

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100170
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	323238
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	293
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sian Stringer
Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Lunnon
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Margaret's Grove Plumstead London SE18 7RL
Telephone number	020 8854 3924

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2009
Inspection number	323238

Fax number

020 8854 4403

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. Two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a much higher-than-average proportion. The largest group has Black African heritage. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than average. More pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or statements of special educational need, mostly for speech and language delay, communication issues or autistic spectrum disorders. The Early Years Foundation Stage has 65 full-time equivalent places for children aged 3-5. The school is part of an extended schools cluster that coordinates a range of provision in the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Margaret's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and staff create a caring Christian ethos which is reflected in pupils' good personal development. Parents are strongly supportive. As one commented, typically, 'My child goes to school happy and comes out very happy.'

Achievement is satisfactory overall but presents a mixed picture. From children's individual starting points, progress is variable. It is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Standards in 2008 in Year 6 were below average in English and mathematics and they were average in science. Pupils learning English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because support for their learning needs in the classroom is effective.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. A range of systems is in place for assessing ability, logging performance data, measuring progress and setting targets for improvement. However, the information is not fully used or understood by some of the school's managers and teachers. Targets are not consistently shared with pupils, or reviewed regularly enough, so that pupils sometimes find it hard to understand how to make progress. Consequently, too many of the 2008 Year 6 pupils had not made the progress that was expected of them over the four years of Key Stage 2. Pastoral care is good throughout the school. It is this which underpins pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and say they feel happy and safe. They know how to stay healthy, and take part in the good opportunities for exercise which are provided at school and in the group of schools that link together to provide additional clubs and services. They particularly value the good relationships they have with adults and fellow pupils. They are self-confident learners, keen to participate in the clubs and activities offered.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and supplemented by a suitable range of additional activities. Good cross-curricular projects have very recently been introduced. Although it is too soon to assess their impact on standards, they are strengthening links with the community, and improving pupils' personal development. The structured approach to teaching the core subjects of English, mathematics and science relies too heavily on worksheets, restricting opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and creativity. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good. A strength of the best lessons is the skilful management of teaching assistants to lead small groups of pupils. This is a successful catalyst for progress for those with learning needs. However, at other times teaching assistants are not managed well and in these lessons individual needs are not met well enough, pupils' attention falters and progress slows.

Satisfactory leadership and management have secured a happy school with a strong Christian ethos. The headteacher and the senior team work well together, but the contribution of managers to school improvement is inconsistent because of their variable experience of whole-school matters. Governance is good. Taking this into account, along with the suitable action taken to deal with the issues of the last inspection, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly in linking sounds to letters and calculations. The majority make satisfactory progress but enter Year 1 with standards that are still below expectations, although their standards in personal, creative and physical development are broadly as expected. A suitable curriculum and satisfactory teaching assist the children to learn and develop steadily in all the areas of learning. An appropriate variety of indoor and outdoor activities, and opportunities during adult-led and child-initiated activities, reinforces and extends their learning in relevant and meaningful ways. For instance, Reception children were inspired by the variety of learning activities they chose themselves, including a water activity carefully planned to develop their understanding of money and number. At the end of these activities the teacher brought them together and reinforced their learning well. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, weaknesses in the baseline data (checks made on children's skills and abilities when they start) mean staff do not have a clear enough understanding of individuals' starting points. As a result, it is difficult for the adults to ensure that each child is making the best possible progress in different areas of learning. Staff have developed good partnerships with parents and other groups, and they are enthusiastic and caring. They pay suitable attention to the children's welfare, and help children understand the need for good hygiene and healthy eating. As a result, children enjoy their happy and secure environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the baseline data in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the checking of children's progress.
- Develop the skills and abilities of managers at all levels to increase their effectiveness in promoting school improvement.
- Accelerate progress in English and mathematics by:
 - reducing the reliance on worksheets so that pupils' thinking skills can develop faster
 - using teaching assistants' skills more consistently.
- Use data on pupils' progress to identify the next steps for improvement, and share these more frequently and consistently with pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2008 Year 2 achieved well. Standards were above average in reading, writing and mathematics, showing the impact of successful intervention strategies such as the introduction of a special reading programme. Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 has slowed since the last inspection. As a result, achievement is not as good as it was then but is satisfactory overall. From starting points that are often below expectations, pupils' results in national tests for Year 6 in 2008 were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Too many of the cohort did not make the expected progress over the three subjects. Because of this, in 2008 the school did not meet its targets for English and mathematics. One of the reasons for the dip in standards

