

St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich

Bolton Lane, Ipswich, IP4 2BT

Inspection dates

22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good teaching ensures that children in Reception and pupils throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress.
- Standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, and rose again in 2014.
- Pupils reach very high standards in their understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics).
- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is well above average.
- Teachers and support staff give pupils good individual support when needed, while challenging them with work at the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and their parents agree.
- The headteacher is working effectively to ensure that achievement remains high and teaching is consistently good or better across the school.
- Subject leaders' roles have been reviewed and extended. As a result, teaching and learning are improving in all subject areas.
- Governors know the school well and are working closely with senior leaders and staff. Their efforts are also helping to improve the school.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well. Links with the local and national communities are preparing them well for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not make full use of links between subjects to assist pupils' learning of key skills, such as literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils do not always respond to the teachers' detailed comments in marking about how to improve their work, and this holds back their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors collected evidence about teaching and learning by observing 17 lessons, looking at pupils' work and discussing it with them to assess their understanding and attitudes to learning. A scrutiny of pupils' work and four joint observations were conducted with members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders. Inspectors also observed a variety of activities to support individuals and small groups of pupils, and listened to two groups of pupils reading.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and her deputy, who has been acting headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and two groups of pupils.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 20 staff.
- The inspectors looked at the school's development plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, and the arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Carpenter	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. The early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school is part of a local pyramid cluster of seven primary schools which share good practice and training opportunities.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, at about 4%, is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, at around 5%, is also below average.
- The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium, at around 11%, is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- An after-school club on the school premises, St Margaret's After School Hours Club (SMASH), is organised and run independently by a group of parents. It was not included in the inspection.
- The headteacher is currently on a phased return after a period of illness. During her absence, the deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - the new curriculum reinforces the development of key skills through additional links between subjects
 - pupils routinely respond to the detailed guidance teachers give them in marking about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is working effectively with senior leaders, staff and governors to ensure that behaviour is always good, and that the school maintains its already high standards and continues to improve. Recently, the deputy headteacher has seamlessly continued this work during the headteacher's absence.
- Subject leaders' roles have grown and developed in a drive to ensure that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. They monitor pupils' work regularly as part of their assessment of the quality of teaching, and report back on this to governors. In common with all staff, they meet frequently with the local pyramid of primary schools to share good practice and training. Leaders and staff say that these sessions are very beneficial in helping to fully stretch the most-able pupils and help less-able pupils to reach their potential.
- The curriculum is under review. The school is in the process of implementing its preferred approach to assessment. It is working closely with the local authority and the pyramid of schools. The review process takes account of pupils' opinions on what they are learning, and has an additional focus on how to reinforce learning through additional links between subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have good links with the local church and community, for example through families in need in Ipswich (FIND), and growing links with a school in Sheffield. Such activities help to prepare them well for life in modern British society. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and none is disadvantaged in any way.
- National primary school sports funding is used well to increase the skills of staff and pupils in sport and physical education, and to ensure that pupils are fully aware of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Extra coaching ensures that pupils are well prepared for local competitions, in which they have a good level of success. Many pupils mentioned that physical education was a favourite subject.
- The performance of staff is managed well. Teachers' targets are linked closely to the achievement of pupils, the school development plan and their individual needs. Classroom performance is monitored closely and reviewed at pupil progress meetings.
- The local authority supports the school whenever required and monitors progress regularly to ensure that high standards of achievement and teaching are sustained. It maintained an overview of the school during the headteacher's recent illness.
- Links with parents are well developed. Parents are kept informed about events in the school and how their children are doing, and have opportunities to serve as volunteers in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors know the school well and are determined that it should continue to improve. A large number met with the lead inspector during the inspection. They outlined how they have worked closely with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff and parents to ensure that good teaching and achievement are maintained.
 - Governors visit the school regularly, have clearly defined roles and bring in a wide range of expertise. They are both supportive and challenging, for example about plans for school development and pupils' attainment and progress. They have a good understanding of performance data, which enables them to ask pertinent questions about the rigour of assessment.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure that rigorous and effective management of staff performance drives the school forward, and that good teaching can lead to promotion within the school.
 - Governors are vigilant in making sure that pupil premium funding is spent properly and has the desired impact on eligible pupils' achievement. They make sure safeguarding practices and procedures are effective and meet current national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is an orderly place. Pupils are respectful to their teachers, other adults and each other. They behave well as they move about, arrive punctually for lessons and always look smart in their well-maintained uniforms. As one said, 'We are like a family. As we go through the school and get to know each other more, the closer we come together as a real family'. For example, when pupils need assistance, there is usually a queue of willing helpers, demonstrating the impact of the school's work on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In class, pupils work hard, are attentive and demonstrate a desire to do well through their highly positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are seldom disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. A word from the teacher is all that is needed to keep learning moving forward. In the playground, Year 6 pupils help to supervise the play of younger pupils. This gives confidence to the smaller pupils and welcome responsibility to their older peers.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is good and this was demonstrated during the inspection by the journey pupils made to the neighbouring church for an assembly. Pupils were supervised closely, expectations were clear and pupils walked silently in pairs as instructed. Behaviour is reinforced through school rules and in assemblies, as well as by pupils' own expectations of each other. Parents, staff and governors also feel that behaviour is good.
- Attendance is well above average. Persistent absence rates are very low. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions in recent years.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. Their parents agree that they are safe. The school has reviewed its procedures in the light of the proposed building works. The school has clear systems in relation to visitors, asking them to sign in and wear identification as well as monitoring their movement around the site.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of their role in staying safe and are able to manage their conduct to ensure they remain safe. The school takes all necessary steps to ensure the safety of potentially vulnerable pupils and involves appropriate agencies in their care.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and an adult is always nearby to help with any concerns they may have. Work in lessons reinforces pupils' good understanding of the different forms bullying may take. For example, a Year 6 lesson on making decisions about what information to share with others was a good introduction to cyber-bullying. No derogatory language, or rudeness, was heard during the inspection. Few parents expressed any concern about bullying and a very large majority feel that their children are safe.
- Staff and governors are suitably trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment. Policies and procedures for child protection are regularly reviewed by senior leaders and governors.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, plan well and enjoy good working relationships with pupils. They check on pupils' understanding and work closely with other adults to provide effective support and ensure good progress for all groups, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who may struggle.
- The school's own monitoring of teaching and learning records swift action to address and support any areas where teaching has been weaker. As a result, the quality of teaching is steadily rising.
- The more-able pupils benefit from an increasing amount of challenge in lessons, which engages them

