

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Whiteway Lane, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 7HB

Inspection dates	22–23 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors provide determined and focused leadership for the school. As a result of their work, the school has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning are now good. Teachers plan activities that interest and engage pupils and fire their enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils learn well and make good progress overall from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment are rising and currently, near the end of Year 6, most pupils are working at or above the expectations for their age.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They feel safe and happy at school and are well looked after.
- Children get a good start to school in the early years. They make good progress, and develop confidence and independence and a love of learning. They are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and have every confidence in the school's leadership. One parent reflected the views of many with the comment, 'My children have a positive experience at St Margaret's. They are happy and well taught and the school always has their best interests at heart'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet outstanding across the school. This means that there is some uneven progress and achievement.
- Despite improvements in mathematics since the previous inspection, there are still occasions where there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a depth of learning in mathematics.
- Although improving, boys' achievement in writing lags behind that of girls.
- Leaders of subjects other than mathematics and English are not yet having sufficient impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes.
- The strategic overview and record-keeping systems of the provision and support for different groups of pupils is not rigorous or efficient.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift pupils' achievement further and ensure that remaining inconsistencies in teaching and learning are eradicated by:
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop a depth of learning in mathematics
 - build on the improvements in writing to further narrow the gaps between boys' and girls' achievement.
- Ensure that senior leaders and governors apply more rigour in the strategic overview and record-keeping systems for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who may be vulnerable, to complement and account for the good provision these groups receive.
- Ensure that leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The leadership and management of the school have built successfully on the strengths reported at the previous inspection. As a result, teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are now good.
- The headteacher provides effective and motivating leadership and is very well supported by the two assistant headteachers. The appointment of two assistant headteachers has increased leadership capacity, and with the headteacher, they form a strong team, which is relentlessly and determinedly focused on continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- All leaders, staff and governors share the ambition and vision for the school. The school improvement plan gives a clear steer to bring about these developments. The enthusiasm of the headteacher and assistant headteachers ensures that staff morale is high. Teachers and teaching assistants appreciate the opportunities to develop their individual skills and meet whole-school priorities through further training.
- There has been a significant number of changes to the teaching team since the previous inspection and some pupils have experienced several class teachers in a relatively short space of time. Senior leaders have been determined and successful in ensuring that there has been rapid catch-up where there have been gaps in pupils' learning as a result of staffing turbulence.
- Senior leaders and governors rigorously check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning and hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. If any weaknesses are identified, support is given, action points are followed up and improvement is expected. Continuing underperformance is challenged and deemed unacceptable if it does not meet the school's standards.
- Senior leaders ensure that the provision of additional and appropriate support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, disadvantaged pupils and those who may be vulnerable are effective and successful. However, the record-keeping procedures to document this successful work are sometimes not sufficiently rigorous or timely and do not always provide a strategic overview.
- English and mathematics are led very effectively and the impact is evident in the improved progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Many other subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. They all have a good knowledge of the national curriculum requirements in their subjects and have developed action plans. The headteacher and governors have correctly identified, however, the need to further develop the leadership of subjects other than mathematics and English. This is in order to ensure that there is greater impact and influence on the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils, as well as appropriate and consistent coverage and progression.
- The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and mathematics. Teachers are increasingly planning lessons that link learning across different subjects and that draw on first-hand experiences to spark pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Year 5 pupils, for example, were thoroughly motivated in a writing activity as a result of a visit to a local secondary school to see a production of the musical 'Oliver'. Pupils clearly understood the language features required to write a successful review and made good progress in their writing skills.
- A range of extra-curricular opportunities, including residential and day trips, visitors to the school and after-school clubs, enriches learning and helps pupils to learn new skills, as well as making a significant contribution to their personal and academic development.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Staff and pupils promote and demonstrate fundamental British values in all areas across the school. Tolerance and respect are fostered very effectively through the school's values and the subjects taught, and pupils learn about and celebrate different religions and cultures. Pupils have a strong sense of community and understand the need for rules within the school and the wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and underpins all of the school's work.
- The school works productively in partnership with several other schools to collaborate on training and share good practice, which benefits pupils and teachers.
- The school uses additional funding effectively for the small number of disadvantaged pupils. It is used to provide a range of additional support as appropriate to the needs of the pupils. This ensures that they make similar progress to others, as well as including these pupils in the full life of the school.

