



St Margaret Clitherows RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134539
LEA Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 282607
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Penter

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Margarets Grove
School category	Voluntary aided		South Bank
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Middlesbrough TS6 6TA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 835370
Number on roll	354	Fax number	01642 835370
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Buckton
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms Sarah Walker

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	3 May 2006 - 3 May 2006	282607

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector met with the headteacher, children, staff and members of the governing body. Seventy-seven families responded to the questionnaire seeking their views about the school.

Description of the school

St Margaret Clitherow's is a larger than the average primary school with a nursery. It was created in September 2004 by the amalgamation of two adjacent Catholic schools and will continue to operate on two sites until the end of this school year. The school has 354 pupils, the majority of whom are White British with around 6% from other ethnic groups. Over 60% of pupils come from one of the most deprived areas in the country and many children start the school with skills and attainment that are well below what might be expected for their age. The numbers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally, although the school has no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Pupil mobility is high, partly due to the proximity of a site for traveller families. The school has a very strong Catholic mission and ethos which is much in evidence throughout the daily life of the school and which provides very positive support for pupils and staff alike.

There is no previous inspection report for this school and standardised attainment data is only available for 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Margaret Clitherow's is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The exceptional leadership provided by the headteacher, working with a strong and supportive staff and an informed and involved governing body has ensured the successful management of a difficult amalgamation. The parents who responded to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One commented 'the positive relationships within the school promote a caring and high achieving atmosphere'. Numbers of others highlighted the good progress made by their children and the friendliness and approachability of staff.

The headteacher has a strong vision for a cohesive 'school family' within which each child will learn and succeed whatever their background and ability. This has been achieved within a powerful Catholic ethos which encourages thoughtfulness, respect, concern for others and prayer. The result is a well ordered, exciting and stimulating learning environment. Classical music plays on the corridors and in classrooms while children change activities, many quiet corners are set aside throughout the school for reflection and prayer, high quality displays of children's work are everywhere, and recognition and rewards systems such as 'golden time' and 'golden tickets' are in evidence throughout the school.

Many children join the nursery or reception classes with skills and levels of attainment much lower than those normally expected for their age, but make very good progress so that by the time they join Key Stage 1 most have achieved or are close to achieving the Early Learning Goals. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve particularly well in literacy, reading and writing. The school has put in place robust strategies for further improving attainment in mathematics. This good achievement and progress are maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave, standards overall are above national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and as a result they also make good progress throughout their time in the school.

Nine classes were jointly observed with the headteacher. None of the teaching seen was less than good and some was outstanding. This level of consistency has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and their progress over time. Teachers operate within a praise and celebration culture which nurtures and develops self esteem. Relationships are strong and positive and all staff know the individual children well. The school has made a significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT) and this is effectively used by both pupils and teachers to support, enhance or consolidate learning. Lesson planning, within a whole school framework, is a strong feature. At the start of each lesson teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of what they are expected to achieve and how they will know when they have achieved it. To enhance the learning experience the school should continue to develop more creative and interactive teaching and link this more closely to children's preferred learning styles.

Pupils work hard, and concentrate well. They clearly very much enjoy their lessons: lots of happy, smiling faces! Teaching assistants and other support staff, including the ICT technician, are effectively used to ensure children receive the support and encouragement they need. The best marking is outstanding. In literacy, success criteria are pasted in books at the start of the work, encouragement and praise are contained in 'bubbles', while comments to support improvement are in 'bullets'. This exemplary practice is currently being extended across other subjects. Assessment systems are robust. The performance of pupils is regularly measured, carefully recorded, effectively analysed and used to ensure teaching is carefully matched to the needs of pupils.

The curriculum is good, it covers the requirements of the national curriculum, and offers breadth and balance. There is an appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 1 which enables the children to access the rest of the curriculum more effectively. Creative cross-curricular approaches are used to ensure that the context for learning is relevant and meaningful; in order to enhance enjoyment and raise aspirations the school should further develop these. Pupils are taught to understand and celebrate the nature of diversity and are well prepared to take their place in the wider multi-cultural society.

Pupil's behaviour throughout the school is excellent; children are respectful, polite, friendly and open. They care about each other and about the adults who care for them and are taught to show concern for disadvantaged groups within the wider community. Children exhibit positive attitudes to their learning and to their school. Attendance is satisfactory but the school is working very hard with the welfare officer and the traveller service to target the small number of families who do not send their children to school regularly. Pupils work and play safely and appropriate risk assessments are carried out regularly. Child protection procedures are robust. Each child knows there is someone in the school who they can speak to when worried or upset, and they confirm that the few instances of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They have access to healthy food, including an excellent salad bar, drink plenty of water each day, eat fruit provided by the national scheme and take regular exercise. Every pupil has a 'Huff and Puff' day where they use a range of small equipment to engage in individual or group exercise during playtimes.

