

## St Margaret Ward Catholic Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106359
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	324379
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janette Corlett

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	223
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Anne Risdon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Ratchford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cherry Lane Sale Cheshire M33 4GY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 9699852
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 9123663

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1; the consistency in the quality of teaching; and the effectiveness of leadership in promoting community cohesion. Evidence was collected from national published data, the school's own assessment and evaluation records, observations of lessons, pupils' completed work and interviews with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. The views of parents were also taken into account through the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but, on the whole, inspectors 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

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a diverse and widespread community in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Around one quarter of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is slightly above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school provides education for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has achieved a variety of awards including Activemark, Artsmark, Healthy School Status and the International School Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which takes exceptionally good care of its pupils and promotes their excellent personal development and well-being. Pupils quickly settle into the school's warm environment and become confident and happy learners. By the time they leave the school, pupils are very well equipped to begin the next phase in their education. Parents really appreciate this, and speak highly of the friendly and approachable staff, good levels of communication and the way in which any concerns they may have are dealt with courteously and sensitively. The school actively promotes the inclusion of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, learners treat one another with great respect and their behaviour is exemplary in all aspects of school life. They have very positive attitudes to learning and take their responsibilities in school very seriously. Attendance is above average because pupils love coming to school, where they feel safe and know that staff are always willing to listen and offer help when it is needed.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally high. From low starting points, a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes is followed by good progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. With these secure basic skills, pupils are well equipped to make very rapid progress in Key Stage 2, and their achievement is outstanding.

These very high standards are reached because the quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers use a wide variety of approaches to support learning effectively, recognising that children learn in many different ways. Lessons are stimulating and constantly challenge pupils to develop their thinking. Pupils have ample opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening and frequently use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well as a result of the good quality support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and frequently make written suggestions as to how pupils can improve their work, indicating the next steps in their learning. Older pupils are encouraged to assess their own progress against challenging targets. This helps them to develop as independent learners. Pupils identified as being gifted or talented receive appropriate levels of challenge in lessons to ensure they can develop their academic skills and are encouraged to pursue their interests through a wide range of enrichment activities. The school's strong links with Manchester University support pupils and their families in building high aspirations for their future in education and life. As a result, pupils have high self-esteem and know that if they continue to work hard, they can achieve success in adult life.

The school offers an excellent curriculum which meets the needs of all groups of learners. Teachers are skilled in linking together areas of learning so that pupils have ample opportunities to enjoy practising their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics while learning about other subjects. For example, pupils learned about using sound patterns in writing poetry through creating a musical accompaniment to a 'nonsense' poem. The curriculum is enriched through a broad range of outside visits and visitors to the school, and pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of after-school clubs. Pupils participate in many physical and sporting activities. This, together with the school's promotion of the importance of eating a well-balanced diet, supports them in developing a healthy lifestyle. Displays around the school show the high quality of

pupils' art work. Many pupils take part in the school choir and this gives them the opportunity to contribute to the local community and to meet with pupils from diverse social and cultural backgrounds when they perform jointly with other schools in the area.

Community cohesion is effectively promoted through the school's strong links with the parish and local community, including the emergency services. Pupils support a range of local and national charities through the regular fundraising events they help to organise. They exchange emails with pupils in a Ugandan school. All this helps pupils learn to value cultural diversity and to respect those with beliefs and values which may differ from their own. The school day provides many opportunities for quiet spiritual reflection which help pupils to develop their excellent understanding of moral values and of their responsibilities as future citizens in the world-wide community.

Leadership and management are outstanding. With strong direction from the headteacher, school leaders at all levels have developed a school-wide culture of high expectations for every pupil. They have embedded robust systems to ensure that pupils who may not be making quite as much progress as they should are swiftly supported and can move on in their learning. Challenging targets are set and achieved or exceeded, and this is demonstrated in the improvements to pupils' writing since the last inspection. Current statutory safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Equality of opportunity is threaded through every aspect of the school's work; pupils know that they are each special and valued for the unique contributions they make to the school community. School governors are well informed and involved in the life of the school. They have supported school leaders in providing excellent value for money and developing the school's outstanding capacity to continue to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected of youngsters of this age. Staff provide good quality teaching and care which results in children making good progress. There is much emphasis on communication and cooperation, and this is shown in the support that the children give to each other. Children's improvement in the use of spoken language is good, and this is because adults work hard to encourage them to develop good skills in speaking and listening. Teachers' planning for learning outside the classroom is not quite as good as it is for indoor activities and this sometimes limits children's opportunities to continue their learning outdoors. Procedures for assessment, including regular observations of children's learning, are well established in the daily routines. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are currently shared by school senior leaders due to unforeseen staffing changes beyond the control of the school. They have acted effectively to ensure that there is no disruption to children's welfare and learning until the new leader is able to take up her responsibilities during the autumn term. Adults respond sensitively to children's contributions, linking the areas of learning in an interesting and stimulating way. From their earliest days in school, children are supported in making informed decisions and choosing resources to work with. Adults are always there to help but give children frequent opportunities to decide the direction of their learning. As a result, children learn to be confident and independent learners. They are able to take risks without being unnecessarily fearful and just love playing and learning together in this warm, secure and happy environment.

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

- Improve teachers' planning for all areas of learning in the outdoor environment to ensure that children are able to make as much progress outdoors as they do in the classroom.

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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?	1
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	1

### 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?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

Thank you all for giving us such a warm welcome to your school when my colleague and I came to inspect it. You were all exceptionally polite and helpful, and we really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the fun you have in school. A special thank you to the members of the school council and the group of older pupils who gave up your lunch break to talk to us.

Your school is outstanding. That means that it is one of the best in the country and you are right to be so proud of it. You make very good progress in your lessons and behave exceptionally well. This means that you are very well prepared to move on to secondary school by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Your teachers work very hard to make learning exciting and fun. You told us how much you enjoy the visits and clubs they arrange, and that they are all friendly and kind. You also said that they are always willing to give you extra support if you find things difficult, and that no one ever feels bad about having to ask for help.

One of the jobs inspectors have to do is to try and find things which might make your school even better. St Margaret Ward is already a wonderful school but there is one thing I found that could make it even better. The opportunities for the little ones in the Nursery and Reception classes to learn outdoors are not quite as good as they are indoors and I have asked your teachers to improve this.

All the adults in your school put you at the very centre of everything they do and make it a wonderful place for you to learn and play. Each one of you is very special to them, and I am sure that you will all do very well in the future. Please continue to help them by listening to their suggestions and paying careful attention to their comments on your written work. Each one of you has a very important contribution to make in the future. I wish you all the very best of luck.