

St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118708
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	326877
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Pickles

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	206
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	Gary Colville
Headteacher	Jennifer Faik
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	King Street Rochester ME1 1YF
Telephone number	01634 843843
Fax number	01634 310067

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Margaret's at Troy Town is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average, the largest minority group being of Asian heritage. A well above average proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, predominantly for moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is in line with the national average. The levels of pupil mobility are in line with the national average but have been increasing in recent years.

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 at Troy Town is a satisfactory school. It has a number of good features. The school promotes a strong Christian ethos, whilst valuing the diversity of its local community. As a result, pupils behave well, treat each other with respect and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. The school has strong links with the church and other faiths within the community. These support pupils' good spiritual and moral development. The local area is used well to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils are encouraged to lead safe, healthy lifestyles and, as a result of this, the school has gained the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their satisfactory attendance. As one parent said, 'My child is very happy and the environment is friendly and supportive.'

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff work well together to meet the needs of the children through a rich curriculum. Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below national expectations and most of the recent group reached nationally expected goals by the time they joined Year 1. This is because the school accurately identifies children's needs and provides effective support. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6, leading to standards that are broadly average. There was some underachievement in Years 3 and 4 in the last academic year and the school has taken action to address this. The increasing mobility within the school is managed well so that pupils who join St Margaret's partway through their primary education make similar progress to those who spend all their time at the school. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, pupils are challenged through interesting activities, and assessment is used to ensure learning is matched to the needs of all pupils. However, in some lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to be actively involved in their learning and the pace is too slow. Marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve their work. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented.

Pupils participate in various activities within the wider community and this supports the good curriculum provision. The curriculum provides good enrichment and extra-curricular activities, which are an integral part of school life and add breadth to pupils' learning. The well-resourced library and computer suite contribute to the good curriculum provision. The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is satisfactory and arrangements for the safeguarding of all pupils meet statutory requirements.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. School leaders have secured a number of improvements since the last inspection, particularly in writing, but ongoing self-evaluation does not focus sufficiently on monitoring and evaluating the impact of recent changes. A minority of parents who replied to the questionnaires expressed concerns regarding pupil progress and behaviour. The inspection team is satisfied that the school is taking action to improve pupil progress and confirms the school's judgement that behaviour is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress during the Reception Year. They are given opportunities to make independent choices within a stimulating learning environment and this contributes to their outstanding personal development and good standards of behaviour. Teaching is good and

activities are well matched to the needs of all children to support learning both in the classroom and outdoors. Children have a very strong sense of enjoyment in carrying out real-life practical tasks. This enjoyment, and children's language development, are stimulated through interactive questioning which extends their imagination and creativity. The welfare of children has a high profile as they are taught how to keep themselves safe, and hygiene practices are well established. Leadership is good. It is based on an accurate picture of strengths of the provision and the areas for improvement. Leaders have correctly identified, for example, that their long-term planning for the development of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much less comprehensive than their day-to-day plans for children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the pace of pupils' learning by ensuring that activities in lessons always give them opportunities to be actively engaged.
- Regularly monitor the impact of initiatives introduced to raise standards through the use of clearly measurable success criteria.
- Improve pupils' understanding of their own learning by giving them clear guidance on how they can improve.

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

Standards are broadly in line with national average. Achievement is satisfactory, and the progress that pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Progress in Key Stage 1 is consistent across both year groups. In Key Stage 2, however, progress varies between year groups and across subjects. In the last academic year, although the progress of Year 6 pupils was satisfactory overall, pupils made good progress in reading and science. Analysis of achievement for the last academic year identifies that pupils make slower progress in the early stages of Key Stage 2. Current progress across the school is most marked in writing, where the action taken to raise standards has had the greatest impact. Successful action has also been taken to address previous underachievement in lower Key Stage 2 so that these pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels expected for their age and are on course to reach the targets that have been set for them. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers. The majority of pupils learning English as an additional language are provided with additional support and make good progress, but the few pupils with complex learning needs progress at a slower rate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The good behaviour of learners in the classroom and around school helps to create a calm learning environment where friendships flourish. Pupils feel safe at school, and are confident that any concerns they have will be resolved by staff. Enjoyment is a key element of pupils' personal development and well-being, as many describe the school as 'a fun place to be'. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Learners have a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles and can give clear

