

# St Margaret's, Collier Street Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118636
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313023
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tom Stevens
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Ryan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Collier Street Marden Tonbridge TN12 9RR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 730264
<b>Fax number</b>	01892 730264

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated differences in achievement between key stages and the impact of measures introduced by school leaders to improve the quality of provision. The inspector met with pupils, and some of the staff and governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This school is smaller than the average-size primary school. Pupils are all taught in mixed-age classes, although Years 5 and 6 are split by age for lessons in literacy and numeracy. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The largest numbers are for dyslexia, language and communication. Almost all of the pupils are White British.

## 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. A very satisfied parent explained that their daughter 'has had a fantastic time and has been given a great all-round education'. Pupils achieve well over the course of their time at the school. National test results for 2008 were not available at the time of the inspection, but results in 2007 were the equivalent of around two terms ahead of the national average. Current work continues to be of above average standard. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' broadly average starting points. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Those with dyslexia, delayed speech and language and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well because they benefit from good, well-targeted support, drawing well on help from outside agencies where this is needed. The success of able pupils is evident in the high proportion attaining the higher Level 5 in the national tests. The good progress that pupils make in their key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares them well for the next stage of their education and future working life.

Pupils have done less well in the assessments taken in Year 2. The school has given priority to developing children's enthusiasm for learning and their good personal development. In this it has been successful, turning out youngsters who are confident and keen learners. A significant contributory factor is the extra year that most Year 1 pupils spend following a curriculum that is similar to that for the Foundation Stage. Although they are taught in focused groups for some of the day, they also spend much of their time on activities they choose for themselves, alongside the Reception Year children. This pays dividends in terms of pupils' attitudes and aptitude for learning, so that they are equipped to make often rapid progress as they move through the school. It has meant, however, that they have made satisfactory rather than good academic progress in Key Stage 1 as measured in their Year 2 assessments.

Pupils do well through their time in school because they benefit from good teaching. Work is mostly matched well to the wide range of age and ability in each class, and lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace. Pupils work well together. They are attentive and keen to learn. One of the reasons pupils say they greatly enjoy school is because teachers 'make lessons fun so that you learn lots'. A good curriculum is enriched through a strong track record in music and sports, through visits and through a good range of after-school activities, in which many, mainly older pupils, take part. The school is increasingly bringing subjects together as topics that cross traditional subject boundaries. For example, topic work on 'water' incorporates elements of science, geography, literacy and ICT. However, teachers have sometimes relied too much on worksheets which limit pupils' opportunities to apply and extend their writing skills by recording their findings in their own words. Homework generally makes a good contribution to learning, but teachers do not always carry out the 'times tables' tests that pupils and their parents have been given to expect. Throughout the school, marking generally gives pupils good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, although teachers do not always ensure that pupils have read, followed and acted on their comments. Marking is mostly supplemented well through pupils' individual targets in English and mathematics, although those in pupils' books are not all kept up to date.

Pupils feel safe at school because they are looked after well. A parent explained aptly, 'The small size means that all staff know every child'. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils get on very well with each other almost all of the time, but there are rare occasions when they fall out. Some parents are unhappy with the way such incidents are dealt with. Others refer positively to the action taken to sort out disagreements, and pupils agree. Pupils know well how to keep

safe. They appreciate the need for a healthy diet and plenty of exercise; as part of their work on the life of a Tudor sailor, some of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 show an almost forensic understanding of the symptoms, causes and cure for scurvy. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, including, in Year 6, as 'buddies' helping the younger pupils. The school's partnership with a school in Malawi has helped to broaden pupils' horizons of life in the wider world. The pupils themselves raise funds for the Malawi school, as well as several local, national and international charities, and they play a very active role in the local community and the church. Attendance is average. The school has had some success in discouraging family holidays in term-time, but attendance rates were depressed this year by absences during a period when the local area was flooded.

In this well-run school, the headteacher, staff and governors have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and they are constantly striving for improvement. Attractive displays throughout the school celebrate pupils' work and contribute to the stimulating environment that helps motivate pupils to do well. The school has made good use of its budget surplus to invest in additional teaching and support staff to enable older pupils to be taught for some of the time in single-age groupings and to boost support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Its success in raising and maintaining high standards by the end of Year 6 shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They are helped to quickly settle in and they soon enjoy the rich mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities that make up their day. Facilities are good, including a well-equipped outdoor play area that is much improved since the last inspection. As a result of good teaching and support, the children make good progress so that most attain the early learning goals expected for the end of the Reception Year. They do least well in writing, where their Foundation Stage scores are below those expected.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils throughout the school all have good opportunities to use and develop their writing in subjects other than English and to record findings in their own words.
- Review the curriculum for Year 1 pupils to ensure that they are all equipped to make the rapid academic progress in Key Stage 1 that they make in Key Stage 2.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

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**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Tonbridge  
TN12 9RR

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. Some of you told me how much you enjoy all the fun things you get to do and learn about in school. I agree that yours is a good school. It is well run. The teaching is good and you do well by the time you leave, reaching high standards in the Year 6 tests. Results have not been as good in the Year 2 tests, and I have asked the school to look at the mix of activities for children, particularly in the younger classes. The Year 1 children develop lots of skills that stand them in good stead for later years and help them to make good progress further up the school, but I would like to see them equipped to show similarly good progress as measured in the Year 2 tests.

I was pleased to see how very well behaved you are and how you help and get on well with each other. Some of your parents told me of concerns about children falling out, but all the pupils I spoke to assured me that when problems arise, they are properly dealt with. Do make sure that if you ever have any worries, you make use of the playground 'buddies' and you tell one of your teachers. The school takes good care of you and it was good to see that all the children I spoke to had up-to-date individual targets, even though some of those written in your books had not been updated since the start of the year. You can always help at school by continuing to work hard to achieve your targets and by asking your teachers what you need to do to make your work even better.

I mentioned all the different activities that you get to do at school. Your work on all the topics is helping you to do well in English, mathematics and science. Sometimes, though, the worksheets that you fill in limit the chance for you to develop your writing skills by recording things in your own way. I could see from your work over the past year that this is already improving, but it is something I have asked teachers to keep an eye on so that, throughout the school, you all have every opportunity to develop your writing.

Best wishes, Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector