

# Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

King Street, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1YF

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Inspection dates:

1 and 2 December 2021

## **Outcome**

St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils are understandably proud of this friendly, inclusive, and welcoming school. They say that their teachers make learning fun and talk with interest about what they have learned. For example, during the inspection, pupils spoke enthusiastically about continents, rainforests, and the way that animals are adapted to live in different habitats.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils are eager to learn and want to please their teachers. They start work quickly during lessons and work carefully and neatly in their books. The youngest children have settled into school well. They play and learn happily together.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that everyone is kind to each other, and that bullying is not something they need to worry about. Pupils say that teachers make it very clear that unkindness is not acceptable. They are confident that their teachers would sort out any concerns about bullying quickly. The school's records confirm that this is the case.

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

The headteacher and her team have steered the school through a period of rapid change since the previous inspection. They have successfully raised expectations, built an effective staff team and addressed weaknesses in learning and behaviour. The pandemic has hampered some of the school's plans to secure further improvements. However, leaders have remained ambitious for the school. Their clear and unwavering leadership, combined with strong staff teamwork, has ensured that the ongoing drive for improvement has continued throughout.

The school is currently benefiting from a more settled phase. Staff morale is high. The headteacher's commitment to the pupils, their families, and the local community has been

instrumental in shaping the school's family atmosphere. The school is calm and purposeful. Pupils enjoy school and work hard in lessons. Teachers make sure that pupils who become distracted during lessons are quickly re-engaged, so that lessons are not interrupted.

Leaders have worked hard over the past few years to develop the curriculum. Well-designed curriculum plans have now been created for all subjects. The benefits of this work are clear. Teachers now know exactly what they need to teach, and when. However, the pandemic has hampered plans to deliver the revised curriculum fully in the classroom. Some subjects, such as mathematics, are more securely established than others. Revised plans in subjects other than English and mathematics are being introduced now. Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly as they work. However, assessments are not always used well enough to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Mathematics is taught consistently well. Teachers are confident about what they are teaching. They make learning interesting and engaging so that pupils want to learn more. Pupils become proficient mathematicians. They talk with interest about what they have learned in the past. The youngest children in the school develop reliable number skills through a wide range of activities, such as counting objects and joining in with songs and rhymes.

The school is currently in the process of changing to a new phonics programme. The change was prompted by a dip in pupils' phonics skills over the past couple of years. Leaders had planned to introduce the change before the pandemic started. Their plans are now back on track. The programme has been introduced in early years and key stage 1. Leaders have scheduled training to support staff in delivering the programme confidently and effectively.

Historic weaknesses in phonics teaching, combined with the impact of the pandemic, mean that some pupils are behind in their reading. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to ensure that pupils catch up, including some of the older pupils in key stage 2, and are putting extra help in place.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable about the school's work. The support provided by the trust since academisation has made a notable contribution to improvements in the school's work. For example, the trust updated the school's computing systems soon after academisation and continues to provide valuable training for staff. Leaders pay close attention to staff welfare and consider workload implications carefully when planning developments.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. For example, pupils learn about different religions and have regular opportunities to consider topical issues.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Staff are clear about what to do if they have any concerns. School records show that leaders treat any worries raised seriously. They take prompt and suitable action to ensure pupils' safety. The school's home-school link worker provides a valuable link between parents and the school. All parents and staff who completed Ofsted's surveys say that pupils are safe in school.

The school's personal development curriculum helps to equip pupils with important skills. For example, they learn about the importance of self-respect and privacy, and about what they can do if something makes them feel uncomfortable. Pupils know what to do if they are worried about something they see online.

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

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

- Leaders had intended to introduce the revised curriculum some time ago. However, the pandemic has made this difficult. As a result, some subjects, such as mathematics, are more securely established in the classrooms than others. The school is now introducing revised curriculum plans in other subjects, such as geography. Leaders should continue with these plans.
- Staff training has ensured that teachers are increasingly knowledgeable about pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND are usually supported effectively. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to ensure that pupils with SEND learn as well as they could. This is particularly the case in the foundation subjects. Not all adults are knowledgeable about what they can do to support pupils with SEND. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is clear about where developments are needed, and suitable plans are in place to build on recent improvements. Leaders should prioritise this aspect of the school's work for development.

## **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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good in October 2013.

## 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>	144914
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10203146
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mark Wilkes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Jobling
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmargaretsattroytown.co.uk">http://www.stmargaretsattroytown.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due soon and leaders have made arrangements for this to take place in due course.
- The school has a breakfast club, which is open to pupils who attend the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust and other senior leaders. She also spoke with four governors, including the chair of governors, and four trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning, and looked at a sample of their work.

- The inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. She also met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and spoke with pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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