

St Margaret of Scotland Primary School

Rotheram Avenue, Luton, LU1 5PP

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils have not made good progress year on year in reading, writing and mathematics, although it is faster this year. As a result, standards are below average in these subjects.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn. The tasks they set are not demanding enough for all pupils, especially the more-able pupils.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to respond to their comments on how to improve their work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to improve their writing skills in different subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their calculating and problem-solving skills.
- Subject leaders have not been sufficiently involved in the drive to improve teaching and raise standards. They do not yet consistently check what goes on in the classrooms.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have not focused enough, until recently, on the progress of different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving rapidly after a period of instability and underperformance.
- Leaders and governors have worked systematically and effectively to ensure the quality of teaching is better and that all groups of pupils make faster progress.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute considerably to their achievement.
- Provision for children in the Reception year is good and helps them to make rapid progress from their low starting points.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the cultural diversity within the school and respect others' values, beliefs and ways of life.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons and learning areas. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading to them.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and 41 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also analysed parents' responses to the school's own survey.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Podmore

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Approximately a third of the pupils come from White British backgrounds, about a third from other White backgrounds and about a third from a wide range of other minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly African. Nearly half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. An increasing number of pupils join the school with very little English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The previous headteacher of the school had been on long-term sick leave and sadly passed away in December 2013. A high proportion of staff left or joined the school during this period. The current interim headteacher was initially seconded from another local school in May 2013, was appointed as acting headteacher in September 2013 and then as the interim headteacher in December 2013. Staffing is now stable, but some subject leaders are new to their posts.
- The school is a member of the Deanery Partnership of Catholic Schools. Currently the school, and its governing body, is managed by a Standards Improvement Board (SIB) which includes representatives of the governing body, local authority and the Deanery Partnership of Catholic Schools. A headteacher from an outstanding Catholic school, who is a National Leader in Education, is involved in supporting the school. The school is in the process of appointing a substantive headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that tasks set in lessons stretch all pupils consistently, especially more-able pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and how much they are able to achieve
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to the guidance teachers provide when marking their work.
- Raise achievement, especially in writing and mathematics by:
 - extending the opportunities for pupils, including more-able pupils, to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - giving pupils in all classes sufficient opportunities to develop skills for solving problems in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that checks on the quality of teaching and learning are consistently rigorous and focused on the progress of all groups of pupils
 - developing the capacity of new subject leaders to check teaching and learning in their areas accurately and effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are too low and teaching is not consistently strong enough to speed up pupils' progress in all classes. As a result, too few pupils made the expected progress by the time they left Year 6 in 2013. Very few pupils made more than the expected progress, especially the more-able pupils.
- Following a turbulent period, the school has taken very effective actions in the current school year to raise standards. The school's data on current pupils' progress and their targets for 2014, supported by the work seen in their books and in lessons, clearly indicate that pupils are making much more rapid progress in all areas and that attainment is rising.
- Systematic approaches have been introduced to analyse and assess pupils' progress from their starting points and to check the effectiveness of teaching in accelerating pupils' learning. This new focus has brought about considerable improvements to pupils' achievement in the current school year.
- Children join the Reception year with skills that are well below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress because relationships are very positive and stimulating activities promote children's basic skills well.
- Pupils are developing their reading skills effectively. Results of the check in Year 1 on how well pupils link letters and sounds (phonics) improved in 2013 and were close to average. During the inspection, younger pupils showed they can use their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils are gaining an increasing understanding of different styles of writing and are keen to discuss their views on different authors.
- Pupils are increasingly writing for different purposes in English. Often, they use imaginative words to describe events and characters. However, they do not have the opportunity to write at length in different subjects such as science and history. In mathematics, pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills are not well-enough developed to raise standards further.
- A number of pupils join different year groups throughout the year speaking very little English and often with no prior experience of education. Their needs are assessed as soon as they arrive and they receive good quality support from teaching assistants, including those who speak the first languages of these pupils. As a result, they make similar progress to their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with specific social and emotional needs, are making faster progress than previously, particularly in reading and writing. This is because they are supported increasingly well in one-to-one and small-group sessions which helps them learn effectively.
- Support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has improved over the past year. A range of effective individual interventions help these pupils. Consequently, most have made faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics than previously, narrowing the gap in attainment between them and their classmates. The gap in attainment narrowed from four terms in 2012 to less than half a term in 2013 in reading and writing. In mathematics, the gap improved from nearly three terms to two terms. Inspection findings indicate a similar trend of improvement in the current year.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not ensured that pupils acquire all the key skills necessary for them to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. That said, teaching has improved significantly recently. However, it has not yet resulted in consistently good achievement in all subjects throughout the school.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their pupils and do not always use assessment information effectively to ensure that all groups, particularly the more-able pupils, are stretched to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers mark work regularly and most provide the clear guidance that pupils need to help them improve their work. Teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to these suggestions and, as a result, pupils often repeat their mistakes.
- There is a positive climate for learning in lessons and pupils respond readily to tasks, showing interest and enthusiasm. Relationships are good and behaviour is managed well in all classes.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge and use effective questioning to check on pupils' understanding and build on what they already know. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher used demanding questioning to make sure that pupils developed a good understanding of how to measure the perimeters of different shapes.
- The teaching of phonics has improved because teachers now use a consistent method so that pupils can build on what they are learning from week to week. This has led to marked improvement in pupils' reading skills over the past year.
- In the Reception year, stimulating resources and lively teaching contribute to children's good progress. They enjoy using their developing knowledge of phonics to help them read new words. In a session during the inspection, children read unfamiliar words confidently and understood the need to separate words from phrases in doing so.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and respectful of each other and adults. They have positive attitudes to learning and get on well in lessons without disruption, although they sometimes lose focus when lesson activities are not demanding enough.
- There are good procedures for adults to manage pupils' behaviour. These are applied consistently and pupils respond well to them. Pupils are proud of their school and thrive in the school's inclusive atmosphere where everyone is valued and trusted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe at school; as one pupil explained, 'teachers are kind and loving and, if something happens, they protect us'. Most parents who responded to the online Parent View survey and the school's own survey agree that their children are safe at school at all times. Pupils have a good understanding about e-safety and how to guard their personal details. They are clear about the dangers of illegal drugs.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school. They are confident that if it did occur it would be dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils show a good understanding of different forms of

