

Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's Church of England Junior School

Orchard Street, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9AE

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

Outcome

St Margaret's Church of England Junior School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Lenny Williams. This school is part of Medway Anglican Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hilary Sanders, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gill Mond.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, calm and caring school. Pupils' well-being is a priority for everyone. One parent expressed the views of several and commented, 'The staff have a personal and caring approach which we value highly.' Pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy all aspects of school life. They achieve well overall.

Pupils are valued, know that their opinions matter and that staff will always help them. The school's values of respect, resilience and responsibility are deeply embedded in the school's culture and are lived up to by the pupils in all that they do. Pupils are great ambassadors for their school. They take huge pride in achievements such as a 'Fair Play' award and their work to raise funds for charities.

Pupils behave very well. They know and understand the expectations for their behaviour in lessons, during social times and in the playground. Newly introduced approaches are appreciated by pupils to help them identify and manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils are confident that if any issues should arise, they can talk to staff. Any concerns are dealt with quickly and fairly.

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

Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been relatively low in the past. The school adopted a new curriculum, leading to much improved outcomes in English and mathematics over the last year. However, there is no complacency. The school is rightly determined to raise expectations and improve outcomes further. In particular, the

proportion of pupils achieving greater depth and higher standards, particularly in writing, are not high enough.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other disadvantaged pupils. It is designed well. It sets out the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and when, and how they should learn it. The school makes sure that pupils build their knowledge over time and draw on their previous learning to help them achieve well. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately, and teachers and teaching assistants know what to do to support them. Teachers check on pupils' learning in a range of ways to inform their teaching and make adjustments to meet pupils' needs successfully.

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes help them to learn well. Teachers are quick to refocus any pupil who becomes distracted. The school provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities and experiences. Activities such as visiting a farm to see the lambing and raising money for charities leave a lasting impression. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, and Year 6 pupils are very excited about their residential visit.

There is a strong focus on fostering pupils' enjoyment and love of reading. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers. A recently introduced structure for daily reading lessons is consistently effective across classes. Pupils read widely and the opening of the new school library is excitedly anticipated. A few pupils are still in the early stage of learning to read, and they are quickly identified and supported. However, at times, this additional help is not put into place swiftly enough because the school needs to monitor the impact of the newly introduced phonics programme more thoroughly.

There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school. Teachers appreciate the support and guidance in their respective subjects. Leaders set great store in providing professional training for staff to further develop their expertise and skills. The school has the right actions in place to monitor more closely how well the curriculum is implemented.

Most parents are positive about the school. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and supported to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. Governors and the trust ensure that all responsibilities are carried out effectively and statutory requirements are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations are not always as ambitious as they could be for pupils' achievement. As a result, too few pupils achieve higher standards in their work, especially in writing. The school should raise teachers' expectations further so that pupils produce work that is

the very best that they can do.

- Not all areas of the curriculum are currently monitored as closely as they should be. As a result, there is sometimes a lack of clarity on how effectively the curriculum, including the new phonics programme, is implemented. The school should continue with its plans to monitor the curriculum implementation to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they can.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Margaret's CofE Voluntary Controlled Junior School, to be good in March 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142160
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10296423
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gill Mond
CEO of the trust	Hilary Sanders
Headteacher	Lenny Williams
Website	www.stmargaretsonline.net
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started at the school in April 2021
- The school is part of the Medway Anglican Schools Trust
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Rochester. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader and the curriculum leader. She also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and

the chair of the trustees.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work, including writing in English books and in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of learners, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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