- The primary physical education and sports funding is used effectively. It is used mainly to secure membership of the Deans Sports Partnership, which provides an advanced skills teacher of physical education to work alongside the partnership schools. Activities enhance the skills and opportunities for pupils and teachers and therefore improve outcomes for pupils.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and express every confidence in the leadership and the staff. One parent commented: 'St Margaret's is a lovely school with a caring, welcoming faith based approach. Since the installation of the headteacher, the school has gone from strength to strength, establishing a strong team of teachers and an effective leadership team'.
- A few parents commented that they felt there was good communication between home and school; however, several disagreed with this. Inspectors agree that senior leaders and governors should work with parents to strengthen this aspect.
- The local authority has supported and challenged the school since the previous inspection to ensure that improvement has been made, particularly in phonics (the sounds that letters represent), the early years and teaching and learning in key stage 2.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have played their part to ensure that the school improves. They share the ambition and aspirations of the headteacher to ensure that the school continues to improve.
 - Governors, including some new members, form an effective team that benefits from a wide range of experience and expertise. The governing body holds senior leaders to account effectively for the school's performance. Well-considered termly action plans determine how it can increase its effectiveness.
 - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very well informed by the headteacher and other leaders and their own monitoring visits, which are linked to school development priorities.
 - Governors oversee the performance management process and fully support the headteacher in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching and the actions that have been taken to tackle underperformance.
 - Governors are aware of the information on pupils' achievement, which helps them compare the school's performance with the national picture and to question the performance of different groups in the school.
 - The governing body is aware of the impact of additional funding and how it is making a difference for pupils. Governors are able to compare the attainment and progress of, for example, disadvantaged pupils with those of others, from information provided by the headteacher. They are less well informed of the detail of the funding breakdown to help them monitor the value of specific spending decisions.
 - Governors have correctly identified the need to increase their engagement and the school's communication with parents.
 - The governing body meets its statutory duties.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained in safeguarding matters and all staff are alert to signs of risk and act quickly to raise any concerns. The procedures and any actions taken are robust and conducted with appropriate urgency if required. Policies are up to date and staff work well with outside agencies when appropriate to benefit the pupils. Good levels of care and guidance are afforded to all pupils, and as a result, they are kept safe and secure. Governors and senior leaders do not, however, have a robust enough oversight to check on the record-keeping systems for those pupils who benefit from the good provision in safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. As a result, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are also good.
- Teachers provide tasks that capture the interest of pupils and engage them well in their lessons. Positive relationships between pupils and adults encourage pupils to be reflective learners who are confident to take risks, try things out for themselves and express their opinions.
- Classroom displays of current and developing work and information technology are used well to support teaching and learning.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in a culture of mutual support and strong teamwork. They question pupils well to check on learning and pick up any misunderstandings to help pupils make good progress. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to probe pupils' thinking more deeply.
- Pupils are very supportive of each other and learn together well. Their good attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on their learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, worked very well in teams to prepare presentations to support one side or the other in the European referendum. Some had to argue for a position that did not reflect their personal view, which they did with great maturity and enthusiasm. They listened to and considered other viewpoints before casting a personal vote. This activity was a good example of pupils developing an understanding of democracy and British values, and their discussions contributed well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Continuing with the Europe theme, pupils in Year 3 worked very well together in groups to research facts and figures about different European countries. They collaborated and negotiated well to make decisions about the most important feature to include and made good progress in their geographical understanding.
- Teachers promote an interest and enjoyment in books and ensure that pupils are introduced to a wealth of good-quality texts. Phonics teaching has strengthened over the past year, which has led to a considerable improvement in the proportion of current pupils reaching the expected level. Generally, teachers provide skilled phonics sessions that reinforce sounds systematically, moving promptly from hearing and saying sounds to reading and writing.
- Teaching and learning in writing have improved. There has been a focus on writing, with increasing opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English. Improving boys' writing has been a priority and boys are responding well, for example, to having 'free writing books' where they can write about anything that interests them. Pupils are proud of their writing, but there remain some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.