quickly with the tasks to be done and allows them to move forward rapidly. Consequently, more pupils are reaching the very highest levels in all key stages.

- More-able pupils reached very high levels as a result of innovative planning in a Year 5 lesson using a Greek word detective game, which also developed phonic skills. Pupils had to discover the meaning of words like 'polymorphic' by putting the meanings of each part together. The 'super challenge' was to combine all 12 words into a single paragraph. In addition to the discussion which occurred, pupils were highly competitive with each other and eager to show their talents by reading out the paragraphs.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils have good opportunities to read and most do so fluently and with good use of phonic skills. Although pupils have good communication, literacy and numeracy skills, the school is reviewing the teaching of reading and writing to ensure that pupils are always fully engaged by the range of activities and resources on offer. Pupils are responding well to the initial changes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and produce good work. They benefit from work on an individual basis and in small groups to ensure that gaps in their learning are closing more rapidly than previously.
- Teachers give generous amounts of time to marking and commenting on pupils' work, including careful guidance on how to improve it. They ensure that presentation is neat, with close attention, for example, to the layout of mathematical work. Many pupils respond to the guidance they are given in marking but progress is slower for those who do not. Homework is set regularly.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils of all abilities make consistently good progress in all key stages. Current school data indicate that standards are continuing to rise across the school.
- Results at the end of Year 6 were above average for all subjects at Key Stage 2 in 2013 and significantly so for most-able pupils in mathematics, reading and English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly above average overall and in reading, and above average in mathematics.
- Attainment rose further in 2014, especially in writing, with a large number of pupils exceeding expected progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2 as the school began work to ensure that pupils were fully engaged by the activities and resources on offer in literacy.
- Progress rates are rising across all subjects. The school has adjusted the way reading, writing and mathematics are taught to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to practise their skills. However, pupils still have inconsistent opportunities to reinforce their skills through other subjects.
- Children generally arrive in Reception with skills and understanding in line with those expected for their age, but there is some variation from year to year. Their skills and understanding are promptly assessed and support provided where needed. Communication, language and social skills are weaker than personal, physical, social and emotional development. The range of activities on offer ensures that children have good opportunities to develop language and social skills through interaction with each other.
- Pupils achieved well-above-average levels in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013. High levels were maintained in 2014 in both the Year 1 test and the Year 2 retest. Children benefit from regular practise of the sounds that letters make.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress. In 2013, the attainment of those in Year 6 was in line with that of all pupils nationally in mathematics and reading, and about two terms behind others in the school. The gaps were smaller in writing. Gaps closed in 2014 in reading and writing and are now closing in mathematics as the school is taking further action, for example by using more practical resources and activities which pupils might encounter in everyday life.

- The most-able pupils make good, and often outstanding, progress in all areas, as reflected in 2013 and 2014 results. They are challenged in most lessons, expectations are clear and most pupils respond quickly so they achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs usually make good progress in line with their peers. The school is reviewing the support on offer to provide further work with individuals and in small group as part of its efforts to close any remaining gaps.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress in the Reception classes, and the number of children reaching a good level of development rose significantly in 2014. On the basis of current school data, similar results are expected in 2015. More children, sometimes including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are exceeding expectations for their age. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Staff work well together in planning and providing activities which engage children, develop communication, language and social skills and relate to their interests. In a lesson centred on the story of *The Little Red Hen*, children were actively involved in recounting her journey and making the related physical movements over, under, around and through imaginary physical obstacles.
- Behaviour is good and managed well. Expectations are clear. Children respond promptly and relate positively to each other and to the adults, who all know them as individuals. Children are kept safe indoors and out because they are carefully supervised at all times and procedures are clearly explained.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The number of children has doubled as the school expands. The two teachers work closely together with shared responsibility under the overview of the Key Stage 1 leader to ensure continuity and effective provision. Indoor and outdoor space is used well, and this is reviewed regularly to maintain standards. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted 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	124782
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	448693

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	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cutts
Headteacher	Kim Kelway
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2010
Telephone number	01473 251613
Fax number	No fax number
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