

# Inspection of St Margaret's Primary Academy

Church Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4JF

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Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils say that their school is a very special and welcoming place. They attend school well and enjoy learning. Pupils have a strong understanding of celebrating each other's differences. As one pupil outlined, reflecting the views of many, 'We are told to love ourselves and be ourselves and that is fine'. Pupils are empathetic and talk knowledgeably about issues that people from all walks of life may face. They like to contribute to their community. Pupils do this in many ways, for example creating fundraising wreaths for Christmas or donating food parcels for those who may need additional help and support.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There is a strong rapport between pupils and adults, and between pupils and their peers. Incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with any concerns quickly and fairly.

Pupils consider that it is good to have a hobby or a passion. They often set up their own clubs so that everyone can be involved in enrichment activities. Pupils enjoy different leadership opportunities, such as eco council where they focus on reducing food waste. Pupils help to make changes for the better at school, such as recently introducing healthy food trolleys for pupils.

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

The new leadership team has driven forward significant change in a short period of time. The improvements are many. Suspensions have been substantially reduced. Disadvantaged pupils attend school well. Pupils who had poor attendance in the past now attend school regularly.

There is now an ambitious curriculum in place. Staff are confident in their teaching of many subjects. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills are increasing in a range of areas. Pupils are really enjoying their learning.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children in Nursery learn the knowledge and skills necessary so that they are ready to start formally learning phonics when they start in Reception. Staff are well trained to teach the chosen phonics programme and do so effectively. Pupils who need extra support are quickly identified and given further practice, which helps them to catch up.

Pupils read regularly both at school and at home. Teachers check how often pupils read and which types of books they are reading. Pupils remain engaged in their reading as teachers suggest new book titles based on pupils' interests. Teachers also introduce pupils to a diverse range of authors and genres to increase their love of reading.

Leaders have designed curriculum plans carefully so that pupils learn and revisit important knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. In subjects such as

mathematics, pupils recall their learning easily. They use the vocabulary of the subject with confidence and ease. However, in a few subjects where changes with curriculum plans are relatively new, pupils are less confident recalling the most important information they need. Leaders continue to help pupils to 'fill any gaps' in learning which developed during the national lockdowns.

Leaders have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has tackled the backlog of outstanding assessments and reviews, ensuring that appropriate provision is in place. Pupils' individual support plans are precise with helpful strategies for teachers to follow. Adults carefully consider different ways to support pupils with SEND so they can learn well. Pupils with SEND are accessing the curriculum very well alongside their peers.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is highly effective. Leaders go above and beyond to raise aspirations and widen pupils' interests. They have thought carefully about what pupils need to flourish in later life. For example, pupils learn about financial management. They engage weekly with current affairs and understand all aspects of modern British life. The trust provides exceptional opportunities for pupils that they would not ordinarily experience. Pupils participate in many adventures where they develop teamwork skills and working independently. One of these included sleeping in a shark tunnel.

The early years curriculum is well considered. Leaders have chosen important information that children need to learn to be well prepared for Year 1. For example, children have many opportunities to develop their understanding of the world. They enjoy learning about how different people live, creating different homes using resources such as bricks and mud. Children in Nursery learn about different traditions, such as making gingerbread at Christmas time. Children show independence with activities and move from one area to another sensibly. They know the routines of the classroom. Leaders are working with parents to help children learn and use a broad and rich vocabulary when speaking.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school and the community it serves. They ask appropriate questions to leaders, which helps them to form an accurate view of the school. Governors and trust leaders hold school leaders to account exceptionally well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding processes and procedures are thorough and precise. Staff know the risks that pupils may face and how to report concerns if they arise. Staff record factually and with appropriate detail so leaders can act swiftly and knowledgeably to keep pupils safe. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies to provide appropriate support to the most vulnerable pupils.

Pupils learn about staying safe through assemblies, the computing curriculum and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Leaders use external agencies, such as the police, to help all pupils learn the latest information about online risks.

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

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

- In some subjects, the implementation of curriculum plans is relatively new. Pupils do not have sufficient prior subject knowledge and vocabulary. This limits the strong connections they can make in their learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident learners in all subjects.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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>	141984
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10207079
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gavin Robert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zara Lambert
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-margarets.suffolk.sch.uk">www.st-margarets.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2020. The new senior leadership team includes two new assistant headteachers and a recently appointed SENCo.
- The school uses two providers of alternative provision. One is registered and the other is unregistered.
- Over half of the pupils who attend the school are eligible for free school meals.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with the deputy director of education from the multi-academy trust, members of the local governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.

- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and in less structured times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, music and physical education to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum plans for other subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors considered the provision for PSHE, relationships, sex and health education and religious education.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the eight free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Liz Smith, lead inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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