- Mathematics is generally taught well, which has helped to raise current pupils' achievement. This was an issue to improve in the previous inspection. A priority has been to increase pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of mathematics, which has been successful as many pupils now say that it is their favourite subject and 'it's fun'. Pupils of all abilities, and particularly the most able, enjoy the 'secret challenges' in mathematics.
- Senior leaders are correctly aware that although improvements in pupils' outcomes for mathematics are evident, more work needs to be done. This is to ensure that the quality and range of opportunities to promote pupils' depth of learning, reasoning skills and the application of their mathematical skills are at the same level of quality seen in some classes.
- Teachers are aware of how well each pupil is doing and what the next steps are because they make effective use of the assessment system and have regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress of individual pupils. This enables teachers to plan carefully for different groups to help reduce any gaps in achievement. For example, teachers plan activities to motivate boys without losing the interest of girls, which is effectively helping to narrow the gap between them.
- Similarly, most teachers are successfully narrowing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others with well-planned interventions. Teachers and teaching assistants provide appropriate additional support where needed for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to be successful learners as well as being clear about what they are learning. Pupils say that teachers help them understand what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful.
- The school's policy for marking and feedback is used consistently across the school. Pupils say that teachers' comments help them know how to improve their work.
- Within the overall good picture of teaching and learning, senior leaders are aware of strengths where pupils are making better than expected progress to further raise their attainment. Senior leaders are also aware that, although a legacy of underperformance in teaching has been eradicated, a few inconsistencies remain across the classes. As a consequence, there are fewer demands made of some pupils to promote a depth of learning, knowledge and understanding. This means that sometimes pupils do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable in order to lift their attainment. This is more marked in mathematics than in English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and found it difficult to think of anything they would like to improve.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured, have very good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They said that they are encouraged to work hard, and a group agreed with one pupil who said, 'I like work to be hard because I like a challenge'.
- Pupils are caring, polite and respectful of adults and each other. Inspectors were impressed with pupils' good manners and friendly greetings throughout the school day and the way they look out for each other in the playground.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and said they would like more.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the family atmosphere and the fact that older and younger pupils mix together. A parent of a child in the Reception year commented that her child 'is often playing or talking to children in other years all the way up to Year 6. The older children are excellent with the younger ones'.
- Pupils are active in promoting anti-bullying in the school. 'Bullybusters' support others in the playground and are well regarded by their peers. Pupils say that any bullying of any kind is very rare. They are proud of the fact that their school won an award for having the lowest reported rate of bullying among schools in the local authority. Should any issues arise, however, pupils are confident to seek help from teachers, who, they say, are 'kind and supportive'.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.
- Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in school, and most say that their children are happy and well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour and adherence to school routines.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the playground, at lunchtimes and around the school. Good behaviour is celebrated in assemblies along with academic achievements.
- School records confirm that behaviour is good over time. Pupils know and understand the behaviour system and are very clear about what is expected. Pupils have a very sensible and caring attitude towards the very few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. They say that initiatives like the 'Circle of Friends' and 'Learning Friends' have 'improved things a lot for these children' and that learning in lessons is very rarely disrupted.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school. Attendance is in line with the national average, although the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs is below that of other groups. Staff work effectively with parents and outside agencies to promote the regular attendance of all pupils.
- Most parents agree that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' work in their books and the school's information about progress show that pupils currently in the school make good progress overall from their different starting points. Progress is a little uneven across year groups. It is strongest in Year 2 and Year 6 as a result of particularly good and sometimes outstanding teaching and learning.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who achieved the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 6 was above that seen nationally in reading, writing and in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, it was a little below. By the end of Year 2 in 2015, attainment was above the national average and stronger in mathematics than in reading or writing.