examples of the benefits of healthy living. The school has been awarded Active Mark for its sporting activities. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are eager to improve their learning and feel they could do even better with more guidance. They are learning about the value and use of money through fundraising activities and have a clear understanding of how their actions can help others around the world. This was shown by the pupils' enthusiasm and support for the 'life straws' appeal providing clean water for children in Africa. Many pupils demonstrate ambition and high aspirations for their future careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff develop good relationships with pupils and organise their classes well so that pupils enjoy their work. In turn, pupils are very responsive when they are challenged and engaged in their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of lessons by sharing the learning objective at the start. This is consistent across the school, but teachers do not always refer to the learning objectives during the lesson to assess pupils' levels of understanding. In lessons where teaching is good, teachers plan work which is well matched to the different abilities in the class, and teacher questioning accurately draws out key learning points and ensures all pupils participate in the lesson. Satisfactory lessons are characterised by a slower pace, with fewer opportunities taken to assess pupils' understanding. Pupils' work is regularly marked but marking does not always provide sufficient guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The development of a creative curriculum has helped pupils to understand the links between different subjects. A good range of visits, visitors and practical activities stimulate pupils' interest in learning. This is clearly shown by the good use made of the local environment, particularly the Chatham Dockyards and the Guildhall Museum, which gives pupils a real appreciation of their local area and its historical significance. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils through, for example, the use of 'bubble time', when pupils can share their worries with adults. In this way, the curriculum directly contributes to pupils' good personal development and, in particular, the successful promotion of teamwork and respect for other faiths and cultures. Displays are of a consistently high standard, celebrate pupils' work and reflect the cultural diversity within the school. The many extra-curricular clubs are well attended. They cover a variety of sporting activities, as well as pottery, French and art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of all pupils is strong. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and well understood by all staff. The school is a safe working environment for adults and children, and procedures for risk assessment are well established and rigorously monitored. Good links with outside agencies help to support vulnerable pupils. Within school, provision accurately identifies and supports the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Attendance procedures have succeeded in reducing the number of pupils with persistent absence, and procedures to promote good

behaviour have resulted in a calm learning environment where no pupils have been excluded. Procedures to prevent bullying and racism are effective. As one pupil explained, 'Lunchtime can be fun again.' The school uses assessment data to identify individual pupils who are not making expected progress and puts in place appropriate support to help them to catch up. Monitoring and analysis of the performance of different cohorts and groups of pupils, however, is not sufficiently rigorous. Pupils are set targets but they do not always understand how well they are doing in relation to nationally expected standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The ethos of care is central to the leadership's vision and leads to good outcomes for personal development and well-being and a strong start for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The rigour applied to pastoral care is not as strongly applied to academic guidance and achievement. The headteacher has introduced a range of actions across the whole school to support achievement more effectively but their impact has not been monitored and evaluated against clearly measurable success criteria. Leaders are not using data systematically to evaluate whole-school performance and inform their long-term strategic planning. Analysis of performance focuses on individual pupils but does not check to see where there may be discernible variation in progress between different cohorts and groups. School self-evaluation is accurate and the school has been successful in raising standards in writing, an area for improvement identified in the last inspection. This shows the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school is striving to improve the currently satisfactory provision for community cohesion through its involvement in several local community initiatives. Leaders are equally aware of the need to develop a plan for the wider context. Governors are supportive, informed about the work of the school and provide satisfactory challenge and monitoring of the school's performance.

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?	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?	1
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?	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	3

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?	2
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	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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's at Troy Town C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Rochester
ME1 1YF

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently and thank you for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the interesting things you do in school. We found out that you enjoy being at school and you like the teachers and adults that help you. St Margaret's at Troy Town has some good aspects and also some areas to improve, so, overall, it gives you a satisfactory education.

These are some good things about your school.

- You behave well and are kind and considerate towards each other.
- You try hard in your lessons and listen to what the teachers say.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you and keep you safe.
- The school gives you extra help from adults when you need it.
- There are lots of activities for you to get involved in and enjoy.
- The school provides plenty of opportunities for you to go on visits out of school.

Your headteacher and all the staff want you to do well so here are some of the things we have asked your school to do.

- Make sure that you are all actively involved in all your lessons so that you learn at a good pace.
- Check on the differences made by the new initiatives introduced to help you make faster progress.
- Give you all more information on how you can make your work better.

You can help by continuing to try hard and asking how you can improve your work.

Yours faithfully

Linda Pickles

Lead Inspector