The children are able to describe a large range of extra curricular provision in which most are engaged. These include sporting activities such as football; art, drama and music activities; charity fundraising and work within the local community, for example contributing a school float to the South Bank carnival. The well attended lunchtime chaplaincy club offers the opportunity for children to reflect and pray together. The school council is an enthusiastic, well organised and effective group which articulates and represents the views of pupils well and is listened to by school leaders and governors. It has produced a detailed school evaluation document, suggested areas for improvement and brought about real change such as the development of the rewards system.

Links with outside agencies are well established. There is a particularly innovative programme delivered in conjunction with Middlesbrough Football Club which

contributes to the development of citizenship, healthy lifestyles and working in teams. It also provides children with some excellent role models.

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The senior team have a very accurate picture of the school's performance. They, together with the effective subject leaders, share a strong focus on raising achievement, developing self confidence and self esteem in pupils, and maintaining the powerful and supportive faith life of the school. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff is well established and increasingly staff are observing each other in order to share best practice. The headteacher provides enthusiastic leadership and generates an ethos where very good relationships, trust, effective mutual support and optimism are valued. Her expectations are high and all staff at all levels live up to them. The governing body are very effective. Formed at the time of the amalgamation they have worked closely with the headteacher in shaping the vision and are committed to supporting and challenging the staff to make it work. Most governors visit the school regularly; they support the faith life, join the mass and the liturgy, participate in celebrations and link with subject areas. This, together with the high quality of management information provided by the headteacher, ensures they are well informed and understand the issues and challenges for the school. Financial controls are well established and the school delivers excellent value for money.

Views of parents and pupils are regularly sought and inform debate and decision making at all levels. Fortnightly newsletters and an excellent web site keep parents well informed. In the light of the progress the school has made since it was established eighteen months ago and the continuing commitment of staff and governors, it demonstrates very good capacity to continue to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupil's attainment on entry is much lower than might normally be expected. They make very good progress in the nursery and foundation stages and good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards overall are above national averages by the end of Key Stage 2. Achievement and standards are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school, show good attitudes to learning and exhibit excellent behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is well supported by the strong Catholic ethos. Pupils feel and are safe; they understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are encouraged to adopt one. A few children need to attend school more regularly. Pupils are well prepared for their future roles and understand and celebrate diversity. Overall this aspect is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All the teaching seen was at least good, some was outstanding. Relationships are strong and positive. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. The best marking is outstanding, and the assessment of pupils and tracking of their progress are good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Key skills are properly emphasised in Key Stage 1. A good range of extra curricular activities are accessed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care and support provided for pupils is outstanding. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Each child knows there is an adult in school who they can speak to if worried or upset. Learners are supported to reach challenging targets and the school works well with parents and other agencies to support each child. Risk assessments are routinely carried out and child protection procedures are well established and well understood.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and has empowered and developed staff to ensure that leadership at all levels is outstanding. The governing body offer exceptional support for the school. They are well informed and well able to act as 'critical friends'. School self evaluation is accurate and the school routinely and formally seeks views of parents, pupils and others concerned with the school. The school demonstrates very good capacity to improve further.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

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Ms Sarah Walker

St Margaret Clitherow's RC Primary School

St Margaret's Grove

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Middlesbrough

TS6 6TA

03 May 2006

Dear Children

What a real pleasure it was to visit your very friendly school on a lovely sunny day. Thank you for making me feel very welcome. I really enjoyed talking to some of you in your lessons and hearing about all of things you do in school. Big thanks to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to tell me about what makes your school so special.

I think you are very lucky to attend St Margaret Clitherow's. It is a good school. Your teachers are very good and care about you very much. They work really hard to help you learn and to explain things when you are stuck. They also give up a lot of their own time to organise interesting extra activities. You repay them by working hard, being respectful, behaving very well and are eager to earn 'golden tickets' and 'golden time'. This means that most of you learn well and can be rightly proud of what you achieve. The opportunities you have to think quietly and to pray help you learn more about yourself and other people. Ms Walker is an excellent headteacher and she is eager to continue to improve your school. She will need your help to do this and the school council will continue to play an important role.

The school is going to develop further the links between subjects which help to make the work interesting and exciting. Teachers are also going to look carefully at the ways in which you like to learn and give you more chances to 'learn and enjoy.' A few of you do need to come to school more often because if you are not there you can't learn.

Finally, can I say what a pleasure it was to share the day with you and I wish you all the very best of luck in the future.

Chris Penter

Lead inspector