

St Margaret's School, Tintinhull

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123855
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292816
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	74
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Whitlock
Headteacher	Jan Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2005
School address	School Close Tintinhull Yeovil BA22 8PX
Telephone number	01935 822686
Fax number	01935 823643

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school drawing pupils from a wide area. A small number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Several pupils join or leave the school each year. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from a variety of minority ethnic groups. When children start school their skills and knowledge are broadly in line with those expected.

St Margaret's holds a Healthy Schools award. It joins with other local schools for a variety of activities to extend learning opportunities for the pupils. There have been significant changes of staffing, with almost all teachers having joined the school in the past three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My child is doing well but above all she is happy and confident. I couldn't ask for more.' This comment sums up the overwhelming confidence that parents have in the school's work. They are right to be pleased. This is a good school that has achieved much since the last inspection. The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies. Good leadership and management have been instrumental in bringing about rapid improvement. Good systems have been put in place to improve the quality of provision and to address past underachievement.

Throughout the school, pupils are making good progress and making up lost ground at a rapid rate, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Standards have improved, moving rapidly from being well below to broadly average levels. Performance in English is strong because pupils do particularly well in reading. Achievement in writing has improved, but there is still scope to raise standards further so that they are more in line with those found in reading. Achievement in mathematics and science, which was inadequate in the last inspection, is now sound. Standards are improving further because effective steps have been taken to strengthen provision for these subjects.

Good teaching and learning underpin the good progress now being made. Pupils are also benefiting from a good curriculum that gives them a range of exciting learning opportunities. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Provision for personal, health and social education is particularly strong and pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have a very good understanding of the needs of others. Their appreciation of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and their awareness of safe practices are excellent. The oldest pupils are mature, responsible and well prepared for the next stage in learning. These pupils have a keen appreciation of their own learning and very much enjoy working towards their literacy targets. There is scope to capitalise on this and to extend target-setting to other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics. Marking of pupils' work is generally helpful but in some instances does not relate to targets or give a clear view of what they need to do to improve.

Children in the Reception Year get off to a good start and almost all are working at or above expected levels at the start of Year 1. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and this means that they are well placed for later learning. They also have a strong base of mathematical skills but, as in year groups further up the school, writing is a weaker area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that pupils do as well in this area as they do in reading.
- Extend the use of targets and ensure that marking gives pupils a clear view of how well they are doing in relation to their targets and what they need to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

A range of initiatives introduced over the past two years has led to the successful eradication of past underachievement. Throughout the school, pupils are making good progress. This is leading to a rise in standards, although this is more evident at the lower end of the school than

it is for older pupils. Most pupils in Year 2, for example, are attaining above average levels in mathematics. Achievement is now satisfactory. There was a significant improvement in standards in 2006 when they rose from well below to broadly average levels. This improvement is set to be maintained this year, with current Year 6 pupils making good gains from a below average starting point at the end of Year 2. Pupils do particularly well in reading but writing, although improved, is not quite as strong. Pupils with learning difficulties and those identified as underachieving benefit from well-targeted support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed in their lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they show sensitive awareness of the needs of others and their place in the wider world. Pupils are involved in a wide range of fund-raising activities and local events. Year 6 pupils make a very good contribution to the running of the school by taking on a range of responsibilities and acting as school councillors. Pupils participate enthusiastically in early morning 'rise and shine' sessions and know that fruit makes the best snack. They feel safe in school and are clear that they can share any worries and that there is rarely any bullying, with any incidents sorted out immediately. Their confidence and sense of security are very evident, summed up by one pupil who explained 'it's a lovely school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Past weaknesses and inconsistencies in teaching have been successfully tackled and this has led to the rapid improvement in pupils' progress. A good programme of professional development and regular checking and feedback on lessons has strengthened provision. As a result, teachers now have secure subject knowledge and a clear view of the learning that is going to take place. Lessons are well organised and resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, are well used to involve pupils and help them to tackle their tasks. Teachers give clear instructions on tasks, but occasionally the opportunity is missed to demonstrate key teaching points. The quality of marking varies. At times, feedback is evaluative and helpful, giving pupils a clear view of how well they are doing. On occasions, however, marking makes no reference to pupils' targets and comments are too general to help pupils to understand what to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good work has been undertaken to make the curriculum more interesting and exciting by linking subjects together. Some successful work is particularly evident in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, where, for example, following a visit to Charmouth, children created their own rock pools. There has been significant improvement in the opportunities for older pupils to use their skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects such as history. Opportunities to use numeracy skills, while satisfactory, are more limited. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to cater for mixed-age classes. There is a good range of programmes to boost pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and this is a key factor in addressing underachievement. Opportunities to write for a range of purposes

have been increased, particularly in Years 5 and 6, but there is still more to do to ensure that pupils' skills develop at a sustained and consistent rate throughout the school.

A range of visits, visitors and special events enrich opportunities for learning. All pupils are taught by a specialist music teacher and regularly participate in performances. Links with other local schools extend provision, for example for gifted and talented pupils and for the teaching of modern foreign languages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are very confident about the high level of support and care provided for their children. As one commented, 'The school has a nurturing approach to pupils, taking account of their individual needs'. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have well planned programmes to meet their needs and participate fully in all activities. Pupils who join the school mid-year are given extra support so that they settle readily and make progress in their learning. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been strengthened considerably so that teachers have good information on which to base planning and target-setting. Very effective use is made of the information to identify pupils who need extra support to make up some lost ground. Pupils have individual targets for literacy and those in Years 5 and 6 are positive about how much these help. As one said, 'you know where you are'. These targets have not yet been extended to other subjects, a step which pupils themselves would welcome.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong leadership has been instrumental in bringing about rapid improvement in the school's performance. Good systems have been put in place to track and analyse pupils' progress and to identify where there is a need for improvement. Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of provision, particularly teaching, in order to address past underachievement. The effectiveness of the work done so far indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

A range of systems for checking on the school's work gives a good view of what is working well and what needs to be improved. Raising standards is the priority on the school improvement plan and subject leaders and governors are playing their parts in supporting initiatives to achieve this. However, the plans for improvement lack clear success criteria and so it is difficult to measure the success of action taken.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's CofE Primary School, Tintinhull, BA22 8PX

You may remember that Mr Lee and I visited recently to see how things are going at your school. Many thanks to all of you who talked to us about the work you are doing and what you enjoy learning. A particular thanks to the Years 5 and 6 pupils who met with us and gave us so much information about your activities. We thought you might be interested in what we are saying in our report. Yours is a good school. It has improved very quickly because your headteacher, staff and governors have put lots of ideas into action to make sure you are doing as well as you should.

Here are some of the 'highlights'.

- You are taught well so that you are all learning at a good rate now.
- You become very good at reading and your work in mathematics and science is improving well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and those of you in Year 6 are mature and responsible and well prepared for the move to secondary schools.
- Staff take good care of you and your parents are pleased that you are all known so well and given extra help if you need it.
- You have lots of opportunities to join clubs, go on trips and work with special visitors. We particularly liked seeing the photographs and the work you had done after your visit to Charmouth.

We have suggested two things that the school needs to do now.

- Make sure that you do as well in writing as you do in reading.
- Give you targets for subjects like numeracy and make sure that marking tells you how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.

You can help by working hard towards those targets – some of you in Years 5 and 6 told us how much these help you in literacy.

With very best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector