

Inspection of St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School

Rotheram Avenue, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 5PP

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of the large but tightly knit community at St Margaret's. There is a strong nurturing ethos. Everyone cares for one another. Most pupils attend regularly and are punctual.

Pupils celebrate their differences and achievements. They believe that everyone should be respected and treated equally. Newcomers and visitors are made to feel welcome. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of clubs and activities. These enable pupils to follow their interests and broaden their horizons. Pupils aspire to take on roles of responsibility and to act as role models for others.

Pupils feel happy and safe. Staff care for pupils exceptionally well. Pupils' behaviour is good, and learning is rarely disturbed in class. Pupils said that they always have someone to go to if they have a worry. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with incidents quickly and well.

Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of what everyone can achieve. Pupils are keen to learn. They take part enthusiastically in lessons. Previously, pupils have not achieved as well as they should by the end of Year 6. Improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching mean that pupils now learn well across a range of subjects.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They want pupils to achieve well and become responsible, caring citizens. Leaders have carefully constructed a broad curriculum with these aims in mind.

Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn in each subject. They ensure that learning builds year on year, so pupils can remember more. This is particularly strong in English and mathematics. In a small number of subjects, leaders have not considered precisely what children should know by the end of Reception. In these subjects, it is not clear how teachers will build on children's learning in Year 1.

However, overall, children in Reception settle quickly into their learning. They work well together, are cared for, and are prepared well for learning in Year 1.

Curriculum leaders provide guidance for teachers to help break complex ideas into smaller chunks. This helps pupils to learn and remember more. Occasionally, teachers are not clear about what they want pupils to learn from an activity. When this happens, pupils remember the activity rather than the essential knowledge and learning that leaders intended.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding to quickly spot any misunderstandings pupils may have. Teachers use the information they have to plan opportunities to help pupils become more secure in their learning.

Pupils enjoy reading. Children in the Reception classes are introduced to books and stories from the very start. Older pupils like the books that teachers read to them in class. Adults choose books which they know capture pupils' interest. Pupils like discussing the ideas and themes in the books that they read.

Staff teach reading effectively. Pupils use their phonics knowledge confidently to read and spell unfamiliar words. Teachers ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This enables most pupils to read fluently, accurately and with understanding. Staff quickly spot pupils who find learning to read more challenging. Pupils receive the extra help that they need to catch up.

Teachers are ambitious for all pupils. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the help that they need to access the full curriculum. Most pupils with SEND make strong progress in their learning, and have their needs met well. Pupils who join the school speaking very little English are given effective support, so that they can learn well.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are caring, kind and know right from wrong. They know why it is important to respect others' views. Pupils learn about and participate in the life of the local community. They support local charities and multi-faith events. A carefully planned programme of trips and activities is available for all pupils. This helps to open pupils' eyes to new opportunities, and helps them to develop new interests and ambitions.

Pupils behave well. The small number of pupils who find it hard to make good behaviour choices are given the help they need to improve. Although leaders have improved attendance, a small number of pupils are still absent too often.

Staff feel that leaders support them well. Leaders have used high-quality support, from within and outside the trust, to improve the quality of education. Staff value the extra training they receive. Trustees and governors ensure that leaders set the right priorities for improvement, and that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and alert to the risks that pupils face. They know when and how to report concerns. Leaders act quickly and appropriately to keep pupils safe. They ensure that pupils receive the help that they need, including from outside agencies when necessary.

Pupils learn how to recognise a variety of risks. They learn how to stay safe online and about what makes a good friend.

Staff from the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust and governors check regularly that procedures to keep pupils safe are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified exactly what they want children to know by the end of their time in the early years. In these subjects, it is not clear how children's learning is providing a foundation for learning in Year 1 and beyond. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, curriculum plans clearly identify what children should know and be able to do by the end of the early years.
- Occasionally, some teachers are not clear about the knowledge that they intend pupils to learn from an activity. When this occurs, pupils remember the activity, but not the important subject knowledge that leaders intended. This leads to inconsistencies in how effectively the curriculum is implemented. Leaders should ensure that teachers' planned activities always clearly identify the knowledge that they want pupils to learn, so that they teach the curriculum as leaders intend.
- A small number of pupils are absent from school too often. These pupils miss out on learning. Leaders should continue to develop strategies and work with families to reduce persistent absence further.

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

Unique reference number	142263
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10207077
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Duffy
Headteacher	Gabrielle Somes
Website	www.stmargarets.luton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school. The number of pupils on roll has decreased since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust and is in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act (2005) in June 2018, and was judged to be good.
- The St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust has delegated some responsibilities to a local academy committee. The members of the local academy committee are known to parents as governors.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils eligible for free school meals are above average.
- Just under half of the staff were not working at the school when it was previously inspected.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the strategic executive leader from the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, trust directors and members of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, art, geography and history. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils and staff, and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work and visited lessons in a range of other subjects.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school policies, procedures and records. An inspector met with the headteacher as the designated safeguarding leader, and other staff, to discuss and review examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe. Inspectors spoke to pupils and checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spoke to pupils when visiting lessons, met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 45 responses and 21 free-text comments submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered a letter handed to the inspection team.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, including non-teaching staff. They also considered 37 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
James Chester	Her Majesty's Inspector

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