bullying, including name-calling, racism and cyber bullying.

- Pupils demonstrate a good sense of responsibility through their commitment to school council work and various fundraising activities. For example, they raise funds for charities such as the local hospice as well as for several international charities to support children in other countries.
- Attendance has been average over the past two years and improved in the current year. This is because the school have worked hard with external agencies and parents over the past year to raise attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- In the recent past, leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching is consistently good. This means that pupils have not made good progress and standards are low in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The relatively new leadership team has taken effective action during the current school year to arrest the decline in standards and to raise achievement across the school. The interim headteacher and senior leaders have steered the school through a period of rapid growth and are successfully driving improvement. Consequently, pupils' achievement is now improving.
- Since her arrival, the interim headteacher has successfully introduced effective new systems which are helping the school to operate efficiently. The new subject leaders, including the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, are determined to improve the quality of teaching and to speed up pupils' progress. Nevertheless, they have not yet had the time to establish their roles in checking teaching and learning in their areas accurately and effectively.
- In the past, checks on teaching have not always focused in enough detail on the progress made by different groups of pupils. A revised system is helping staff to measure progress more rigorously. This means that pupils are now being identified more promptly and support being given more efficiently. However, this is not yet happening consistently throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. There is a strong focus on teaching music and art. Pupils have a good understanding of the cultural diversity within the school and celebrate their different traditions and heritage.
- The primary schools sports funding is being spent on coaching, equipment and a wide range of sporting opportunities. This has resulted in increased participation by pupils and a positive impact on their health and well-being.
- The local authority has provided very effective support for the school during a difficult period and has helped the school to bring about improvement. Leaders and members of the Standards Improvement Board, the governing body and Deanery Partnership of Catholic Schools have worked very well with the local authority to achieve this.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly to gain first-hand knowledge of teaching and learning and are involved in all aspects of the schools' work. They are fully aware of the period of underachievement and turbulence the school went through and worked well with leaders and external partners to halt the decline in standards. They ensured that the school was supported by a National Leader of Education from the Diocese and funded this post for one term. They challenge leaders and ask searching questions about how any underperformance in teaching

and in pupils' achievement is being tackled. Governors are aware of the results pupils attain in national tests and how they compare with national averages. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and understand how each member of staff is paid according to their performance and progress towards their targets. Pay increases have only been awarded where they were deserved. The governing body monitors the allocation and impact of pupil premium funds rigorously, ensuring that it is used to raise the attainment of these particular pupils. All statutory safeguarding requirements 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

Unique reference number	109634
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	430767

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	570
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Loretta Danahar
Headteacher (Interim)	Gabe Somes
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012
Telephone number	01582 723430
Fax number	N/A
Email address	st.margaret.of.scotland.primary.head@luton.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

