



St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118708
LEA Medway
Inspection number 280378
Inspection dates 10 November 2005 to 11 November 2005
Reporting inspector David Collard RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	King Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Rochester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Kent ME1 1YF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 843843
Number on roll	207	Fax number	01634 310067
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Rita Menzies
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Faik

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	10 November 2005 - 11 November 2005	280378

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Margaret's primary school is in the city of Rochester, Kent. As a voluntary controlled, Church of England school, there is a strong Christian ethos but the admissions policy has ensured that there is a significant number of pupils from other faiths and cultures, reflecting the diverse local community. A high percentage of pupils, mainly Asian, have English as an additional language. When they first start school, the children's attainment is below average. There are a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as a smaller number with identified talents. The school has recently undergone major refurbishment. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had only been in post from September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education and pupils achieve well. The school evaluates its work accurately so that it has a realistic view of its performance. The good quality provision ensures children progress well in the Foundation Stage but standards do not reach the expected levels when pupils enter Year 1 because they have to make up a lot of ground from a low starting point. The consistently good and exciting teaching through the school, along with strong supporting systems, ensures that pupils make good progress and the majority reach at least average standards by the time they leave. Standards improved substantially this year. Strong and effective use of assessment, comparing the performance of different groups, provides the information the school needs to address any underachievement, although marking, whilst satisfactory, is more variable. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a wide range of after-school clubs.

The school is led and managed well. The new headteacher has made good use of the expertise of staff and is ensuring that the school's plans are well focused and are based on good evidence and analysis. The school has rightly identified that pupils' writing skills need developing and that teaching could be even better if the marking of work was linked more to individual pupil targets. Professional development is planned to strengthen these areas. The school has the capacity to sustain the momentum of improvement. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to assess the improvements being made in pupils' writing ability and so raise standards in English
- improve the marking so that teachers use it to strengthen their planning and the pupils fully understand the individual targets they have been set.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is good. The high numbers of pupils with English as an additional language become confident speakers and make equally as good progress as their peers.

Progress through the Foundation Stage and to Year 2 is good and the school's results in national tests for 7-year-olds have regularly been at the national average. Progress is equally good through the juniors although variable, the most important factor being the high turnover of pupils. In Year 6 last year, half the class had changed but the extensive assessments identified the pupils' achievement and then addressed any problems. In 2005, nearly all pupils achieved average standards in English. The school's challenging targets were met for English and mathematics, representing a significant improvement on 2004.

The school has rightly placed an emphasis on writing by developing its use in subjects such as history and science. This is providing pupils, particularly the more able, with better opportunities to improve their use of language, spelling and grammar in extended written exercises.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a safe, welcoming environment in which pupils make good progress in their personal development. The reception class assembly, about Remembrance Day, demonstrated how quickly the younger children make progress in this area. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak positively about it. They behave very well and enjoy their lessons. They are friendly and keen to tell visitors about their work. They know that they can trust their teachers to deal effectively with any problems that occur.

Pupils have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles, for instance, by tasting unusual fruits and vegetables. They enjoy their physical education and games lessons and have lots of opportunities through the varied after school clubs to improve their expertise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils of different faiths respect each other and show great interest and understanding of different cultures. Through the school council, taking part in assemblies and in day-to-day activities, the pupils learn to express their views, listen to others and make an effective contribution to the school community. The school is doing all it can to improve the average attendance levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are excited by what they do and behave well because teachers think carefully about how to motivate them. Many opportunities are given for practical work, such as when pupils become models for portrait sketching. The school's very good understanding of assessment ensures individuals of both higher and lower ability receive good support, often from well trained assistants. This better focus has been successful in the teaching of reading and spelling where the well established systems continuously challenge pupils to do better. Until recently, it has not been as successful in writing, although the school's urgent focus is ensuring that all subjects now build upon the work in literacy lessons. Marking is generally used satisfactorily, although it does not always provide the teachers and the pupils with the information that will help move learning on.

The teaching successfully raised the pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests from the level in 2004, which had slipped. This is because the school was able to analyse the performance of pupils over an extensive period of time and then identify the measures needed to remedy the weaknesses.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. They enjoy the interesting activities they are given, for example, in history and geography. The curriculum in art and design and technology is strong. Teachers are increasingly setting work which makes links between subjects and this is helping to make writing activities in particular more relevant to the pupils. Teachers make very good use of the many resources in the local environment to bring topics to life, for instance, when pupils study toys from the Victorian period at a museum. The school provides a very good range of after school activities which pupils become very involved in. Frequent opportunities to work in teams help to develop pupils' self-confidence, which prepares them well for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care for its pupils. All staff are well trained and committed to promoting health and safety. The governors and the local education authority (LEA) carry out regular safety checks and risk assessments. In this safe and secure environment, pupils make good progress in reaching their learning targets. The headteacher has an 'open door' policy and parents are encouraged to share either any concerns or good news. The reception class teacher supports the special needs coordinator and so is well placed to identify problems at an early stage. The school has close links with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils make consistent progress. In subjects such as science and personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and safe practices and are prepared well for their future life. Good links exist with the local secondary schools to ensure transition is effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The new headteacher provides a strong lead and is committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. She is well supported by a deputy headteacher and senior staff who know the school well. This is reflected in the realistic self-evaluation, where processes are robust in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Teamwork is the key to the school's success. Assessment arrangements are well established and very effective in checking the progress of groups of pupils and identifying the next stage in their learning, although it is recognised that this needs to be translated into the more consistent use of marking by individual teachers. Teaching is carefully monitored and effective use has been made of the very good support from the local authority. Pupils of all faiths and abilities make good progress in their work because the school values all pupils equally. The recent refurbishment and the addition of the wonderful library and ICT suite have

enhanced the buildings. The many comprehensive systems are ensuring that the school gives good value for money.

Governors are well informed and provide good support. They visit regularly and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school and value the efforts teachers make on behalf of their children. The school works well with other agencies, particularly the LEA, to ensure that children are successful in their learning and personal development. The school's progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is good capacity for improvement in the future.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Margaret's at Troy Town C of E VC Primary School King Street Rochester, Kent ME1 1YF

25 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for looking after the two of us during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed joining you in your lessons, having lunch with you, and the Remembrance Day service. You are probably wondering what we thought about your school so I have included a few of the main points below.

You all told us how much you enjoy school, like your lessons and want to take part in all the many activities that happen. We agree with you and could see how much it is helping you to get on well.

We think you behave very well and your parents agree. Even when you do have some minor arguments, you all know who to see to sort it out. In fact, we know that you are encouraged to try and help each other and we saw this happening.

Your teachers are good at planning exciting and interesting lessons and this is helping you to make good progress. You told us that you would like to better understand why you have particular targets and we have asked your teachers to explain this to you.

We know some of you find writing difficult. You said that you have more chances now to write in other subjects but we have asked your teachers to see if that can be improved even more so that you all become confident when you have to write longer stories, letters or reports. This will also help you when you move on to the next school.

Your new headteacher has worked hard to know how well you are doing and she has many good ideas to make your learning even better. We think she, along with all the other staff, are doing all the right things that will make your school even better than it is.

Finally, we would like to wish you all the best for the future and hope you continue to enjoy your time at St Margaret's.

Yours sincerely,

David Collard Lead Inspector