



St Margaret's School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134902
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 285572
Inspection dates 28 November 2005 to 28 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mark Evans AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Tadworth Court
School category	Non-maintained special		Tadworth
Age range of pupils	5 to 19		KT20 5RU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01737 365810
Number on roll	42	Fax number	01737 365819
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Ross
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs J Cunningham

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Margaret's School is a purpose built non-maintained residential school for children and young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. It is run by a charity, the Children's Trust. The educational buildings are a very short distance from the boarding accommodation. Specialised and individualised equipment is provided for all children and young people. The school is set in the extensive grounds of the Children's Trust, where there are extensive gardens. The Trust headquarters and other services run by the Trust are located on the same site. The school's stated mission is 'Putting pupils first, striving to promote intellectual, physical, emotional and social development.'

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's School is a very effective school with some outstanding features. The school's leadership has a clear understanding of its strengths and limitations. The pupils are safe, happy and enjoy being at school. The care, guidance and support provided are exemplary. Pupils make good progress towards meeting their individual targets. Teaching is good with many lessons being excellent. However, teachers are not given sufficiently clear feedback about their lessons to help them improve further, which limits the sharing of outstanding practice. The school is very well supported by the Children's Trust, but links on some financial and training matters are not as secure as they should be. The school development plan is strong and clearly defines future developments. However, it is not well understood by all stakeholders and thus its overall effectiveness is limited. The school's capacity to improve is very good and the self-review and audit processes in place already will ensure that this happens. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision for students in the sixth form is very effective. The students enjoy being at school; the care and support they receive is excellent, being age appropriate and suitable for their needs. They make good progress towards their individual targets.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Boarding provision is very good. It is managed well and regular inspections confirm that nearly all aspects of the facility are effective. Staff ensure that pupils are safe and they make sure that they have varied and interesting activities in the evenings and weekends. When appropriate, parents are encouraged to stay at or near the school. Pupils' personal needs are well cared for and communication between carers and teachers is very good; pupils use as many opportunities for communicating as they wish. Pupils and students are accompanied out into the community regularly. Boarding provision for post 16 students has been effectively incorporated into aspects of the school work, leading to a recognised qualification in the use of leisure time. The latest Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report on boarding welfare, 24 October 2004, states that the school continued to be well organised, that the managers of the school were positive and proactive and that the staff were knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils. Most standards were judged to be met or exceeded; a few minor shortfalls were recorded. A full copy of the CSCI report may be read at the following internet address: <http://62.73.173.233/CSCI/RSS/42/S0000013942.V184305.R01.S.pdf>

What the school should do to improve further

* clarify the system used to monitor teaching and learning within the school, making it clearer how well teachers are doing* improve the links between Trust and School

