

St Margaret Marys RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105533
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	324238
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Dunne

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)	272
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	Rev Canon K O'Connor
Headteacher	Mrs Janina Chinnery
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Margaret's Road New Moston Manchester Lancashire M40 0JE

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Inspection number	324238

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds with a significant number from areas of some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the combined Nursery and Reception class. The school has received a number of awards including, Arts Mark, the Manchester Inclusion Award, Activemark, Healthy Schools Award and the International Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Following its last inspection in 2006, the school was judged to be providing a satisfactory education. Since then, standards have declined and pupils' achievements have been significantly lower than they should have been for three consecutive years in English, mathematics and science.

Standards are exceptionally low for the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1. Long term teacher absences in Years 1 and 2 have undoubtedly created difficulties, but leaders have not managed these effectively over an extended period. Managers have not ensured that accurate records have been kept of what pupils have learned and where the gaps are in their knowledge and understanding. Too much of the teaching in Key Stage 1 is inadequate because it repeats work that pupils already understand and planned activities do not meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. In the weakest lessons pupils do not enjoy their work; they become bored and this leads to low level disruption that interferes with learning.

Teaching is better in Key Stage 2. Lessons are more interesting, there are good relationships and pupils enjoy working. Despite this, pupils have underachieved for a sustained period. This is due, in part, to leaders' inaccurate self-evaluation. The last inspection provided clear indicators on what the school needed to do to improve. However, leaders and managers, including governors, have failed to deal with these issues quickly enough and there has been an insufficient focus on raising standards. Systems for checking how well pupils are doing, and identifying the next steps in their learning to meet their targets, are not rigorous enough. As a result, teachers are unable to identify the root causes of pupils' underachievement. Coupled with inconsistencies in marking, this means that pupils receive insufficient guidance as to how to improve their work.

A significant number of parents expressed concern about the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. These concerns are well founded.

During the past year, with support from the local authority, leaders and managers have begun to deal with weaknesses. The measures being implemented are at an early stage and are only just beginning to show a positive impact in some areas.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in the curriculum at Key Stage 1 which result from some inadequacies in the quality of teaching of different subjects at this key stage. However, there are some curriculum strengths throughout the school. Notably these include the quality of performing arts, enrichment activities, regular trips, visits and extra-curricular events, which pupils say they particularly enjoy. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. Attendance is improving. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, mostly enjoy school, and involve themselves well in the school council, fundraising for charities and community activities. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. A wide range of physical education activities and nutritious food choices all contribute effectively to pupils' healthy life styles. Weaknesses in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills mean they are not well prepared for their next schools.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy good relationships. They are well cared for and know where to seek help if they need it. However, academic guidance has been inadequate for too long and this hampers progress.

Inadequate progress has been made in dealing with the issues from the last inspection and leaders and managers have been ineffective in dealing with significant underachievement for an extended period. Because of this, the school is not demonstrating sufficient capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception years and most enter Year 1 with skills which are at or above the expected levels in their personal development, language and literacy and mathematical development. This good progress is made as a result of good teaching which caters well for the differing needs of children. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle happily, adapt well to routines and gain independence. Parents are welcomed and appreciate the 15 minutes each morning when they can stay and share with staff what children have done and learned. Children are taught how to keep healthy and safe, for example, through a range of input from external visitors. The children enjoy the stimulating activities provided both inside and outdoors, such as planting and watering sunflower seeds and biscuit making. The children have access to a suitable range of outside activities which cover all areas of learning. However, the layout of the outdoor area means that children do not have continuous access to the outdoor spaces. Children are well cared for in a secure learning environment, show good attitudes and behave well. All the welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. All adults form a closely knit team who work and plan effectively together. An example is the way that staff frequently meet to discuss and record progress in children's personal diaries and plan effectively for the next stage of each child's development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress by setting more rigorous targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards them.
- Improve guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.
- Improve the accuracy of school self-evaluation by leaders and managers in order to take more effective action to tackle weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. They join Year 1 with above average knowledge and understanding. From this good starting point, their progress slows due to too much inadequate teaching. Consequently, significant numbers of pupils fail to make the expected rate of progress or, in some cases, regress. This has resulted in a trend of declining and now significantly low standards in Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 test results show that, although standards have remained broadly average, pupils have made inadequate progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and science for the past three years. Assessment information is not used well

enough in lessons to match pupils' work to their individual needs. There are newly introduced systems for identifying and remedying underachievement. However, the impact of these strategies is only just beginning to be seen. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, those with English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

With the exception of some Key Stage 1 lessons, most pupils enjoy school and the interesting range of clubs, visits and visitors which develop their social skills well. Spiritual and moral development are good due to the moving and thought-provoking assemblies and frequent opportunities for reflection in lessons. Pupils learn effectively how to show concern and respect for others and about cultural and social diversity through well-planned lessons. As a result, their social development and understanding of other cultures are also good. There is a friendly and harmonious atmosphere in the school and pupils generally work and play together well. Behaviour is good around school and in most lessons. The school has improved attendance which is now close to the national average. Pupils are proud of their roles on the school council and sports committee and are pleased that they have had a big influence on the decisions to choose the new playground equipment and friendship benches. They willingly take on day-to-day responsibilities as buddies and playground pals and say this has helped improve behaviour outdoors. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay fit and healthy. The healthy lunchtime food choices and the good range of sporting activities along with the daily wake and shake up contribute well to this. Pupils engage in a wide variety of community and charity fund-raising activities. For example, pupils provided 23 backpacks to developing countries and this contributes well to their understanding of cultures around the world. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being and their next stage of education is inadequate because their academic skills are not sufficiently developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate overall. Teaching is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 lessons, the pace and levels of challenge are considerably higher than those seen in most lessons in Key Stage 1. However, in too many lessons, teachers do not match activities well enough to pupils' individual needs because they are not clear about what these needs are. Progress is not monitored rigorously enough and teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information to build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result pupils do not make enough progress in their learning, especially in Key Stage 1. Whilst the school successfully identifies pupils' additional needs, many teachers do not modify their lessons to meet these needs adequately. Pupils are given few opportunities to assess how well they are doing. Although there is a new marking policy, most teachers are not using it and so pupils are not clear about what they have to do to improve their work. In most lessons relationships are good and praise is used well to celebrate pupils' successes and boost their confidence and self-esteem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and has some good features. Curriculum plans are undergoing an overhaul and teachers are beginning to link literacy with other subjects to give pupils extended opportunities for improving writing skills. Because this is recently introduced, it is too soon to gauge its effectiveness in improving outcomes. However, there is some evidence that changes to make the curriculum more appealing to boys in Year 3 are beginning to remedy their previous significant underachievement in Key Stage 1. Lessons are enriched by visits, workshops and events. Pupils value and participate well in the many extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities available. The strength in the school's provision for the performing arts has deservedly enabled it to gain the Artsmark award. Pupils have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language. The curriculum is generally balanced. However, in Key Stage 1 the curriculum is not planned cohesively, partly because of the large number of temporary teachers over an extended time. This is contributing to the inadequate progress pupils make in this key stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The school provides a happy and welcoming environment. Relationships are good and staff provide good levels of care for all pupils. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Instances of bullying and racism are rare and any occurrences are quickly dealt with. Pupils are confident that there is always someone who will deal with any worries or concerns. Academic guidance is inadequate. Recently introduced systems to check on pupils' progress are giving teachers a better understanding of weaknesses in learning. Teachers are beginning to adapt their planning accordingly. However, it is too early to see the impact of these improvements on pupils' achievements. Targets are too often set for groups rather than being sharply focused on individual needs and so are not providing sufficient challenge for all pupils. Inconsistencies in teachers' marking and pupils' self-assessment give pupils inadequate guidance and insufficient understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and well supported by committed teaching assistants, with extra help from outside agencies as appropriate. However, like other pupils, they do not make the progress they should, because in lessons, work is not matched or adapted to their specific needs. Systems for safeguarding, child protection and health and safety meet current statutory requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leaders and managers have been successful in improving attendance and creating a happy school where pupils behave well. Senior leaders have been too slow in identifying the reasons for significant underachievement and weaknesses in provision. They have only recently begun to put in place measures for dealing with many of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. For example, weaknesses identified in 2006 in pupils' understanding of targets and in giving guidance on how to improve their work are only just being dealt with. This is a key reason why there has been significant underachievement for the past three years. Leaders have had to deal with difficulties created by extended staff absences, particularly in

Key Stage 1. However, they have failed to manage these effectively. As a result, there is still too much inadequate teaching and learning for children in Years 1 and 2 and this is significantly hindering their progress. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate because insufficient account is taken of the impact of the curriculum, teaching and assessment on pupils' learning. Leaders and managers do not monitor or evaluate the quality of learning effectively enough or ensure that pupils receive adequate guidance as to how to improve their work and so pupils do not have a clear enough picture of what they need to do to progress and so are not meeting their targets.

Leaders have created a harmonious school community. They teach pupils well about global issues and have an understanding of, and engage with, local needs. Therefore, the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The underachievement of boys is beginning to be tackled effectively. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination are satisfactory in relation to this and in the care and support given to all groups.

The governors are committed, visit the school regularly and are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. However, they have failed to challenge the school sufficiently and to hold leaders to account to secure improvement.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
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	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
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?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently. Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. It is good that you enjoy school and appreciate the many activities the school puts on for you. You know why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and we were pleased to see that you try to do your best for your teachers. You are growing up to be very sensible young people with a lot of self-confidence. Nearly all of you attend well and come to school on time. You behave well and are kind to one another in lessons and in the playground. Everyone in the school cares for you and looks after you well.

It is our judgement that your school needs extra help to give you a good education. For this reason the school requires 'special measures', which means that your leaders and governors will get additional support to improve the school for you. Inspectors will return to check that the school is doing the best it can.

In particular they will check that:

- you are making better progress in English, mathematics and science
- your lessons are improving
- teachers are helping you make better progress towards your targets by checking more regularly how well you are doing
- you are receiving guidance on how to improve your work
- leaders are checking regularly how well the school is doing in order to make it better for you.

All the best for the future!