for the better. They make good use of links with other schools, wisely choosing new ways of working to best suit their school.
- The governing body works closely with the headteacher and has the confidence and skills to ask questions about how the school is run.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. As stated in the school prayer, pupils see the school as home and friends as family; all enjoy coming to school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure all pupils achieve as much as they can, especially in writing.
- Marking and feedback to pupils in lessons do not always help pupils to improve their work.
- In some lessons activities do not challenge the most able pupils.
- Despite the school's work to improve attendance, rates remain average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 14 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, an external school consultant and groups of pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 26 responses to the school's parent questionnaire and 10 responses to the questionnaire for school staff. There were insufficient responses to Parent View to be analysed.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documentation including the school's own evaluation of its performance, information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, behaviour and attendance records and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector also listened to pupils reading in Year 2.

Inspection team

Kelly Stock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very small primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average and rising.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average but rising.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school this extra government funding helps pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school late or leave early is higher than average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The school offers regular extra support classes for pupils on Saturday mornings.
- The school works closely with a cluster of local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding and improve achievement in writing by:
 - planning activities in lessons that challenge all ability groups, and especially more-able pupils, so they achieve the very highest levels of achievement
 - encouraging more-able pupils to improve their writing skills by showing them how to write higher quality work
 - making sure that marking helps to raise standards in all subjects.
- Explore further ways to improve attendance to above-average levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The small number of pupils in each year group and changes such as pupils joining the school as late as in Year 5 mean that standards vary from year to year. However, the work seen and the school's data for this year show that most pupils are making good progress in all age groups.
- In 2013 the attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average, an improvement on the previous year. Nearly all Year 6 pupils had made the nationally expected levels of progress in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2, although few exceeded them. In writing, rates of progress varied but were not as good. The current Year 6 pupils are making good progress and on track to achieve standards in line with or above the national averages in all subjects.
- There are too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their attainment and progress without identifying individuals. Pupils who join the school late, including those who speak little or no English, receive excellent support which is helping them to make at least the same progress as other pupils.
- Children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They are currently doing well in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. They learn to play well together and teachers take account of their interests so they enjoy the activities as they learn.
- In 2013 a higher proportion of pupils than nationally was successful in the Year 1 phonics check, which tests their understanding of the links between letters and sounds. Pupils are making good progress in reading. They enjoy reading at school and at home and enjoy talking in pairs and using actions to think about their writing through the school's 'Talk for Writing' scheme. In mathematics, they show determination to 'get it right' and are able to use resources and displays around the classroom to work things out for themselves.
- The more-able pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed expected progress in reading and mathematics this year. However, they say that at times work is 'too easy due to the mixed class' and as a result they are not currently achieving the very highest levels, particularly in writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good and some is outstanding.
- The teaching of phonics is good. The recent introduction of guided reading and the new library successfully promote reading across the school and at home.
- In Reception, extra support is provided even though there are only six children in the class. This shows the school's commitment to making sure each child receives the help they need from the very start so they are ready for Year 1. As a result, children in Reception settle quickly and grow in confidence.
- New schemes to support pupils' writing and a new homework policy have enabled pupils in all years to practise their writing in a range of contexts. For example, pupils have pen pals in America, some have written to pen pals in Dunkirk about flood defences and others have written poetry for the War Memorial Service. Pupils now also have the opportunity to choose topics for their writing homework, resulting in enthusiastic efforts including 'Nelson Mandela', 'Greek Myths'

and 'Keeping my hamster healthy'.

- Lessons are imaginative and capture pupil's interests, leading to good and often outstanding learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed acting as reporters and interviewing their teacher when learning to write a newspaper report.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is outstanding. All are confident in managing behaviour, are skilful in their use of questions to help pupils understand, and display exceptional patience and sensitivity for the children in their care.
- Where learning is outstanding, teachers plan carefully to make sure that work is at just the right level of difficulty for each pupil. When expectations are high, especially for the more-able pupils, they respond and rise to the challenge. These are not yet common features in lessons.
- Marking in books has improved considerably since the last inspection, and in some cases teachers give pupils specific examples to show them what could be improved. However, teachers do not always make the most of comments to show pupils how to improve their work in all subjects, especially for the more-able pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and caring of each other and show particular sensitivity for newcomers and pupils who have special educational needs. They have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and towards their school are exemplary. They show great pride in their work. They enjoy their learning and show determination to succeed. Their positive attitudes are shown by their unprompted celebration and praise for others' good work or efforts and in their respect for the plants, wildlife and general facilities around the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are very happy and enjoy coming to school, including their attendance for extra support on Saturdays. This is seen in their constant smiles; one parent reported their child asking during the holiday 'how many sleeps until school?' They feel safe and say bullying 'just does not happen'. They know how to keep themselves safe in school and online.
- Behaviour is very well managed, including that of some children who have complex needs. Teachers use humour and well-established routines, and are firm but fair. Genuine strong relationships and excellent care and support by all staff lead to exemplary behaviour in and outside the classroom.
- Pupils in Year 5 and 6 show particular resilience and determination to achieve their best and there is healthy rivalry in class to impress their teacher and each other.
- The school continues to work with a small number of families, liaising with Traveller Education and the Education Welfare Officer to improve attendance, which is broadly average and improving. Pupils arrive at school on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well respected by staff, parents and pupils. He and his deputy work hard

together to bring about improvements while maintaining and consolidating the strengths of the school. They are realistic and accurate about what they need to do to improve their school.

- The headteacher uses lesson observations and feedback to staff effectively to raise the quality of teaching. His own understanding of what outstanding teaching looks like and his support for staff have helped them to improve their practice. The outcome is a whole school team which feels valued and supported to make a positive difference to the children in its care.
- Additional money through the pupil premium and primary sports funding is spent wisely to make sure all pupils enjoy the whole life of the school, including free clubs, trips and music lessons as well as supporting their sporting and academic success through specialist sports teaching and one-to-one and group tuition.
- The school benefits from close links with local schools and this has helped staff to see best practice in action. It has helped them to introduce successful writing schemes and a new homework policy, and to improve the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher's accurate analysis of data across the school enables all staff know how well pupils are doing. As a Key Stage 1 moderator, he makes sure teachers' assessments are accurate.
- The curriculum matches the interests and needs of the pupils well. In Years 5 and 6 links between subjects are particularly strong. For example, pupils have the opportunity to apply and practise their mathematical skills in other contexts such as line graphs in science.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French, music and sport. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness including visits to the remembrance memorial, Easter services and visits to a range of museums.
- The range of trips and after-school clubs is particularly good, including day trips for gifted and talented pupils, half-termly film and popcorn nights and the Young Voices concert at the O2. The headteacher insists that 'we may be a small school but we do not miss any opportunities'.
- The school receives good support from the local authority and the school's consultant.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is particularly knowledgeable about the school and is well placed to support new governors. She holds the headteacher to account and is ambitious for the school. Despite recent changes to the governing body, new governors offer a good range of skills and are confident to ask demanding questions about how the school is run.
 - The governors are kept up to date with regular newsletters and meetings to make sure they have a good understanding of the school's performance. They are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and how teachers' performance is managed. The headteacher's targets are suitably challenging and linked to the school's priorities to raise attainment.
 - They use pupil premium funding and resources very effectively to make sure every child experiences the best from the school in addition to supporting their academic progress and achievement.
 - The governing body makes sure that safeguarding meets national requirements.

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	115116
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	440539

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Stephens
Headteacher	Andrew Gillett
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2012
Telephone number	01277 352114
Fax number	01277 354483
Email address	admin@margaretting.essex.sch.uk

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