

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122785
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	314400
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie O'Boyle
Headteacher	Miss Christine Reilly
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Mildenhall Crescent Bestwood Park Nottingham NG5 5RS
Telephone number	0115 915 0296
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' standards and achievement by the end of Year 6; the school's evaluation of teaching and whether the academic support pupils receive helps them all to make progress. Evidence was gathered from the school's data, pupils' work, observations of teaching and school life, scrutiny of parental questionnaires, discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found 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 this report.

Description of the school

St Margaret Clitherow Primary School is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham. In the Foundation Stage, 11 children attend the Nursery and there are 16 children in Reception. Although most pupils are White British, a large proportion are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Asian, Caribbean and African backgrounds. English is spoken by most pupils but 14 are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school serves a diverse community which largely suffers significant social and economic disadvantages.

The school has met the Healthy Schools Standard in Physical Development and is working towards meeting the standard in Emotional and Behavioural Development. The school also has the International Schools Award at foundation level for its links with schools abroad and is now working towards intermediate level.

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 is a good school. It provides good value for money. The school's Catholic tradition is well-established in all of its work. This helps set a clear direction, which attaches great importance to the welfare and development of every individual. As a result, high expectations are solidly in place, promoting pupils' personal development and their achievement. The school's ethos has led to a number of strengths. In particular, the school has a clear vision of itself as a community, which is striving for all involved to participate fully. The good partnership with parents ensures there is consistency between school and home sustaining the high aspirations for each pupil. Parents' views are positive in regard to the quality of communication with school and their children's enjoyment and achievement. The good links with neighbouring schools and schools abroad serve well to widen pupils' learning opportunities. The morale of staff is high and their common sense of purpose means the focus stays sharp on pupils achieving well. Pupils really enjoy school and attend well. They value their friendships and develop a serious attitude to learning and to their progress.

Good leadership and the effective work of governors keep the school on a straight path to fulfilling its aims and sustaining ongoing improvement. As a result of good management, the school stays up-to-date and accurate in its evaluation of itself. The work of checking the strength of school provision and pupils' performance carried out by the senior leaders is systematic and rigorous. Subject leadership is effective in managing the curriculum and keeping it, and resources, up-to-date. However, it does not link these activities directly enough to their impact on pupils' results. There are plans for this to be improved in the school's next steps of development. The school improvement plan is solidly based on self-evaluation and is well-organised on what actions are required to achieve its development priorities. This gives the school a good capacity for further improvement.

Standards and pupils' achievement throughout school are good. The school sets challenging targets each year, which pupils mostly achieve. A significant proportion of pupils start Nursery below average in their development and make good progress here and in Reception. As a result, the large majority attain all of the early learning goals. Solidly good teaching and learning ensures pupils continue to make good progress across the whole school. Key Stage 1 assessments in 2006 showed standards were broadly average. Preliminary 2007 results show an improvement, particularly at higher levels in reading and mathematics. Standards in Key Stage 2 were above average in 2006. The 2007 results indicate a similar picture but with a strong performance by pupils in English, especially in reading.

Lessons are all well-planned. Teachers introduce work effectively by sharing with pupils what they are expected to learn. They are also consistent in rounding off each lesson by assessing with pupils what has been learnt. The use of targets is a strength of teaching. Targets are displayed prominently in classrooms and are fully discussed with pupils. Assessment is used effectively to set targets at the correct level of challenge and to focus on what pupils need to learn. This is especially good for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the increasing number whose first language is not English. All of these pupils are supported well in lessons and learn as effectively as others. Pupils enjoy many of their lessons and their own view is that while they would not consider all are very enjoyable, they appreciate the necessity nevertheless to concentrate and work hard.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The impact of the school's Christian outlook is very significant on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, as it suffuses so much of the work and routines of each day. Pupils are friendly, self-confident individuals who show a considerable regard for themselves and each other. They know about healthy lifestyles and make good decisions about what they eat and how to stay fit. Their behaviour is good and they are safety conscious. Pupils share the school's concern to eliminate bullying and racism and incidents rarely occur. Many give their support to others by being playground buddies and reading buddies, which is a part of their good contribution in school. Pupils also actively support charity by raising money for many causes. Together with the standards they achieve, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary education and beyond. The school makes good provision to support pupils in every way. There are many procedures to care, protect and keep them safe. However, while the school carries out the range of checks required to determine the suitability of staff and others to work with children, this information is not compiled, as required, in a single record for ease of verification. There are good links with support agencies providing specialist support where pupils have additional needs, such as when learning to speak English. Helpfully, there are prominent displays in classrooms of key words in the languages pupils speak. Pupils are guided and supported effectively in making progress. Good assessment means teachers know pupils well. Pupils are given useful advice when teachers mark their work and are helped by their targets.

The curriculum is planned well to extend pupils skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Planning and continual development of learning opportunities ensure the needs of different groups of pupils are met. Links with secondary schools give the more able pupils good opportunities for new challenges. Good provision for personal, social and health education, 'Our Time' in particular, gives pupils opportunities to develop skills to resolve conflict and relate positively to others. Arrangements for modern foreign languages, sports and the arts enrich the curriculum. Provision for instrumental music tuition, in which a good number of pupils take a serious interest, is particularly strong.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good and many parents are pleased with it and with their children's progress. Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception class, engaging well with each other and the wide range of activities provided. Teachers and their assistants work together effectively because their assessments accurately identify where children need particular opportunities, encouragement and support. The Nursery and Reception classrooms are well-resourced for indoor and outdoor play, exploration and learning. Teaching is good and the expectations of children are high. Activities are well-planned to ensure each early learning goal is incorporated as far as possible into children's work. In the Nursery, children have good opportunities to work with each other and develop the skills of speaking, writing and counting. This is built upon well in Reception through expert teaching where, in particular, children's literacy skills are promoted effectively. By the end of Reception, most children have achieved the levels expected and a good number exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen subject leaders role by improving their monitoring and evaluation so that they increase their understanding of the impact of their work on pupils' standards.
- Meet the requirement of maintaining a single central record for safeguarding children.

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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?	2
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 ¹ 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?	1
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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 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?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Bestwood Park, Nottingham NG5 5RS

I really appreciated the warm welcome and kindness I received from you when I visited your school for its inspection. I also would like to thank the members of the school council for sharing their views of your school.

I think you have a good school. You are all making good progress and the standards you are achieving by the end of Year 6 are often above average. This is the result of your willingness to work hard. Of course, your teachers and all of the staff play an important part in this as well. The lessons I saw were all good and the staff are determined that you will be successful. Your school is doing well in giving you a wide choice of activities you can enjoy. I was impressed by the music, foreign languages and sports, although I am sure there is more that is as good.

I think staff know well how to bring out the best in you and you are developing exceptionally well as young people. Your behaviour is good; you look after your health and stay safe. What is more, you are generous towards each other and people who are less fortunate. In all, you are extremely well prepared for secondary school and the future.

Your headteacher is to be congratulated for ensuring that you are getting a good education. She has a clear idea of what needs improving and she listens closely to your views and those of your parents. I agree with her that teachers with responsibilities for subjects need to share more in developing ways of raising your standards even higher.

I have asked your headteacher to make sure the records on all the people the school employs are up-to-date.

Many thanks for all your help and I wish you well for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector