

St Margaret's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126043
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328448
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	420
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	115
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Mitchell
Headteacher	Helen Fletcher-Reilly
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Mardens Ifield Crawley RH11 0AQ
Telephone number	01293 521077
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Margaret's is a larger than average school, which is popular and oversubscribed. The vast majority of its pupils are White British and very few are entitled to free school meals. Nearly all pupils speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is just above that seen nationally. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is made through a Nursery, which opened in September 2008, and two Reception classes. Recent building developments include the Nursery and a Special Support Centre, with places for eight pupils with physical disabilities, as well as modernisation of much of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are significant strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in pupils' personal development and well-being which are underpinned by effective provision and guidance. A full range of opportunities is offered for pupils to explore and expand their knowledge, skills and understanding. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and participate in a full range of sporting and extra-curricular clubs. Pupils feel safe in school. Staff are very careful to ensure pupils' safety around the site, including the Nursery and Special Support Centre. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to contribute to the day-to-day life of the school, for example as in the production of the friendship bench. The school council is a respected and effective voice for pupils.

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional development. They make outstanding progress so that standards at the end of Reception are above average. Children spend considerable time on activities they choose for themselves, including outdoor learning. As a result, they develop outstanding skills in individual learning. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is good and standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Recent initiatives in science, where standards recently have been below average, have succeeded in raising them. In mathematics, pupils are being carefully guided towards independent practical and investigative work. Progress in reading and writing is good across the school, with increasing effective use of cross-curricular links.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her proactive leadership team have focused consistently and successfully on raising standards and achievement. Currently, the school is working most effectively to reverse the downward trend in standards at the end of Year 6. The school's current assessments, supported by inspection evidence, indicate a rapidly rising level of achievement.

Teaching and learning are good, with increasing examples of outstanding teaching which are driving up standards, especially in Years 3 to 6. Relationships with pupils are good. Work is effectively matched to individual needs. While pupils are becoming increasingly involved in their learning, their understanding of individual targets and how to reach them is inconsistently embedded. The curriculum is good with strengths in the use of key skills across the curriculum to ensure good progress. Enrichment activities, including sports, art and music, have a positive impact on pupils' good achievement. The use of assessment is improving but is not used consistently across the school. Marking is thorough but guidance on the next steps in learning for pupils is inconsistent between classes.

Most parents are positive about the school and the quality of education their children receive. As one parent wrote, 'This is an excellent school; my children have made fantastic progress both academically and emotionally.'

Based on its recent track record of improvement, the school has good capacity to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, together with experienced practitioners, ensures a vibrant, safe and secure environment for children to

learn and develop. Effective systems for assessing and tracking children's progress ensure early identification of individual needs. A wide range of intervention programmes and individualised learning plans ensure targeted support which enables children to make outstanding progress. Effective teamwork is a strength of the staff who are committed to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development as a key priority. Clear routines and high expectations mean that the children are settled, happy and confident. Their behaviour is exceptionally good. The well resourced outdoor play area is stimulating and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to explore and develop skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. They investigate living things, care for the environment by watering the plants and use the weather station to check the day's temperature. The covered play area means that children can access the outdoors in all weathers. The well organised indoor environment is attractive and offers excellent opportunities for children to make their own choices and access resources independently. Excellent teaching of letters and sounds helps children to develop their key reading skills and link letters to sounds in a fun way. This is also evident in their writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of setting of individual pupil targets across the school and curriculum, and ensure that pupils understand these.
- Develop the use and understanding of monitoring and assessment data to embed the capacity for sustained improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There is firm evidence that the school has reversed the recent downward trend in standards and achievement. In Years 1 and 2, successful teaching of literacy and art has enhanced pupils' understanding of how to use their key skills in other subjects, such as history. The most recent data available in the school shows that standards in Year 5 and at the end of Year 6 are rising and are above average. There is an increase in the number of pupils reaching Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils work well in pairs and have developed listening, descriptive and vocabulary skills. In mathematics, pupils are very confident in explaining their thinking and in using mental arithmetic skills.

Most able pupils are challenged in lessons because work and expectations are appropriate to their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress against the targets of their individual education plans. Pupils in the Special Support Centre make good progress because their specific needs are catered for extremely well. They have high quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. The successful teaching of group reading and letters and sounds make a significant contribution to outstanding achievement in Years 1 and 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is outstanding. The strong school ethos and Christian values permeate the school community and are particularly evident in whole-school and class worship. Pupils understand how to support each other and to live safe and healthy lifestyles. They participate in a wide range of sporting activities and games on offer both during lunchtimes and after school. These include swimming,

cycling and inter-school matches. Pupils feel safe and know to whom they can talk if they have problems. Pupils get on well together and behaviour is outstanding. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils make a contribution to the community as representatives on the school council where their views are heard and acted upon. They raise funds for Christian Aid and are involved in other local events. They develop their global sense of community through links with a school in Sierra Leone but their awareness of other communities within the United Kingdom is not as well developed. Pupils are well prepared academically for the future and are beginning to develop workplace and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Significant strengths in teaching and learning have a positive impact on the rapidly improving standards at the end of Year 6. Teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable, with the result that pupils sustain interest and make good progress in lessons. As one pupil in Year 5 said, 'I enjoy school because teachers make us work hard and they really help us to learn.' Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are skilled and adept in teaching new knowledge, skills and understanding. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards to explain and demonstrate new learning. Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with those who learn English as an additional language. Teaching in the Special Support Centre is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. Because lessons are interesting and challenging, pupils are absorbed in their learning and show impressive levels of independence and concentration. In the main, marking is good but teachers are inconsistent in telling pupils when they have reached their targets for literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils are not always clear about their next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The exciting and engaging curriculum motivates and enthuses pupils, with the result that standards and achievement are improving dramatically. There are good expectations that pupils should use their key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects. Pupils benefit from meaningful cross-curricular links. They enjoy learning Spanish. The curriculum is adapted successfully to meet the needs of all pupils, including those in the Special Support Centre. Recent improvements in science in carrying out investigations and experiments still need embedding across the school. The very good provision of personal, social and health education, together with the strong promotion of the school's Christian ethos, have a significant impact on pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils participate enthusiastically in an impressive range of after-school clubs. They benefit from a wide range of educational visits and visits to the school. The recent visit by Paul Geraghty led to outstanding work by pupils on the theme of 'African Art'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school complies fully with the current requirements for safeguarding pupils and for child protection. It engages successfully with a wide range of outside agencies to support children with learning difficulties, including those in the Special Support Centre. Equally, staff provide good support and guidance for pupils learning English as an additional language. The quality of support for such groups contributes significantly to their good progress. All staff have the individual needs of pupils as a priority in terms of supporting their personal development and well-being. All pupils have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, but across the school there is inconsistency in pupils knowing and understanding these targets. In a number of classes, pupils know the National Curriculum levels at which they work and their next steps. In other cases, pupils do not know such levels and are less secure in knowing what their next targets are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has worked with great focus to address the previous decline in standards in the school. Effective support from governors and the senior leadership team has enabled the school to increase pupils' motivation and track progress over time. As a result, the school is now monitoring teaching and learning more effectively and using this information to prioritise initiatives. Examples include development of subject leader skills, learning plans and increasingly centralised recording of data. Increasingly challenging targets are set based on reliable data. However, not all teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan next steps in pupils' learning. The school is working within an increasingly global framework to complement its identity as a school community. Governors are preparing a full audit of the school's contribution to community cohesion.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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 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	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

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

25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's CofE Primary School, Crawley RH11 0AQ

I am writing to thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed being with you in lessons and seeing you around your school. I would especially like to thank the school council for making time to meet with us and speak so glowingly about the school.

Yours is a good school and there are some very interesting and exciting things happening. These are the things that we thought you do well:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you really enjoy taking part in physical education and after-school clubs.
- You show care and consideration for the other pupils in your school.
- You work hard in lessons and this helps you to improve your learning throughout the school.
- Teachers take great care to ensure that you are safe, healthy and happy in school.
- The headteacher and senior managers are determined to help you make good progress and achieve higher standards in your work.

There are only a few things which we think need improving so we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following:

- Ensure that individual pupil targets are set across the school and that you understand these.
- Develop the use and understanding of monitoring and assessment data so that your school can continue to improve. I know that you will keep on working hard and enjoying the wonderful facilities and opportunities that you have at your school.

Yours faithfully

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Lead Inspector