

# Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's Infant School

Orchard Street, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9AE

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Inspection dates:

12–13 February 2020

## **Outcome**

St Margaret's Infant School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. There is a warm and caring atmosphere where all pupils are valued by staff and thrive. Pupils are happy and feel safe and secure. They know that the headteacher and all the staff want the very best for them. As a result, pupils work hard and achieve well.

Pupils are motivated by exciting and fun activities. They have positive attitudes and quickly develop a love for learning. Superhero characters represent the school values. They are called: Confident, Happy, Achieve, Respect and Determination. The children learn and live up to these values. Staff know their pupils really well. There are positive and trusting relationships with pupils. If any pupil is not doing as well as they should, extra support is quickly provided.

Staff have high and consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children quickly learn the routines for school life when they start in the Nursery Year or the Reception Year classes. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They said it does not happen because everyone is kind and friendly. Pupils play and learn together well.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They particularly enjoy the opportunities to come into school and read with their children.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Strong leadership has made sure that the school provides an effective education for pupils. The ambitious and aspirational vision is shared by the trust, the local governing board and the dedicated team of senior leaders and teachers. Teachers are very positive about leaders' attention to their workload and well-being.

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. Right from the beginning, teachers pay great attention to children's personal, social and emotional development. This approach continues through Years 1 and 2. There is a close focus on developing early

reading, writing and number skills. Children in the Nursery, for example, demonstrated their accurate knowledge of numbers through singing songs with great gusto and animated actions.

Leaders have worked hard over the last two years to design an ambitious and well-planned curriculum. Over time, pupils learn and remember more so that they are well prepared to continue learning in key stage 2. Plans provide a clear overview so that teachers know what to teach and when. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND get the right support and are included in all aspects of school life. Leaders ensure that pupils with emotional and social needs are supported effectively.

In all subjects, teachers' first priority is to engage the interest, excitement and curiosity of the pupils. They do this through imaginative and creative means, such as the culture week that was taking place during the inspection. Pupils from all year groups worked well together. They learned about different countries through a range of subjects, including geography, history, art and music. Teachers present work clearly. They help pupils to remember what they know and can do to help them learn new things. Pupils' positive behaviour helps them learn well.

As they go through the year, leaders and teachers check that the plans they use are the most effective and successful in helping pupils learn. There is scope for deepening some leaders' subject knowledge even further and developing more opportunities for outdoor learning, to ensure that teachers can even more successfully deliver the planned curriculum.

Leaders give high priority to reading. The teaching of phonics is well organised. It starts right from the beginning of children's time in school. Pupils use their phonics skills well to help them read and write. If any pupil is not doing as well as they should, effective extra support is provided to help them catch up. Pupils take books home that match the sounds they are learning so they can practise what they know. Staff foster a love of reading and stories through sharing quality books and storytelling. Fluency and comprehension is developed well in Years 1 and 2.

The school's work to ensure pupils' personal and cultural development is very effective. Pupils can talk about what helps or hinders their learning. They are not afraid to make mistakes. They learn to try for themselves and be resilient. Pupils are respectful of each other and adults. They like to help each other out and are proud of their achievements. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a range of lunchtime clubs. Their learning is enriched by many experiences in and out of school. For example, visits and visitors to school, growing vegetables in the gardening club and looking after the school chickens.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and well-being have a very high profile in the school. All staff are aware of their responsibilities. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern and are

vigilant in carrying these out. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families receive effective support when needed. The system for recording all safeguarding information ensures that records are kept effectively and efficiently.

Pupils say they feel safe because there are lots of grown-ups in school. A group agreed with one pupil who said, 'They are like my family, they look after me and help me learn'.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have created a curriculum with a clear, strong and focused intent. Knowledge and skills are built in a logical, sequential way. As the curriculum is being taught, leaders and teachers are monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness and success, and making changes and adaptations. They have, correctly, identified the need to deepen some subject leaders' knowledge to enhance pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding. To support the planned curriculum delivery and to have the maximum impact on pupils' outcomes, the outdoor learning opportunities need to be expanded and developed further. Leaders should continue the work they have started, on reviewing and revising the curriculum, to ensure that this happens and that pupils reap the benefits they have planned from outdoor learning.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Margaret's Infant School to be good on 22 March 2016.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144133
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122241
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mr Richard Gibbons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Paula Fewtrell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmargaretsinf.medway.sch.uk">http://www.stmargaretsinf.medway.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- St Margaret's Infant School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, St Margaret's Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is one of three schools in the Westbrook Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other leaders and teachers.
- A meeting was held with two members of the local governing board, including the chair of governors. I also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each of these subjects, I met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- I spoke to pupils in and out of lessons and observed them at lunch and in the playground. I also heard some pupils read and attended an assembly.

- To inspect safeguarding, I met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding documentation, and spoke to pupils and staff.
- I considered 47 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. I also took account of six responses to the confidential staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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