

St Margaret's CofE Primary School

The Mardens, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0AQ

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching and assessment mean pupils' progress is uneven. Pupils do not make enough progress in some classes.
- There is not enough consistently effective teaching to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Some teachers and teaching assistants do not use questioning well enough to explore and develop pupils' understanding.
- Groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make slower progress than they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers give pupils too few opportunities to use and apply mathematical and writing skills.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) does not build pupils' reading and writing skills effectively enough.
- Some teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are not sufficiently high.
- In some classes, teachers set work which is too easy, particularly for the most able.
- Teaching in early years does not build strongly enough on children's starting points.
- Sometimes a few pupils make slower progress during lessons when they lose concentration. Not all teachers refocus pupils quickly enough when this is the case.
- Targets in development plans are not specific enough. This hampers leaders', governors' and teachers' ability to check the school's performance and secure rapid improvement.
- Leaders, governors and teachers do not yet use improved checks on pupils' progress sharply enough to plan learning and improve teaching.
- Some subject leaders do not play a sufficiently influential role in improving teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has halted a decline in the school's performance since her appointment. She has strengthened leadership and restored staff, pupil and parent confidence. The school is well placed to secure the improvements needed to lift pupils' outcomes.
- The school is a happy, inclusive and cohesive community. Relationships are strong. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and attend regularly.
- There is some very effective teaching in the school which is deepening pupils' learning and quickening their progress, particularly in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in all key stages, including early years, and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants:
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning
 - quickly address any incidents of off-task behaviour during lessons
 - set work which deepens and extends the most-able pupils' understanding
 - use questioning effectively to check and probe pupils' understanding and build on their learning needs
 - give pupils more regular opportunities to practise and improve writing skills by completing longer pieces of writing
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to use and strengthen mathematical skills by solving number problems
 - teach phonics skills effectively and confidently.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening plans for development, with a stronger focus on pupils' outcomes, so that leaders and governors can measure progress more effectively
 - strengthen subject leaders' roles in improving teaching
 - embed recent improvements in procedures to assess pupils' progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured necessary improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- Development plans are not focused sharply enough on improving pupils' progress. As a result, leaders do not have a sufficiently rigorous view of whether improvements in teaching are accelerating pupils' progress.
- In the past, unreliable assessments of pupils' learning made it difficult for teachers and leaders to check pupils' learning and progress. Recent improvements in procedures are not yet fully established.
- Numerous staffing changes have disrupted pupils' learning since the previous inspection, particularly in Year 6. However, the school is now benefiting from a more settled period.
- Subject leaders' roles are in the early stages of development. Some subject leaders do not play an influential enough part in improving the quality of teaching. However, all are enthusiastic and increasingly knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They are committed to playing their role in the school's development.
- The headteacher has quickly eradicated an element of weak teaching and established a confident, upbeat atmosphere. She has clarified staff roles and raised expectations of staff performance. More frequent checks on learning ensure teachers are more answerable for pupils' learning. The headteacher knows what needs to be done to improve the school's performance further.
- High staff morale is contributing to the school's capacity to build on recent improvements, with all staff committed to playing their part in the school's development. Teachers and teaching assistants are determined to improve their practice and participate fully in training.
- Mathematics leadership has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Leaders have used an external audit of mathematics completed at the start of the year very well to introduce changes and improvements in teaching. They have, for example, provided more information to help parents to support their children at home, including regular number challenges in the newsletter and video clips on the school website to demonstrate different ways of completing calculations.
- The recently appointed special needs team is passionate about ensuring every pupil achieves well. The special needs leader has securely established herself in the school and has a good understanding of pupils' needs. She works closely with the special needs team and with teachers to make sure that pupils who have special educational needs or disability are fully integrated into school life, including those who attend 'The Rainbow'.
- In the past, pupil premium has not been used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. The headteacher has made a start in putting this right. She has made sure that teachers and teaching assistants know which pupils are eligible and are more knowledgeable about those pupils' needs. However, the newness of assessment procedures means that leaders and teachers do not have a sufficiently rigorous view of disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Local authority support has increased over the past year and has made a valuable contribution to the school's development, particularly in the past two terms. For example, advisers have worked successfully alongside the early years leader to develop the use of the early years outdoor area.
- The headteacher has improved links with parents substantially since her appointment. Most parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire express confidence in the school's leadership. Many commented appreciatively on the difference the headteacher has made to communication and the school's atmosphere.
- Leaders have developed a broad, balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs provided, participating enthusiastically.
- Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An insistence on good behaviour during events such as worship times has enhanced these occasions considerably, so that pupils listen and reflect thoughtfully and respectfully. The school regularly participates in activities and events to support charities in the local and wider community, so that pupils develop a good awareness and empathy for the needs of others. British values are suitably promoted alongside the school's values. For example, pupils in key stage 2 discuss the meaning of 'justice' and learn about the contributions made to social welfare by historical figures such as Elizabeth Fry.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sports premium well to engage pupils in a wide range of activities. Updated plans mean teaching builds more securely on pupils' knowledge and skills in physical education than before. The school participates in many competitions so that pupils of all abilities have opportunities to excel. The sports leader works successfully with teachers by, for example, helping

them to identify opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation of the importance of physical fitness while studying topics such as geography and science. Training has been used appropriately to develop the teaching of physical education in school.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors have not secured the necessary improvements in the school's performance since the previous inspection. They do not have a sufficiently accurate view of the progress different groups of pupils make, including disadvantaged pupils.
 - The headteacher has successfully worked alongside governors over the past two terms to develop their leadership role. She gives them regular opportunities to visit the school, keeps them informed about developments and provides information about the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally. As a result, governors are much clearer about the quality of teaching and assessment and about the further improvements needed to ensure pupils achieve well. They fully share the headteacher's ambitions for the school's future. As one governor commented: 'We're not there yet, but we're confident that we'll get there with our headteacher'.
 - Governors give safeguarding an appropriately high priority and are well qualified in procedures. They are alert to the risks of extremism and radicalisation and know what to do if they have any concerns.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, school staff and governors regularly attend safeguarding training so that they are well informed about how to keep pupils safe. Leaders rigorously maintain recruitment and suitability checks for all staff and volunteers. The headteacher has increased pupil safety by tightening site security with, for example, the use of keypads at entry points.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching hinder pupils' progress as they move up through the year groups. There is not enough consistently strong teaching to ensure pupils make the best progress possible and achieve well.
- Some teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are not high enough. They do not set work which is sufficiently demanding, particularly for the most able, or bring pupils back on task quickly enough when they lose concentration during lessons.
- Phonics teaching is not sufficiently strong to ensure pupils learn basic reading and writing skills early enough. While some effective teaching builds pupils' literacy skills quickly and securely, variations in teaching mean that some pupils do not make enough progress.
- Teachers have increased opportunities for pupils to write. This ensures pupils regularly practise writing skills and learn how to write for a wider range of audiences and purposes than previously. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn how to use techniques such as writing in paragraphs by completing longer pieces of writing.
- Mathematics teaching has improved rapidly over the past two terms. Updated curriculum plans ensure teachers know what aspects of mathematics they need to teach and why. A stronger focus on teaching pupils how to complete calculations successfully means they are increasingly equipped with key mathematical skills. Increased use of practical equipment is strengthening pupils' mathematical understanding. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to practise and build problem-solving and investigational skills.
- Until recently, teachers and teaching assistants were not sufficiently aware of which of their pupils were disadvantaged or of their needs. This has changed over the past two terms. They now know which pupils are eligible for support from pupil premium funding. They are increasingly knowledgeable about pupils' needs and what they can do to ensure disadvantaged pupils achieve their full potential.
- Teaching assistants provide good-quality support for those pupils who attend 'The Rainbow'. They are attentive to pupils' needs, while making sure they have equal opportunities to work independently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Some pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are not strong enough to ensure they make the best progress possible.

- Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils get on well together. They speak courteously and politely to adults and to each other.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet. They know their teachers make sure they are safe by checking the websites used in school. Pupils talk sensibly about what they would do if they are worried about anything they come across when using the internet.
- Pupils say they have no concerns about bullying and that incidents rarely happen. This view is reinforced by school records, which indicate that leaders take appropriate action wherever needed.
- Pupils attend regularly and punctually. Above-average attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. At times, some pupils make slow progress during lessons because they are not listening carefully enough to their teachers, or getting on well enough with their work. Standards of behaviour in lessons are linked to the quality of teaching and to individual teachers' expectations.
- Many pupils behave extremely well in lessons. They want to get on with their work and are serious about learning. They listen closely to their teachers, following advice about how to improve their work.
- The headteacher has lifted expectations of pupils' behaviour since her appointment and pupils' behaviour has improved as a result. Pupils know and follow the school rules during playtimes, in the lunch hall and when moving around the school. Pupils say that the headteacher has changed behaviour for the better.
- Most parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire feel that pupils are well behaved, happy and safe. Several parents who spoke with inspectors recognised improvements in behaviour over the past two terms, saying that leaders address any poor behaviour quickly and appropriately.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Improvements in the quality of teaching have been too recent to lift pupils' outcomes. There are still some variations in the quality of teaching which mean pupils in some classes do not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A legacy of weak teaching has left some pupils with gaps in their English and mathematics learning which hamper their progress, particularly in the oldest year groups. Effective teaching in the upper school this year has quickened pupils' progress and is going some way to helping the older pupils to catch up. However, the remaining gaps in knowledge and skills continue to hinder pupils' learning.
- Pupils do not develop reading and writing skills rapidly enough to enable them to achieve their full potential. Average attainment in reading and writing at the end of both key stages in 2015 does not represent sufficiently rapid progress from pupils' starting points.
- Until recently, weaknesses in teaching and low expectations limited pupils' progress in phonics. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have been consistently lower than the national average for the past three years, with little sign of improvement. However, recent developments in phonics teaching mean pupils currently in Reception and Year 1 are making better progress, so that more are on track to achieve expected levels in 2016.
- Better mathematics teaching over the past two terms has accelerated pupils' progress. More frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their mathematics skills mean pupils have a more secure knowledge of fundamental mathematics knowledge and skills, including multiplication facts and formal calculation. However, they are less confident when tackling number problems and investigations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those who attend 'The Rainbow', make similar progress to their classmates and sometimes better. They make good progress where teaching assistants have high expectations of their learning and behaviour, focusing their support on pupils' particular needs. Pupils grow rapidly in confidence and in their ability to work more independently of adult support where this is the case.
- Many pupils, including some of the most able, are rising to teachers' higher expectations and to the challenge of more demanding work. For example, a group of the most-able pupils in Year 6 told inspectors that they are learning much better this year because the work is more suited to what they need to learn. This view is reflected in the increasing quality of work in pupils' books. However, some pupils are finding the changes in school culture and increased expectations more difficult. This is often

