

# St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103995
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308478
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	M Rutter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Stackhouse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Birmingham Road Great Barr Birmingham B43 7AP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01213 572758
<b>Fax number</b>	01213 586258

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

### Description of the school

The school serves the local Great Barr area although most of the pupils come from neighbouring Walsall and Birmingham. The majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are predominantly from White and Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Indian backgrounds. Most of these pupils are bilingual. A large number of the families are from Christian denominations. Fewer pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is similar to the national average.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is in line with the expected levels for children of this age.

The school provides daily breakfast and after school clubs. It is also part of the Extended Schools Core Offer Partnership and offers workshops for parents and holiday play schemes. The school has received a Healthy Schools gold award and an Active Mark. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well. All parents speak in glowing terms about the school's achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote, 'This is a fantastic school with an excellent academic record'. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress towards all their learning goals. Parents feel their children have a 'wonderful start to school life' and appreciate the endless patience, happy faces and unbounded enthusiasm of all the staff. The one area to address in this successful provision is to make sure that the outdoor area is as stimulating as the indoor classrooms. Pupils aged from 5 to 11, respond to the good teaching and achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been above or well above average since the last inspection. On a few occasions more able pupils are not given hard enough work and therefore their achievement is restricted. Learning activities are enhanced by the use of a wide variety of resources and excellent links with other agencies. Support staff are effective and valued team members. Assessment systems are effective in monitoring progress. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show this by being attentive and eager to participate. Their personal development is good and is a significant strength of the school. The curriculum is good and meets the needs and interests of pupils well. It is enriched considerably by many opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. Pastoral care is good and lies at the heart of the school's work. This is chiefly because the school succeeds in ensuring that pupils and their families receive all the help they need because of excellent links with outside agencies. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a good leader who has successfully enhanced many aspects of the school's provision in a relatively short time. She is well supported by senior leaders and the governing body. The performance of the school is closely monitored and the leadership is accurate, if somewhat modest, in its assessment of the school's successes and areas to improve. Issues raised by the last inspection were tackled effectively. Challenging targets are used with great effect in helping pupils to attain well in tests at the end of all year groups. The headteacher's determination and purposeful leadership together with a strong staff team has successfully moved the school forward rapidly. Above average standards have been sustained for several years. Therefore, the school shows a good capacity to improve even further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Parents speak very highly of the good Foundation Stage provision. They note, too, how much their children love the staff and how very happy they are at school. Staff are extremely skilled at involving and engaging children in an exciting range of enticing activities such as preparing for, and enjoying, a party for a princess. Consequently, children achieve well and enter Year 1 with skills, knowledge and abilities that are above the levels normally expected. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding as the skilful Nursery and Reception staff ensure that children are becoming increasingly independent and confident learners who discuss, negotiate and help each other. The one area to improve is the outdoor area so that it provides as many stimulating learning opportunities as the indoor classes. Assessment is good and ensures that tasks are matched precisely to children's needs. Intervention to support both children and parents is swift and effective and demonstrates the outstanding level of care provided by the Foundation Stage staff.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more able pupils always have sufficiently challenging work.
- Make all aspects of the Foundation Stage outdoor learning environment as exciting and stimulating as the indoor classrooms.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2007 standards at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally high in mathematics. Achievement is good throughout the school and over the last few years Year 6 pupils have attained above average or exceptionally high standards in Key Stage 2 tests. Concerns about boys' writing throughout the school have been addressed through improved planning and teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as work is matched carefully to their needs and they receive effective additional help from staff. In most lessons, more able pupils are offered extra challenges which help them to make good progress. However, this is not always the case and on these occasions, more able pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English also make good progress because of effective, well-targeted support and a focus on ensuring pupils understand specific vocabulary