staff dealing with financial and training matters in the school* ensure that the school development plan is the major tool for improvement, that all stakeholders understand it, and that its financial implications are transparent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in all subjects that they experience. They achieve very well in personal, social and health education. Achievement is further enhanced when pupils go out into the community: pupils make good progress when they visit local shops, schools and other facilities. Each pupil is set challenging targets, which they usually meet, albeit within the context of serious and sometimes degenerative conditions. Pupils and students make good progress in relation to their capabilities, based upon a very clear evaluation of their prior attainment. Progress is particularly good in personal and social skills. The regular and consistent use of many different teaching methods is the significant factor in the standards that pupils achieve. Pupils with the most complex and profound learning difficulties are supported by a sophisticated range of specialist access devices and other technology that supports their learning very well. These include screens, single switches, flexible mounting arms, neck, knee and foot switches, and alternative keyboards which provide good access to the curriculum for many of the pupils. Students in Year 12 and 13 achieve standards that allow some to gain certification for a range of independence skills. There is no significant underachievement by different groups of learners such as looked after children or particular ethnic groups; the only differences evident are those caused by the learning difficulties and disabilities themselves.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is excellent. They make good progress in spiritual and cultural development; they make excellent progress in their moral and social development. Parents report clearly that their children are happy at school. From their behaviour, it is evident that they enjoy being at school, both in the educationally focused part of the day and around the boarding houses. Behaviour is often excellent and attendance is consistently very high. Pupils' attitudes to learning, both as seen in lessons and in the houses, are very positive. It is also clear that the pupils feel secure at school. Obviously, their response to safe practices and healthy lifestyles is predominantly in the hands of the adults, but pupils are as healthy and as safe as can be expected. When pupils do exhibit anxiety or distress, it is quickly dealt with and in most cases, they are quickly calm again. Pupils are increasingly enabled to make their views known, to make choices and assert whatever independence is practicable. The pupils make a very good contribution to the community. Governors who are key members of the local community are much involved in supporting the school and the Children's Trust is a well known facility in the area. There is a very wide programme of visitors to the school and a varied series of visits out, for example involving drama groups and musicians.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good; on many occasions, teaching is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well. They work very well as a team, which includes the non-teaching staff, therapists and carers. Each plays a significant part in supporting the high quality of education and care provided. Planning is detailed and leads to activities and experiences which are well matched to pupils' individual needs. There are very positive relationships, which support learning well, and ensure that pupils and students feel valued and secure. There is often laughter in the classrooms, provoked by adults and pupils alike. This all adds to the excellent atmosphere, for example in a lesson involving pupils choosing musical instruments and building up to making a cacophony of sound, which all enjoyed very much! Teaching staff and all support staff have a deep knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs. In all classrooms, parents or other volunteers add to the high quality of teaching experience that each pupil receives. Therapists are very much involved in the partnership with teaching, non-teaching and care staff. This extends across the whole curriculum, for example in communication lessons and in physical education in the hydrotherapy pool. Assessment of what pupils learn is very detailed, based on the very small increments that pupils make. Thus it supports teachers' planning for all levels of attainment within a class. Target setting on an individual basis is very well established and monitoring of learning is also very good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good, with some excellent features. Based on the National Curriculum, but very heavily adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, it provides a very suitable range of activities including physical education, art, craft, information and communication technology, as well as basic communication and number work. Pupils enjoy well constructed, relevant and interesting activities that are carefully matched to their needs. Often these are themed, meaning that different activities 'combine' to give an even better overall experience to the pupils. Programmes for older pupils focus appropriately on as many independence skills as is possible. Use of touch cues to help pupils access information and understand timing is well planned.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are excellent. In the boarding houses and at school, staff provide a warm, friendly and caring environment that ensures the pupils are safe and feel secure. Health and safety requirements are rigorously monitored and risk assessments carried out regularly. The school is infinitely sensitive to the

pupils' welfare needs; this enables them to make good progress or to stay stable, as is practicable. Child protection procedures are very well managed: staff training is appropriately updated and extended to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils receive good support to help them access learning and to ensure they are as comfortable as can be. They have good access to a wider community in preparation for life beyond school. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and students are excellent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good and, in some respects, they are excellent. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy head and senior management team, leads the school very effectively with clear focus on the stated aims. This has resulted in a whole team approach to education and care, involving teaching, non teaching, care, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy staff in a balance that is appropriate for each individual pupil. All pupils benefit greatly from this. Parents are wholly supportive of the leadership of the school and the care and education it provides for their children. They very much appreciate the open door policy of the school, which extends to helping with accommodation for visitors, if appropriate. The governors discharge their responsibilities with care, enthusiasm and commitment. The school welcomes the governors' involvement and encourages regular contact. The standard of accommodation and resources is very high indeed, and those areas of the school which are not up to this standard, are due for extensive refurbishment. Bathrooms, the new boarding houses, hoisting systems, storage areas: all have been designed and built very much with the interests of the pupils and the staff in mind. The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation is good. The headteacher and senior managers know the school well and there is a regular review process which informs school planning and development. The monitoring of teaching however, does not always result in teachers understanding how to do better. The governing body is appropriately involved in school development planning and they are becoming increasingly active in the setting of the agenda for further improvement. However, not all stakeholders understand it fully, and its financial implications are not always transparent. Nevertheless, the school has a very good capacity to improve and reach even higher standards in the future. School staff are deeply committed to improving and promoting the well-being of learners through the high quality of care and education they provide. They assess and monitor the pupils rigorously but sensitively. Specific subject targets are set for all pupils and progress towards them is measured carefully. However, the setting and analysing of targets for overall progress made by pupils is not as well developed. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and any inequalities that may exist from time to time are caused by medical or other crises. Day-to-day financial management of the school is very secure. However, the division in responsibilities between the school and the Trust in the administration of both fiscal and training matters can cause delays and occasional misunderstandings.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

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	Yes
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

:) (The Lead Inspector sent the pupils a smiley face symbol)