because they are not yet secure in basic literacy and mathematics knowledge and so lack confidence in their ability to succeed.

- In 2015, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels declined to below average in all subjects at the end of key stage 1. While the proportion attaining the higher levels at the end of key stage 2 increased in reading and writing to average levels, proportions in mathematics were much lower than the national average.
- While the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and others nationally narrowed at the end of both key stages in 2015, the work in pupils' books indicates that pupils in this group do not learn as well as they should. While some make good progress, others do less well. As with their classmates, their progress varies between classes according to the quality of teaching.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Children do not make sufficiently rapid progress to ensure they achieve their full potential during early years. Teaching does not build strongly enough on children's starting points, despite recent improvements.
- In the past, weaknesses in assessments hampered teachers' and leaders' checks on children's progress. The newness of assessment procedures means the early years leader has not developed a sufficiently robust view of the learning and progress made by different groups, including disadvantaged children.
- The early years leader has improved the teaching of phonics, introducing regular phonics sessions in the school day and training adults. However, while phonics teaching is clearly better than it was, there are still variations, with some adults not teaching phonics skills confidently or effectively enough. As a result, there are differences in children's progress.
- The experienced early years leader is very knowledgeable about children's learning and development needs and knows how to bring out the best in children. She has made a good start in developing her early years team, using her expertise well to support and improve the quality of teaching. For example, over the past two terms she has worked successfully alongside colleagues to substantially improve the way the outdoor area is used to develop children's learning. The area has been transformed from an underused, uninspiring space into an attractive, fun and safe place for children to play and learn. This has quickened children's progress. Children thoroughly enjoy using the outdoor area and do so sensibly.
- Children enthusiastically participate in a wide range of well-designed activities, both in the classrooms and in the outdoor area. Most children behave well because they are busy and interested. At times, however, a few children lose focus during lessons and are not always re-engaged quickly enough by adults, so that they make slower progress than their classmates. Adults do not always respond sufficiently to those children who find the tasks too easy or too difficult and disengage.
- Children get on well with each other, happily talking to their classmates and to adults about their ideas and opinions and listening with interest to others. They eagerly talk to visitors about their learning and do so politely.
- Children feel secure and valued because adults take good care of them and make sure they are safe. They copy the good role models provided by adults and have a keen sense of right and wrong.
- Children start school with levels of knowledge and skills which are in line with those typical for their age. They make steady progress during early years. In 2015, average proportions achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception. There are very few disadvantaged children each year in the Reception classes, so their progress and outcomes are not commented on in detail in this report.
- The early years leader has strengthened links with parents, so that they have a clearer view of how well their children are learning. Popular events, including weekly opportunities for parents to read with their children in the classroom, are well attended by parents and much enjoyed by the children. Parents say they are pleased with the way their children have settled into Reception.

School details

Unique reference number	126043
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10012232

This inspection 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	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Plunkett
Headteacher	Jill Hine
Telephone number	01293 521077
Website	www.st-margaretsifield.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-margaretsifield.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides full-time early years in two Reception classes.
- There is a nursery on site, which is managed by the governing body and inspected separately. The nursery was most recently inspected in May 2015, when it was judged 'good' overall. The early years leader is also manager of the nursery.
- The school has a special support centre, known as 'The Rainbow', for pupils with physical disabilities. There are six pupils on roll. They spend most of the time in mainstream lessons, periodically returning to the centre for specialist support.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 28 lessons or part lessons, including two completed with a senior leader.
- The inspection team held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting also took place with the chair of the governing body and five other governors.
- The inspection team took account of 136 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance and safeguarding policies.
- The inspection team looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Fane	Ofsted Inspector
Sean McKeown	Ofsted Inspector

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