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The Christian ethos underpins the school's work and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, pupils learn to be thoughtful about themselves and others in a safe and happy environment. They enjoy their lessons and behave considerately, in response to teachers who model for them courtesy and kindness. They know how to keep themselves and others safe and healthy, and learn quickly to appreciate and understand others' feelings, beliefs and backgrounds. Not surprisingly, in such circumstances, attendance is good. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council plays a significant part by representing the views of others and thinking how to improve playtimes and the canteen décor for everybody's benefit. A substantial number of older pupils take on roles of genuine responsibility, by helping in the office, welcoming guests, acting as playground leaders or reading buddies. Senior leaders are ambitious and identify correctly that pupils could assume even more responsibility by being involved in pupil leadership programmes. In these ways, and on account of the good progress pupils make in basic skills, they are prepared well for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent which results in happy, purposeful classrooms. Teachers make lessons interesting, challenging and enjoyable with good use of humour. This results in pupils working hard to do their best. Staff are skilled at using interactive whiteboards to enliven lessons. Occasionally some teachers provide insufficient levels of challenge for more able pupils with work the same as everyone else. This restricts their

achievement. However, careful planning and well-targeted support for pupils who find learning difficult ensure that they make good progress and participate fully in activities. Support staff are highly effective at monitoring and supporting all pupils' learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum serves the needs of pupils well as shown by their good achievement. This is because of the well-planned emphasis on basic skills in English and mathematics and the wide range of activities on offer beyond the conventional curriculum, which pupils take up in large numbers and which enrich their education considerably. Most pupils are involved in sports clubs and, as a result of a good variety of healthy eating initiatives, are healthy and know how to stay fit. Reception children have their own mini gym equipment which provides very good opportunities to keep fit and have fun. Pupils' stunning artwork brightens the walls and high calibre music provision enhances pupils' learning. The school recognises that other foundation subjects require reviewing to establish links between them, and to give pupils further opportunities to develop their thinking and creativity. Excellent links with parents, outside agencies and the local church and the community enrich and enliven pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

One parent spoke for many in saying that, 'St Margaret's is a wonderfully caring school'. Pupils share that view and trust their teachers, and these excellent relationships are an important factor in developing pupils' confidence and ensuring their well-being. Safeguarding and risk assessment arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and where necessary, teachers intervene to offer well-planned and targeted support. Pupils have a good understanding of their current standards of work and what to do next to improve. They are encouraged to comment on their own work and that of their classmates, so that assessment is shared. On a small number of occasions, however, more able pupils are not always challenged by targets which would enable them to make better progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has successfully built on the good provision in the school and improved teaching, subject leadership and assessment even further. Together with the deputy headteacher she has also made significant strides forward in involving all staff much more in school improvement by enabling pupils' progress to be tracked precisely in all year groups. This ensures that any areas of potential underachievement are identified and intervention strategies quickly implemented. Subject leaders are fully involved in leading and developing their areas, which has accelerated the progress pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6. The school's self-evaluation is somewhat modest in terms of the overall judgements it has made but the improvement plan is focused precisely on what needs to be done. Senior leaders are currently correctly working on ensuring that more able pupils achieve well and reach even higher targets. Good improvements to curriculum planning and teaching have successfully raised standards in boys' writing throughout the school. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

11 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's CE Primary School, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7AP

It was a real treat for us to visit your school and we thank you for two very happy days. You go to a good school. That means that the staff not only take good care of you but also are successful at helping you to do your best and reach good standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

There are lots of great things about your school.

- You are very good at working hard, helping each other and listening to your teachers, and you do well in all your lessons.
- The staff care about you very much. They are good teachers and they make learning really interesting and fun, giving you many exciting things to do.
- Your headteacher and other staff are good at running the school and making sure you all have a happy and safe time and do really well.
- Anybody who needs extra help is always given it.
- You love learning new things and are good at behaving well and being kind to each other.
- For all these reasons, you make good progress.

Your headteacher and staff have lots of good ideas to make the school even better. We agree with them that it would be good to make sure those of you who find learning easy are given harder work to make you really think. We would also like them to make the outdoor Foundation Stage area as exciting as the indoor classes.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and behave well, and always being kind to each other.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead inspector



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Joyce Cox  
Lead inspector