

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) Junior School

Seaview Road, Morwenna Park, Northam, Bideford, Devon EX39 1EL

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education is not good enough. Pupils do not learn well enough in a range of subjects. This is because the curriculum is not ambitious enough. Pupils in Year 6 told us that they do not feel ready for secondary school.

Pupils like coming to school and attendance is good. Nevertheless, older pupils say that the behaviour of some pupils hinders their ability to learn. Pupils like the topics they learn. They like the trips and visits leaders provide. Pupils told us how their visit to 'Northam Burrows' strengthened their understanding of events in the Second World War. However, pupils are not always able to remember what they have learned.

Pupils feel safe at school. They say that staff help them if they have a worry or concern. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. They do say that occasionally friends fall out. Leaders have put in place additional provision, such as the 'sunshine club'. This is for pupils who find social times challenging. Pupils like this additional provision. Pupils are very positive about the wide range of extra-curricular clubs they have on offer. They are proud of their school and enjoy representing the school at many events.

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

In recent years, there has been a decline in standards. There have been significant changes in senior leadership in the last 18 months. Although leaders have not yet been able to halt the decline in writing, there are signs of improvement. Some curriculum plans are not ambitious enough. This is because some curriculum leaders do not know what pupils need to achieve to be successful. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. The lack of ambition and low expectations in some classes leads to pupils not reaching their full potential.

Leaders have carefully planned some subjects. They have deliberately chosen topics that develop pupils' understanding of different religions and cultures. Additional opportunities, such as visits to different places of worship, prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. One parent told us, 'The school is aware of its place in Devon and seeks to broaden pupils' appreciation of the wider world.' Pupils support many local and international charities, such as 'Edu Kid'. They work closely with organisers to fund raise for children in Cambodia.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the curriculum for these pupils. Some pupils with SEND have broad targets. These targets do not always provide teachers with the information they need. This means that planned activities do not always help pupils build their knowledge and skills well enough.

Leaders have recently focused on improving the quality of reading. There are positive signs of improvement. However, the curriculum plan is not as well organised as it needs to be. Lessons are not organised coherently. Pupils enjoy reading and the range of books available. Books are well matched to pupils' ability. Leaders make sure that pupils who do not have support at home read with an adult. There are systems in place to help pupils who are behind catch up. Nevertheless, these pupils spend too much time learning skills they already know. This means pupils are not catching up as quickly as they could.

Some older pupils lack resilience. They often seek additional support to help them complete their work. This is because they do not have the necessary prior knowledge needed to be successful. If support is not forthcoming, pupils quickly lose their focus. This leads to them distracting other pupils.

Parents are very positive about the school. One parent's comment, that encapsulates many, was: 'I can only say positive things about the school. The teachers and staff are great. My child feels safe and happy to come to school every day.'

Staff morale is high. The very large majority of staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all staff, including governors, have received appropriate training. Staff know the signs to look out for if a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns they may have. In response to an increase in vulnerable pupils joining the school, leaders have enhanced the school's capacity. Parents speak positively about the additional support.

Pupils learn how to stay safe both inside and outside of school. They told us that sessions from the emergency services and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has given them the knowledge they need to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans, and teachers' expectations, are not always ambitious enough. These low expectations limit what some pupils can achieve. This means by the time pupils leave the school they are not ready for the next stage of their education. Senior leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils and that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- There has been insufficient training for some curriculum leaders. This has hampered their ability to improve the subjects they lead. Senior leaders need to ensure that all curriculum leaders have the knowledge and skills required to improve the quality of education in the subjects they lead.

- Leaders recognise that the school's approach to assessment needs further work. Systems for checking what pupils already know and understand in some subjects are not effective. This leads to some pupils not learning the breadth of the curriculum as well as they should.
- The reading curriculum is not as well organised as it needs to be. Leaders need to ensure that the content of these plans are thorough and carefully organised. This will enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a logical order.
- There is a need to improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Pupils have limited resilience with their learning. This means they do not achieve as well as they could. The poor behaviour of some pupils disrupts learning for others. Leaders recognise the need to address this and have recently introduced a new behaviour policy. Leaders need to ensure that the policy is fit for purpose and pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes improve.

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

Unique reference number	113453
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10086873
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Crossman
Headteacher	Jim Williams
Website	www.st-margarets-junior.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018. In addition to this school, he has responsibility for St George’s Church of England Infant School. The deputy headteacher was appointed September 2019.
- St Margaret’s Junior School is part of the Northam Schools Federation. The federation is made up of St Margaret’s and St George’s. The federation is part of Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust, a partnership of nine infant, junior and primary schools.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in May 2015 when this aspect of the school’s work was graded as outstanding.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND and a sample of staff. We also considered the 17 responses to the staff survey.
- We met with two governors from the governing body, including the chair.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- A significant proportion of the inspection focused on ensuring that pupils are safe. We scrutinised records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. We met with the designated safeguarding leader and two members of the pastoral support team.
- We considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We met with parents at the start of the second day. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, modern foreign languages, geography and writing. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils. On day two of the inspection, we looked further into the quality of education in science.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Hanrahan

Ofsted Inspector

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