

St Margaret's CofE (C) Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124268
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314867
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Dutton
Headteacher	Andrew Black
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Knutton Road Wolstanton Newcastle ST5 0HU
Telephone number	01782 297760
Fax number	01782 297764

Age group	7-11
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Inspection number	314867

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

whether the good progress in 2007 has been sustained, and whether this progress varies between different groups of pupils

the quality of teaching and the guidance given in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils and supporting their progress

the effectiveness of school leaders in driving improvements in pupils' performance.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of school data, the previous inspection report, pupils' work, parent questionnaires, school policies, monitoring reports, and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with pupils, senior staff, governors and the local authority link adviser. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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 this report.

Description of the school

St Margaret's is larger than most junior schools. There are low levels of learning difficulties and few pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British. The school has set up voluntarily run before- and after-school provision for pupils aged 4 to 11, and this includes pupils from the local infant school.

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 is a good school. Pupils achieve well academically, and standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Their personal development is outstanding. The school is a vibrant, purposeful and very happy learning environment where pupils thrive. These successes are due to good quality teaching, an outstanding curriculum with a wide range of additional activities, and good care and guidance. Effective leadership ensures that the school keeps improving. Pupils of all abilities and in all age groups, including those who need extra support with their learning, make good overall progress but do particularly well in information and communication technology (ICT) and a number of other subjects, especially in the arts and sports. The school is full of stunning displays of pupils' work, showing their talents in a wealth of areas including art, writing, history and geography.

Pupils clearly enjoy school enormously, as reflected by one pupil commenting, 'I love school because I like all my teacher does with us.' This is evident in their outstanding attendance, very positive attitudes to learning and exceptionally high uptake of after-school clubs and other events. Pupils behave and act very safely. Behaviour in most lessons is excellent, although a small minority of pupils occasionally disrupt learning, usually when the lesson lacks sufficient challenge. Nevertheless, behaviour has improved recently, there are almost no unsafe or unkind incidents and bullying is very rare. Activities to promote the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives pervade much of the work of the school, and their success is evident in pupils' empathy towards others and considerable care for their environment. Parents are very positive about the school. One typically commented, 'I believe the school makes every effort for the children to have fun whilst learning which is why my children are enjoying the process!' Parents particularly appreciate the care provided, the wealth of extra-curricular activities and the progress their children are making. Pupils consider the additional projects and activities – 24 so far this term – a major part of their school experience and 85 of them belong to the school choir.

Lessons are usually fast paced, active and engaging. Pupils are successfully encouraged to learn for themselves, work well with others and understand what they must do to improve. Pupils are highly motivated by the interesting activities and relish the opportunity to show how well they have done. For example, in one inspiring lesson about Ancient Egypt, pupils were very keen to take up the challenge of discovering what different objects told them about life in those times. They then took great pleasure in the success of their classmates in making the right decisions. However, this high quality of teaching and learning is not seen in all lessons. As a result the rate of progress varies, and in the key subjects of English and mathematics it is satisfactory rather than good for a minority of pupils.

The headteacher has been effective in directing many improvements in systems and in developing leaders at all levels. There are now well developed procedures for monitoring the progress of groups and individuals, setting them challenging targets and providing timely support and guidance for those falling behind. The result is that staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and senior leaders have accurately identified key areas for development. This has led to recent improvements in science, writing, mathematics and reading as well as sustaining the good progress and raised standards evident in 2007. The capacity to continue improving is good. Nevertheless, school leaders have rightly recognised that in practice, assessment does not always identify pupils' specific skills precisely enough. This means that occasionally lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for some pupils and their learning slows as a result. The rich curriculum supports pupils exceptionally well in their understanding of how to lead safe

and healthy lives. Many of them have increased the amount of exercise they take and the line dancing club, for example, is full of happy energetic pupils having fun whilst keeping fit. School lunches are of a high quality and pupils are keen to make sure that they eat enough fruit and vegetables.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are robust. When pupils join or leave the school, procedures are exceptional in the extent to which they help prepare pupils to continue their learning effectively. In addition, the school works very effectively with other agencies, schools and organisations to support pupils' progress and their personal development and well-being. This ensures that they are able to make the most of their time in the school, building on their particular skills and regardless of any difficulties they may have. The resulting extensive array of opportunities enables pupils to grow in confidence, become highly active members of their community and make an outstanding contribution. They show a very mature sense of responsibility and clearly relish the opportunity to represent the school, set up projects to protect the environment or plan highly professional presentations using their ICT and performance skills. The youngest pupils make a significant contribution. For example, Year 4 organised a football club complete with coaches and referees in the spring. All of this adds up to an excellent preparation for pupils' future schooling and careers by giving them an enthusiasm for learning and self-confidence in their abilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all pupils are helped to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Improve the use of assessment in identifying pupils' needs more precisely so that every lesson provides a suitable level of challenge to all pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	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?	1
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?	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 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's CofE Junior School, Wolstanton, ST5 0HU

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a lively and happy atmosphere. It is a good school, with many excellent things going on, just as you described. Good teaching helps you to make at least good progress in your lessons, and outstanding progress in your social and personal skills. You do exceptionally well in information and communication technology, art, music and sport.

Staff and governors work hard to keep improving the school. For this reason, the standards you reach remain high. I have, however, asked them to make sure that more of you make good progress in English and mathematics by seeking to make more lessons as good as the best. I have also asked them to assess your skills more accurately to ensure that lessons provide all of you with sufficient challenge. I am sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and doing your best to reach your targets.

Your teachers see to it that you have an outstanding range of activities to help you develop strong confidence, independence and creative talents. You were keen to tell me that the school also keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating such a healthy diet. Your behaviour is also good, especially in the way you value learning.

I am also impressed with the responsibilities that you take on within the school and how much help you give to others. You clearly really enjoy coming to school. All these things, together with your high quality basic skills and excellent skills in working together, will help prepare you very well for your next school and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary Lead inspector