

# Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Rottingdean

Whiteway Lane, Rottingdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 7HB

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Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

## **Outcome**

St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Rottingdean continues to be a good school.

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

This is a school where every child is nurtured and cherished. Current leaders have embedded the aspiration to be excellent in all aspects of the school's work. Staff and pupils relish these new higher expectations and are living up to them. This much-needed dynamism is helping to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Pupils are very safe and happy in this school, because it is a community where you are welcomed, whatever your background or needs. Parents and carers are generous in what they give to the school community to make it a special place to learn, for example in their fundraising or helping to improve the outdoor environment.

Pupils behave very well. Classrooms are purposeful places to work. Outside, there are many calm areas to play and relax. Pupils welcome the work of the 'Bully Busters', who are well respected. However, pupils and staff agree there is little for them to do to combat bullying, as it hardly ever happens. Instead, these pupils help peers to maintain and make firm and lasting friendships. In recent years, there have been a much wider range of clubs and activities available. These have been much appreciated by all pupils.

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

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to raise aspirations and build positive relationships, since joining the school. After a previous decline in standards at the end of key stage 2, she is determined that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Other vulnerable pupils, including those adopted from care and with medical needs, are supported very well.

Leaders are redesigning the curriculum in a methodical way. Improvements in reading and mathematics are already helping pupils to learn and remember more. This is because there is now a consistent approach across the school. Starting in Reception, children are

making a great start in phonics and mathematics. For example, many children can already read and spell simple words with the same letter patterns and find pairs of numbers that add to make ten.

Introducing a new scheme and textbook through the school has improved the teaching of mathematics. Concepts are taught sequentially and repeated and built on, with a variety of tasks to deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils across the school are feeling more confident in mathematics. Extra teaching is provided before or after lessons to help all pupils keep up. Teachers' subject knowledge has also improved, due to some high-quality training. However, sometimes their explanations could be more precise.

Throughout the school, the importance of reading is being stressed. In Reception, children enjoy sharing stories in the newly refurbished library. Phonics teaching in key stage 1 is precise and systematic. Key stage 2 explicitly learn to comprehend texts. Year 6 pupils have developed a fervent love of reading. They thrive on the recommendations that they receive from their teacher and their peers. As a result, they read very widely and often. Pupils say they love books, because: 'our teacher loves books herself'. Just a few pupils fall behind in their reading and are not supported well enough to catch up.

The steps to develop the wider curriculum are well planned, starting with subjects such as history. Pupils study the national curriculum and enjoy a broad and balanced diet of learning each week. Learning is certainly engaging. I saw pupils solving ancient Greek mysteries, practising French conversation and planting seeds. Pupils remember great events, such as trips to Roman sites and Victorian re-enactment days. Leaders are aware that learning needs to be well planned to ensure that pupils also learn the historical facts and skills they need. The same is true in other subjects currently under review.

Participation in the growing number of clubs is improving. They include sporting and creative activities and, like the rest of the school, are highly inclusive. Outdoor learning plays a big part in pupils' work. For example, pupils enjoy the forest school and contributing towards the new sensory garden. During their free time, pupils play games such as handball harmoniously.

Governors have an inclusive vision for the school and welcome the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils with SEND are spending more time with their peers, experiencing the whole curriculum. Governors are fully supportive of the carefully researched improvements being led by the headteacher and staff through their teacher research groups.

In our surveys, parents and teachers were pleased about the improvements being made. Parents were particularly pleased with the improvements to provision for pupils with SEND. Staff commented on how leaders communicate well and look out for their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained in many aspects of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant and look out for pupils' well-being. They report any concerns promptly. Leaders pass these on as necessary.

Leaders work well with families and other professionals to keep the most vulnerable pupils safe. They keep detailed records of their work to keep pupils safe.

Parents are rightly confident that their children are safe at this school. There are many opportunities in the curriculum to help pupils learn to be safe, both in and out of the school, as well as when working or playing online.

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

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

- School leaders have rightly focused on improving teaching in reading and mathematics. This is already having a positive impact throughout the school. Leaders are taking a methodical approach to developing the curriculum in other subject areas. The national curriculum is being taught. However, not all subjects are yet carefully sequenced throughout the school. Leaders need to complete the development of the curriculum, so that knowledge and skills build coherently in each subject. This will help pupils to learn and remember more.

## **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 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 school to be good in June 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>	114537
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122256
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kyri Souppouris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Kershaw
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmargaretscofeprimary.co.uk">www.stmargaretscofeprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22–23 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- This Church of England school had its previous Section 48 inspection in March 2015. The governing body is aware that the next Section 48 inspection looking at the religious character of the school should take place during the current academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher throughout the inspection. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, and with a representative of the local authority.
- I did deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. This included a telephone discussion with the headteacher prior to the inspection, meetings with subject leaders, visits to lessons, talking to pupils about their work and discussions with teachers. I also heard some pupils from Years 2, 3 and 6 read.
- To inspect safeguarding, I checked the single central record of recruitment checks, met with the designated safeguarding lead and talked informally to a wide range of staff and pupils.

- I considered 16 responses to the online staff survey. I also took account of 57 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, including 32 free-text responses.

## **Inspection team**

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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