- The picture in 2015 at the end of key stages 1 and 2 showed a dip from the previous year when attainment was significantly above national averages at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. This dip is mainly attributed to considerable turbulence in the teaching staff team, as well as the differences in the needs of the year groups.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who made at least the expected progress in mathematics and reading was above that found nationally. In writing it was just below.
- The most able pupils achieved well in 2015. By the end of Year 2, an above-average proportion reached the higher Level 3, particularly in writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, the proportion reaching the higher level in reading and writing was above average. The most able pupils currently in the school are generally challenged to achieve well. There are a few occasions, however, when pupils are not challenged sufficiently well to make the better than expected progress of which they are capable, and to develop a depth of learning, knowledge and understanding.
- In the 2015 phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was below the national figure. Leaders took this very seriously and rapidly reorganised the teaching and learning of phonics. The local authority supported the school well by providing training for staff. These actions successfully increased teachers' capacity to raise standards and the proportion of current Year 1 pupils who are on track to achieve the expected standard is above last year's national average. Leaders have ensured that pupils in Year 2 have made good progress to catch up quickly with gaps in their phonics knowledge. Younger pupils who read to inspectors could confidently use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words.
- All groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, make similar progress as others in the school, which means that it is good overall and across almost all classes. In 2015, there were too few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability to comment in detail on their achievement. Both groups across the school benefit, however, from additional support in lessons and when working individually or in small groups outside the classroom.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally typical for their age. In the current year, children started with strengths in health and self-care, exploring and using media and materials, and being imaginative. Weaker aspects were children's reading and writing skills. They make good progress in the Reception year and are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- In 2015, the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was above that found nationally and had increased from 2014 when it was below national figures.
- There is a determined and successful focus on children's writing, phonics and reading skills, and children have made the most rapid progress in these areas. Children are provided with interesting activities across all areas of learning. Leaders have correctly identified a continuing focus on developing writing, particularly to lift achievement further for boys, and provide more opportunities for promoting physical development in the outside area and more opportunities for children to excel in technology skills.
- Narrowing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in writing, has been a priority, and the impact of this is evident this year, as the gap in writing between boys and girls has narrowed considerably. Staff plan activities to appeal to boys in particular as well as girls. Overall, girls still do better than boys but boys are outperforming girls in reading, numbers and shapes, space and measures.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding and they learn to share and cooperate with each other exceptionally well. They share resources and have lots of opportunities for role play and talking to develop their communication and language skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Learning stems from children's interests and they happily make choices for themselves. Activities capture the interest and imagination of the children, so they quickly develop a love of learning. Adults use questioning well to extend thinking and move children's learning forward and provide good role models for the children. Assessment is used well to plan the next steps for learning and a record of achievements is made throughout the year. Children love sharing their 'Wow' moments in class.

- There are good and trusting relationships between adults and children, and adults know the children very well. There are good procedures to get to know children and their families before they start and ongoing good relationships with parents. One parent wrote that their child, 'has thrived at St Margaret's and runs into school in the morning. He loves his teachers and has made good friends at school'.
- Children learn and play in a stimulating, safe and secure environment. Staff provide a welcoming, friendly atmosphere where children are happy and settle calmly into the routines of the day.
- The early years is led very effectively by an experienced assistant headteacher. All the safeguarding and welfare requirements appropriate to this age group are met. All the necessary actions are taken to support any child whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including effective use of additional funding to narrow the gaps for disadvantaged children.

School details

Unique reference number	114537
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10012216

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Delow
Headteacher	Simon Hateley
Telephone number	01273 303109
Website	www.stmargaretscofeprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@stmargarets.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 March 2014

Information about this school

- St Margaret’s is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work in pupils' books. They observed pupils at break- and lunchtime and asked them for their views on the school. Inspectors also talked to pupils about reading and listened to some read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other staff with leadership responsibilities, governors and the school partnership adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; improvement plans; information on pupils' attainment and progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 107 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 70 written comments, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

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