

St Margaret Clitherows RC Primary School

St Margaret's Grove, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6TA

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The acting headteacher has successfully established a highly positive, productive ethos. Teaching and learning are consistently good across subjects and key stages.
- Leaders model their high expectations well. A uniquely Christian atmosphere contributes exceptionally well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is enriching. Clubs, visits, visitors and a careful consideration of how subjects relate to one another develop pupils' knowledge and skills across each area of learning effectively.
- Leaders' attention to pupils' welfare needs and their work with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and families is impressive. Nevertheless, although improving, a small proportion of pupils are too regularly absent.
- Leaders' and governors' ambition for all pupils is tangible. Careful consideration is given to the spending of additional funding. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress overall. Leaders' evaluation of their work to improve this group's attainment, however, is too vague.
- Subject leaders' enthusiasm and passion are infectious. They are knowledgeable and keep up to date about their areas of responsibility. This said, some action plans lack the detail needed to drive continuous improvement.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, using this effectively to foster pupils' progress and development. Adults use subject-specific vocabulary skilfully and explain new concepts clearly. Good use is made of additional adults to support pupils in their learning and tasks.
- Current pupils across key stages and subjects are making good progress from their different starting points. Occasionally, some pupils are not challenged as effectively as they might be. Books and tasks do not match a few pupils' phonics needs precisely enough.
- Pupils' conduct in and around the school is exemplary. Little acts of kindness between pupils are ever-present. Mutual respect between adults and pupils is plain to see.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. They are completely confident that bullying is not tolerated. Pupils say they have trusted adults with whom they can share any small worries.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Children make strong progress from their different starting points. Adults and children have warm, respectful relationships and children behave very well. Teaching and learning in the Reception class is a particular strength. The outdoor environment is less beneficial for children; several resources are old and tired.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and governance further by:
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school
 - evaluating the effect that additional funding has on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes more meticulously
 - ensuring that subject improvement plans are consistently well detailed, with precise actions and clear timescales.

- Increase the quality of teaching and learning towards outstanding by:
 - making sure that all pupils are suitably and consistently well challenged in their learning and work across subjects
 - matching tasks and books even more closely to pupils' phonics knowledge and skills
 - using the high-quality teaching and learning practices in Reception to shape and develop Nursery provision further
 - improving the quality of the outdoor provision in early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have secured consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across key stages. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points in their work and learning across a wide range of subjects.
- The acting headteacher has worked successfully with her Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust partners to instil high expectations among staff and pupils. Strong, professional relationships with colleagues from the trust, such as the 'standards' and 'attendance' officers, boost leadership capacity. Adults 'truly believe that everybody is somebody' and so all are valued equally. As a result of their combined efforts, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- Leaders and managers are extremely proud of their warm and welcoming school. The distinctively Christian ethos is evident in the tolerant, respectful manner and highly positive attitudes displayed among staff and pupils. Happy, smiling faces abound and a ripple of excitement about learning is in the air.
- Senior leaders are alert to the benefits of an interesting, enriching curriculum. Pupils' books demonstrate that there is no narrowing of learning or work across subjects. Extra-curricular opportunities are widely available and enhance pupils' daily experiences. This means that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of subjects beyond English and mathematics are well developed.
- Leaders provide a carefully tailored programme of whole-school and individual professional development opportunities for staff. Monitoring systems are fair and thorough. Staff like working here and feel valued as part of the St Margaret 'family'. They welcome leaders' constructive criticism and strive conscientiously to tweak and improve their practices. The quality of teaching and learning is good and improving.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils. They give careful consideration to their use of additional government funding. Disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has been above national averages over time. Nonetheless, leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of their actions and spending lacks detail and precision. Despite their strong progress over time, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the standards of attainment expected by the end of Year 6 in 2018, was lower than other pupils nationally in subjects including reading, writing and mathematics. Because of this relative weakness, leaders and their trust partners are, rightfully, commissioning a review of their pupil premium spending.
- Subject leaders' enthusiasm for their area of the curriculum is joyful. Their own delight and fascination with their subject inspires and ignites pupils' interests. Their strong subject expertise and leadership result in good teaching and learning. Improvement plans, however, are too vague. It is not consistently clear what subject leaders will actually do, or when actions will be undertaken, to drive continuous improvements in teaching and learning.
- Leaders use primary sports premium funds to good effect. Staff benefit from the expertise of a trained sports coach who supports them to develop and deepen their skills and knowledge in physical education. Pupils' good health and fitness and their

access to competitive events are high on adults' agenda.

Governance of the school

- The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust and the local governing body, take their responsibilities seriously. A commitment to self-improvement is evident in the range of training with which they engage and their good attendance at meetings. Governors' knowledge of financial matters pertaining to schools, and St Margaret's particular financial circumstances, for example, is transparent.
- Governors' support to leaders, staff and pupils of the school is a strength of their work. The CEO and governors visit the school regularly to understand for themselves, first-hand, how it feels to be a pupil here. They meet with pupils, staff, senior and subject leaders to discuss their learning and work. As a result, governors have a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness.
- Governing body minutes demonstrate that governors' challenge to leaders has strengthened recently. Governors ask and seek clarification about a range of matters pertaining to their duties and responsibilities. Sometimes, however, they do not delve deeply enough into the information that leaders provide. Governors' challenge to leaders about pupil premium spending, for example, lacks rigour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey agree.
- All staff who spoke with inspectors demonstrated a good knowledge and secure understanding of the most recent safeguarding and child protection advice and guidance. Because there are high-quality training opportunities and regular updates, staff are alert to signs of potential abuse. All adults have an appropriate 'it-could-happen-here' attitude to the protection of pupils. They know precisely what to do if concerns arise.
- The single central record and checks on the suitability of adults working with pupils meet requirements. The business manager ensures that records are fully up to date. She is diligent in pursuing matters where further information is needed, for example additional references and/or identification checks. In this way, pupils and staff are further protected.
- Several leaders and governors have undertaken safer recruitment training. This means that they are well placed to apply strict, equitable systems when employing new staff. Currently, the trust is further tightening the pro forma for seeking information from referees about candidates. This demonstrates a continuous approach to improvement in this crucial area of their work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning across key stages and subjects are good. A buzz of learning is palpable across classes and pupils are very well supported in their work. Consequently, most make good or very good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge means that new concepts, vocabulary and subject-specific content are explained clearly for pupils. Adults use subject-related vocabulary skilfully, encouraging pupils to do likewise. This helps to build pupils' knowledge and understanding across subjects as terminology becomes increasingly demanding in their journey through school.
- Teaching staff use questioning well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of key learning points. They take time to explore pupils' thinking and to explain common misconceptions. As a result, pupils become confident and increasingly adept at spotting inaccuracies and errors in their own work.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well. All adults model respectful, positive behaviour and attitudes effectively for pupils. The ethos in classrooms is extremely pleasant and constructive. Consequently, pupils' learning behaviours and their conscientious approach to tasks in each subject, are particularly strong across key stages.
- Teachers use additional staff effectively, deploying them to support pupils in their learning. All adults are determined that 'every minute counts'. Teaching and learning time, therefore, is used well.
- The teaching of reading and phonics has been a focus for staff development, recently. Pupils make good progress from lower than typical starting points in their acquisition of phonics knowledge and skills. Teachers pronounce sounds and letters clearly. They show pupils the mouth movements needed in order to produce each sound correctly for themselves. Adults also make the link between letters and sounds clear to pupils. They work well in partnership with parents so that there is consistency and no confusion for pupils between home and school in the way that sounds are pronounced. In this manner, pupils and children in the early years pick up essential early reading techniques and start to apply them with increasing skill to their English tasks. Even so, some pupils attempt books and work that are not as closely matched to their phonics knowledge and needs as they might be. This mismatch lessens the pace of progress for a small proportion of pupils.
- Pupils say that they like books and enjoy reading; they have been further inspired by the wealth of new books that have been purchased for them. They can confidently discuss their favourite authors and relay the features of books, using terms like blurb, illustrator, index and non-fiction, knowledgeably. Pupils' progress in reading by the time they leave key stage 2 is a strength over time.

Teachers use assessment information to plan tasks and learning that help most pupils make good progress across the primary curriculum. Sometimes, however, tasks are too easy. Some pupils told inspectors that they already know and can do some of the work they are given in a variety of subjects. At times, they have to complete a given task before they receive another that more suitably challenges them, for example, in mathematics or science. This lack of challenge hampers the progress of a relatively small proportion of pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Because of leaders' and teachers' sterling work, pupils have excellent aspirations for themselves. Their aims are pitched realistically high. Pupils have complete faith in their futures as the next generation of teachers, engineers, doctors and firefighters. They have a secure understanding of the link between school learning and later life, wholly appreciating its relevance to their dreams and ambitions.
- Pupils delight in not only their own, but others' successes too. They take enormous pleasure in celebrating achievements within and/or outside of school. The well-embedded Christian ethos and family feel that are ever-present, are especially important to pupils. Shared prayer, choral singing and joint assemblies, fire their enthusiasm and enjoyment, contributing well to their feeling of belonging.
- Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Pupils attend to their learning in a most conscientious manner. Their understanding about what it means to be a successful learner particularly impressed inspectors.
- Staff work diligently with pupils to ensure that they are kept safe. Visitors such as the police, firefighters and 'swim safety' partners enhance this aspect of the school's work. So too does the close working partnership with external agencies, such as educational psychologists, health professionals and social services.
- Regular opportunities are presented for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe, for example when using information technology, digital equipment or social media. As a consequence of the thorough approach to protecting pupils and equipping them with skills of self-preservation, pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, agree that their child is well looked after and kept safe by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils consistently demonstrate very positive attitudes towards others. They have a healthy regard for the needs of others, self-regulating their behaviour with little direction needed. They are particularly mindful of the school's distinctively spiritual ethos and contribute to it unstintingly, describing themselves and their peers as 'loving' and 'friendly'. Pupils are proud to abide by the 'sensible, mature and caring' expectations that adults have of them.
- The conduct of pupils in each key stage within lessons and during breaktimes is excellent. They show enormous respect for the school rules, each other and adults. Many small acts of kindness and consideration are threaded through the school day. Peeling an orange for a friend, sharing resources, holding the door open for someone or encouraging others to join in their games are everyday occurrences.
- Pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong. Their moral compass, tolerance and compassion for others' viewpoints grow apace as

they move through the school. Fundamental British values are well embedded and stand pupils in good stead for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils' attendance, although improving, has been below national averages over time. Leaders and staff have recently revised their policies and practices to tackle the barriers to good attendance that they have correctly identified. Due to their actions, pupils' attendance, currently, is now broadly in line with national averages. There remains, however, a small proportion of pupils who are too regularly absent and more work with pupils and their families is planned.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes in each key stage and across the primary curriculum, are good. From lower than typical starting points on entry to Nursery, pupils make strong progress in their learning and development over time. By the time pupils leave key stage 2, the large majority are well prepared for their secondary education.
- Pupils' outcomes in terms of their personal, social and emotional development are exceptional. They become increasingly confident, effective contributors to the remarkably positive ethos as they move through the school. Respect, courtesy and tolerance are characteristically evident among pupils. In this sense, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils' books, teaching and learning in lessons and the school's own assessment information show that current pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress across subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, is consistently in line with national averages. The proportion reaching a greater depth of learning in each subject is also similar to national comparators. Such outcomes represent good progress over time.
- Pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been above national averages in mathematics and well above in reading over time. Their progress in writing is in keeping with other pupils nationally. Current pupils' work and learning demonstrate that this strong progress is continuing.
- Pupils' progress in phonics is good from typically low starting points, including for current pupils. This said, in Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below national averages over time, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Those pupils not reaching the standard in Year 1, receive good, carefully targeted small-group or individual support. Consequently, by the time they leave Year 2, the large majority are suitably well prepared for the reading demands in key stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress in each key stage. Leaders' actions and expertise ensure that early, targeted support is promptly put in place. School adults' effective work with external agencies, parents and carers are pivotal in securing pupils' positive outcomes.
- In 2017 and in 2018, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6 was lower than their national peers in subjects such as writing and science. Although records and assessment information show that this group made good progress from their starting points, these outcomes

disappointed leaders. The planned review of pupil premium spending is intended to get to the heart of matters to ensure that disadvantaged pupils' attainment rises across subjects to at least match that of their national peers. Currently, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in each key stage and subject due to leaders' and teachers' actions.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders have an honest and accurate understanding of the quality of the early years. They know what is working well and what could be even better. Leaders have ensured that teaching and learning are good. Children, therefore, make good progress over time and the large majority are well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum.
- Teachers and leaders are passionate about early education, understanding its importance in getting children off to a good start in their school career. They welcome the involvement of parents and offer a broad range of opportunities for them to share and join in their children's learning. Parents who spoke with inspectors were especially pleased with the approachability of staff and the care and kindness with which they manage their children.
- Teaching is particularly effective in the Reception class, where focused tasks and areas of provision capture children's interests and meet their needs precisely. Occasionally, children in Nursery are less well directed in their exploration, learning and play. Some tasks lack challenge for Nursery children and at times areas become messy. This inhibits progress for a small proportion of Nursery children.
- Happy, positive interactions and relationships between adults and children are evident. Staff support children very effectively to manage their behaviour. Welfare requirements are met. The excellent personal, social and emotional development seen across the school, starts here. Skills of self-help, personal care and hygiene are very well promoted. Indoors and outside, children conduct themselves sensibly and incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is slightly below national averages over time. However, from starting points lower than those typically expected for their age, especially in communication and speech, children's progress is good overall. Differences in terms of outcomes for disadvantaged children are steadily reducing, year-on-year.
- The indoor learning environment is stimulating and well resourced. Areas of provision are carefully designed to hook children into learning, maximising their involvement and development. Displays and resources nourish children's literacy and numeracy diet. By comparison, the outdoor space is less enriching. Leaders have this area of learning on their improvement agenda and are seeking support from the trust to upgrade external resources and provision.
- Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in their direct teaching of phonics to children. They are precise in their articulation of sounds and encourage children to enunciate sounds correctly. Occasionally, some children's books are not as closely matched to their phonics needs as they might be.

School details

Unique reference number	140769
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10086833

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jill Miller
Headteacher	Clare McNicholas (Acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01642 835 370
Website	www.stmargaretclitherows.co.uk/
Email address	stmargaretclitherowsschool@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in April 2014. It is part of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust. Until September 2018, the school was part of the St Oswald's Catholic Academy Trust.
- This is a slightly larger than average-sized primary. It is a Roman Catholic school and is part of the Middlesbrough Diocese. The school had a denominational interim review inspection by the diocese in March 2016.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding support is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly higher than national averages.
- The school offers a breakfast club and a range of after-school clubs for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. On day 1 of the inspection, teaching and learning were observed jointly by the lead inspector and senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked with parents face-to-face during the inspection. The views expressed by 23 parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work across a wide range of subjects and talked with pupils during lesson observations. The views of pupils were considered during informal and formal discussions.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the standards officer and other trust partners, subject and key stage leaders and the CEO and governors, including the chair of the local governing body. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation document, improvement and subject action plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via formal and informal discussions.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gill Wild	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn McDonald	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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