is that assessment information was not used effectively to promote progress. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils throughout the school are currently making satisfactory progress, regardless of gender or background. Those with learning needs do well compared with their peers nationally. Other groups make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop within the school's strong Christian ethos into mature and confident individuals who are proud of their school community. As a result their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy coming to school. They develop their sense of responsibility through effective class and school councils and other posts, such as playground 'buddies' helping younger children. Pupils have a clear understanding of the wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds of other pupils and the wider community. They appreciate the need for a healthy diet and exercise. Pupils feel safe, and describe the school as a friendly place. They say that if they have a problem, they are confident that staff will help. They feel listened to and able to influence decisions. Behaviour is generally good. Steady progress in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) alongside their good personal skills prepares pupils satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan their lessons carefully and know their pupils' needs well. A key feature of all lessons is the patient support and encouragement given to those having difficulty with their tasks. This encourages confidence and contributes to pupils' well-developed personal skills. The best lessons offer a brisk pace and a variety of tasks to invigorate learning. These lessons combine individual, paired and group work, matched to different pupils' abilities, and assist them to make good progress. Most teachers show good subject knowledge and, where this is the case, they make best use of resources. A good example of this was in a mixed Year 3/4 literacy lesson, where the interactive whiteboard was used to very good effect to support learning. However, too many other lessons rely on worksheets as the main resource. In some lessons support staff are not used well, and pupils are required to listen for too long, having little opportunity to explore and discuss their own ideas. In these lessons attention drifts and progress slows. Teachers' marking, whether verbal or written, is variable. The best is positive and explains to pupils how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum includes all the required subjects and meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily. However, planning in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) does not allow for pupils to develop their thinking skills and creativity effectively. ICT skills are starting to be used across other subjects, although available computers are not always well deployed in classrooms. The range of activities outside of lesson time, such as clubs, visits and visitors, supports pupils' good personal development as well as their academic achievement. The impact of the recent introduction of cross-curricular themes is not yet evident in rising standards, but is making

learning more relevant and is generating more enthusiasm. The work on Bully Richard, for example, successfully links subjects, personal development and work in the community. The well-established programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship helps prepare pupils for making informed choices about their own safety and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Staff carefully foster an ethos of consideration and respect in keeping with the school's Christian foundation and, in consequence, pupils feel safe and happy in school. The school meets requirements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, for example through its arrangements for child protection, health and safety and recruitment. While pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, they were not always reminded of the need to take care during a physical education lesson observed. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that pupils attend school. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall, but the available information is not used consistently by middle managers and teachers. Pupils are not always clear how to improve their work because the process of setting targets is not well established.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides the lead in promoting and sustaining the caring ethos of the school, and this underpins pupils' good personal development and enjoyment of school. Satisfactory leadership ensures that each individual is included in everything on offer, and the leadership team has carefully assessed the impact of its good work to promote community cohesion. This is well developed so that pupils talk knowledgeably about the many ethnicities and faiths within the school and in the local community. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. While the school's judgements on achievement and standards are accurate, managers had not identified the underlying reasons for its satisfactory performance and had overvalued the quality of its provision. Some managers are new to their roles and not all understand and share the information the school gathers to help pupils make progress, or how they can contribute to school improvement. Targets are challenging, but they are used inconsistently to promote improvements in standards. The use of resources, including staff and ICT, is satisfactory. Governance is good. Governors manage finances efficiently and provide good support for the work of the staff. There are warm links with parents, who are extremely supportive of the headteacher and the school. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, so that monitoring systems have improved. In view of this, and the willingness of all staff to work together, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

03 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, London, SE18 7RL

The inspectors who visited your school recently want to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. We really enjoyed the days we spent with you.

Your parents are pleased with the way all the adults in your school look after you. We agree that this is good. We were glad to see that you really enjoy school. We especially liked the way you all get on with each other and with the adults. You have a sensible attitude to school and to your work. You behave well and you pay attention in most lessons and try hard. All of this is helping you to make progress. All of you are making at least satisfactory progress now, and some of you are doing as well as pupils in the rest of the country by the time you leave.

The teachers play their part. They give you lots of help and encouragement. The work they give you is helping all of you to learn. The Bully Richard CD sounds great! You enjoy the after school clubs that help you learn still more and let you get plenty of exercise.

You go to a satisfactory school. This means that some things are good and other things need to improve. The adults in charge of the school are helping you in lots of ways to have the sort of education you need. We have suggested some ways in which the school could be even better.

First, we have asked teachers and managers to make better checks to see what each one of you can do when you start school, so that it is easier to see how well you are doing. Some of the teachers who have managing responsibilities in your school have not been doing it for very long, so we have asked the school to give them a bit more training to help them. We have asked the school to make sure that they help you to make as much progress as possible in English and mathematics, because those are the basic skills you need for your future lives. One of the ways they can do this is by helping you to know what you need to do to improve, and by asking you to think a bit more in your work. We have asked for all the adults to help you as much as they can.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to try your hardest, so that you do as well as you possibly can.

With best wishes for the future,

Yours faithfully

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector