

# St Margaret Clitherow's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134539
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	328928
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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)	303
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>	Mr John Buckton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 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>	St Margarets Grove South Bank Middlesbrough TS6 6TA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 835370

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	328928

**Fax number**

01642 453375

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20-21 January 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school is located in the South Bank district of Middlesbrough. It serves a wide area, including large pockets of significant social and economic deprivation. It has an integrated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are both above average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special education need is low. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, and the Eco-schools Silver Award. The school is subject to possible reorganisation under the Building Schools for the Future initiative. An acting headteacher has very recently been appointed.

## 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. Pupils make excellent progress in their seven years in the school because of the attention to detail, dedication, professional knowledge and team spirit which abounds throughout the whole staff. It gives excellent value for money.

Pupils join the school with standards that are well below those usually expected for their age. The school quickly and very effectively finds out what pupils can do well, and where there are gaps in their knowledge. It works without pause to ensure that strengths are sustained and extended, and that weaknesses are addressed. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their standards are well above average. They make outstanding progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The promotion of pupils' self-esteem and the virtue of consideration for others are central tenets of the school's ethos. Pupils say they enjoy being in school, and they wear their distinctive uniform, the colours of which they chose, with obvious pride. They leave the school in Year 6 exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Energetic and innovative teachers move lessons along quickly, using a range of short, sharp and well measured tasks which demand that pupils of all abilities think things through for themselves. They give pupils prompt and detailed feedback on their work, recognising and celebrating achievement, and giving clear guidance on what to do next. Pupils engage quickly with this style of teaching, and their learning over time is excellent.

The very exciting curriculum quickly grasps pupils' attention. Many subjects have a strong practical dimension. This helps pupils to understand concepts quickly, and enables them to see how knowledge and skills learned in one area can be successfully applied in another. Very high quality examples of pupils' artwork adorn the school and make it a vibrant learning environment, owned by the pupils. Music is a key feature of the curriculum, and all pupils have regular opportunities to play instruments both individually, and in dynamic groups.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are excellent. The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils very seriously. The statutory requirements are met. Adults know the pupils very well, and pupils say they can always get any sort of help they need simply by asking. They have complete faith and trust in the staff. The school's accurate and reliable assessment system is well honed to provide information about how well all pupils are making progress. The information is used most effectively by teachers to plan challenging work, and by managers to develop the curriculum so that it continues to meet pupils' various learning needs.

The recently promoted acting headteacher is respected throughout the school. She is a key figure in the lives of the pupils. Her calm and unassuming manner is complemented by a very sharp mind. This results in a clarity of vision and unified sense of purpose that pervades every level of leadership and management. Both are focused totally on 'giving every child what they deserve and to which they are entitled', as a senior leader stated. This is crucial to the sustained high quality of overall provision. Although modest in its self-evaluation, the school knows itself very well and has outstanding capacity for continuing improvement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age, especially in communicating their thoughts and ideas, and in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they join Year 1, some have reached average levels although many remain below the nationally expected level. All make good progress because effective teaching is taking advantage of recently developed and rapidly improving integrated provision. This is clearly evident in the excellent and popular role play areas which are helping children to develop their social and personal skills quickly.

Children settle quickly into school routines because transition arrangements are good. There are strong relationships with parents. Every child has an identified key worker who looks after them, and who has overall responsibility for communication between home and school, enabling children to be well cared for. Accurate observations enable activities to be well matched to individual children's learning needs. This enables children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make similar progress to their peers.

The school has recently unified previously separate Nursery and Reception classes into a smoothly functioning unit. The unit leader is an experienced and knowledgeable practitioner. Excellent use is made of the well resourced indoor provision and this fosters children's development very well in all areas of learning. The newly developed outdoor provision does not yet reflect the same impact on all areas of children's learning. There are well founded plans for future development of high quality continuous provision. The very effective leadership is characterised by accurate self-review and determination to improve.

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

- Ensure that outdoor provision in EYFS is used more effectively in order to improve progress children make.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is excellent. Children enter Nursery with skills well below those expected for children of their age. They have particular weaknesses in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy. Pupils consistently make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 in 2008 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and when pupils left Year 6 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007, standards reached in the national tests were well above average in English, mathematics and science. For these pupils this represents outstanding progress and excellent achievement. The school's unvalidated results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were higher than in 2007, pointing to sustained high standards. Although this group of pupils joined the school with slightly higher standards than the previous year, this also represents outstanding progress. A very similar pattern has been the case for several years. No group of pupils underachieves and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

There is a calm, yet very purposeful, atmosphere around the school. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are unfailingly polite and friendly with each other. This very inclusive school celebrates pupils' differences and is always prepared to take in vulnerable pupils. Pupils show great enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning, are keen to work hard, and have a genuine thirst to make progress and increase their understanding. It is not surprising that attendance is above average. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say they feel safe and happy. They assert strongly that bullying is not an issue in the school.

Pupils are in no doubt that their views are taken into account by the school, often through the work of the school council. For example, deciding which charities to raise funds for, or securing a well used salad bar at lunchtimes. Pupils make a good contribution to their own and the wider community through involvement in work, such as a project to develop the local area around the school. They understand the need for regular exercise and talk at length about the impact of this and healthy eating. They readily take part in many physical and sporting activities and enjoy the daily 'Wake and Shake', and lunchtime 'Huff and Puff' sessions.

Pupils' basic skills are well above the average, and this, coupled with their thoughtful and mature demeanor, indicates that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

All lessons are characterised by very good relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and provide good role models for pupils. Classroom assistants support pupils who find learning more difficult very well, and are able to dovetail effectively and unobtrusively with the teacher as a result of careful previous shared planning. In many outstanding lessons (over a third of lessons seen), teachers give pupils opportunities to think for themselves, and to work and learn independently. These lessons move forward at a relentless pace and stretch pupils to the limits of what they already know and understand. Pupils say they like this level of challenge. They make rapid progress because the work set is both interesting and very well matched to their learning needs. Pupils are open-minded, and are prepared to consider alternative suggestions and ideas from their peers. The rate of learning occasionally and understandably slows a little when teachers and pupils have to focus on consolidating particular skills, such as actually producing legible handwriting. Teachers consistently mark work conscientiously and regularly, setting individual targets based upon accurate knowledge of pupils' understanding.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 1

Pupils are benefiting from an excellent curriculum which focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which will allow access to all other subjects. Very good religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education are major contributory factors to pupils being so well prepared for the future. A wide range of learning opportunities ensures pupils have a broad understanding

of the world around them. This helps them to appreciate the diversity of society. The pupils' involvement in developing the curriculum is very motivating. An excellent example of this is Year 3 and 4 pupils suggesting that they focus on guitar heroes within the school's overarching topic of Heroes. Outstanding provision is made to enrich the curriculum through clubs and sporting activities and the playing of musical instruments. Educational visits away from school and visiting speakers do much for pupils' cultural and creative development. Excellent links with other schools are exploited to the full. The highest attaining pupils, for example, work with the secondary school's mathematics and ICT departments to learn how to apply their mathematical skills and to develop their computing capabilities. The school itself is a stimulating environment where teachers and assistants have created colourful, interesting and informative displays to augment the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This is a school committed to equality of opportunity for every pupil and where the most vulnerable are fully involved and supported in all activities and so progress well. The care and support afforded to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent and accounts for their outstanding personal development. Very good use is made of outside agencies to ensure pupils reach their full potential. A good example of this is the improvement in pupils' attendance, particularly those who were persistent absentees. Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis, particularly in the planning of visits out of school. Pupils' academic progress is assessed regularly and rigorously. Information is used discerningly to spot any early signs of underachievement, prompt and effective action is taken to put things right. The pupils are very aware of what they do well, and are clear about what they have to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The acting headteacher, her leadership group, staff and governors share a vision in which each child is encouraged to develop to their maximum potential academically and socially. They work as a united and dynamic team, overseeing and measuring closely what pupils are learning. Teachers, middle managers and senior leaders actively assume their responsibilities with a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They are thus able to: sustain the strengths of the school; identify quickly any emerging areas for improvement and act promptly to take action to address them. School improvement is seen as a continuous and ongoing process. Staff continually strive to make the school even better, and for this reason, they are modest in their self-evaluation. Very challenging targets are set, they are regularly reviewed, and usually exceeded.

The school is positive in making a good contribution to community cohesion. It adopts positively an ethical stance towards equality of opportunity and works continuously to challenge and eradicate discrimination in all its forms. This is well supported by good provision for pupils to gain a thorough understanding of their local environment and an improving perspective on international issues.

Under the excellent leadership of the committed chair, the governing body gives generous support to the school, whilst maintaining a level of challenge which prevents complacency. The



school has moved forward well since the last inspection, implementing the national strategies with enthusiasm, and making the curriculum even more inspiring to pupils.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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	1

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<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	1
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	2
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	1
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**

22 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret Clitherow's RC Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS6 6TA

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were extremely impressed with your excellent behaviour, your outstanding attitude to learning, and your happy, shining, smiling faces.

We found that St Margaret Clitherow's is an outstanding school. It is outstanding because so many of its parts, such as the teaching; the curriculum; the guidance and security it provides; and its leadership, are excellent. These combine to help you make outstanding progress in both your learning and your personal development, from the time you join the school, to the time you leave.

We found that one part of the school could be improved. So we have asked that staff make better and more regular use of the outdoor provision for the children in the Nursery and the Reception class. This will ensure that younger children get off to an even better start than they already do.

Thank you all for helping us to reach our judgement, and good luck to every one of you for the future.

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector