

St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105705
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	336543
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev D Hawthorn
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Keiran
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited each class in the school and observed 12 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, improvement planning, a range of policy documents, national published assessment data and the school's own data. Inspectors also analysed 44 parental questionnaires, as well as a number of questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which current data and other evidence confirmed the school's judgement that there have been significant improvements in learning and progress since the last inspection
- how effectively the school provides for pupils' individual needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language
- the level of challenge provided for pupils, particularly the most able.

Information about the school

St Margaret's is a slightly larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is just above the national average and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. There are nine classes in Key Stages 1 and 2, and some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school's Nursery and Reception classes, as well as one class that includes children of Reception age learning alongside those from Year 1. There is privately run before and after-school care which was subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

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 or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Attainment in English has been significantly below average for five years, and dropped even further in 2009. In 2008, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was significantly below average in both English and mathematics. This indicates that the school's most able pupils are underachieving, especially in English. The school has however, improved some aspects of its work over recent years. Increased emphasis on pupils' well-being has resulted in pupils being happy and confident in school. They feel that they are cared for well. Provision in science has also improved and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 is just above average by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has also risen steadily, although the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 remains low in mathematics and is below average in science. Too many pupils are not attaining the standards they are capable of reaching.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, and some groups, including the school's most vulnerable pupils, occasionally make good progress. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. Nevertheless, although the teaching observed was generally satisfactory, it is not yet consistently strong enough to make up for the legacy of low attainment. The planning of work to meet the different needs of individual pupils is underdeveloped. In particular, tasks set for the most able pupils often lack challenge and are completed quickly and easily, especially in English. Consequently, progress, particularly in the core subject of English, is too slow for many of the school's most able pupils and this group of learners underachieve.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a bright and welcoming environment for children. Although there are some good features in the quality and variety of activities provided for children, the overall effectiveness has declined since the last inspection and is now inadequate. Recent changes in staffing have meant that leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has not yet been established. Although several staff are involved in managing the provision, lines of responsibility and accountability are not clear. Consequently, leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are ineffective.

The headteacher has been in post for 18 months. Instability in staffing at senior

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management level has meant that during this period she has had to take on a great deal of responsibility. The governing body does not provide sufficient challenge to address weaknesses and bring about improvement and does not fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Although some things have improved since the last inspection, a major area identified for improvement was the achievement of higher attaining pupils in English; the school has made insufficient progress in addressing this crucial issue. The school's self-evaluation is weak. It lacks rigour and does not accurately reflect in its conclusions the current quality of outcomes and provision. Development planning is not sufficiently rigorous or focused on the most important priorities. Despite remedying a few areas of weakness, leaders have not demonstrated enough impact in securing improvement since the last inspection. Therefore, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English.
- Improve attainment and progress for the most able pupils, particularly in English, by ensuring that lessons consistently include work that provides sufficient challenge for all.
- Establish clear leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the quality of the school's development planning by ensuring that it focuses clearly on the school's most important priorities, identified through accurate and thorough self-evaluation.
- Ensure that the governing body provides sufficient challenge and support to the school and fulfils all statutory requirements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise, and as a result of the school's effective provision in this area; many pupils choose to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils have a secure understanding of the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. They enjoy contributing to the school community, for example, by presenting assemblies and acting as playground buddies, and help out in the local community through work such as litter picking and gardening projects. They particularly enjoy growing and selling their own vegetables and this contributes to the development of workplace skills. However, their low attainment in literacy, which affects many areas of their learning, means that this aspect of pupils' outcomes is satisfactory rather than good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good, although their awareness of a range of cultures is limited.

Overall, pupils made satisfactory progress during the lessons observed and the overall quality of behaviour is good. However, standards of behaviour in the classroom sometimes slip when pupils are not sufficiently challenged, or tasks fail to hold their attention, and this, in turn, slows their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, largely due to the support

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provided by teaching assistants and other support staff. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given adequate support and, consequently, they make satisfactory progress. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been significantly below average for five years, and although recent data indicates a rise in standards there is insufficient evidence of sustained improvement. The persistently low standards in English by the end of Key Stage 2, coupled with progress that is no better than satisfactory, means that pupils' achievement overall is inadequate, and therefore, outcomes for pupils are also inadequate. The school's strategies to address these issues have not had sufficient impact.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff work well to ensure that classrooms are inviting and colourful learning environments. While teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall, there was too much that did not challenge pupils to attain more highly. Lesson planning does not always include reference to how work is tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils according to their ability. Consequently, lessons sometimes include low-level tasks

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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that pupils can complete easily and this restricts progress, especially that of the most able pupils. For example, in several lessons observed, all pupils were given an identical task, aimed at the middle ability group of pupils. This lack of challenge for the most able was particularly obvious in the lessons observed where teaching was weakest. This aspect of teaching was identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection and has not been resolved.

The quality of assessment is variable. Although teachers often use praise well during lessons, pupils are sometimes given verbal and written feedback that places too much evidence on congratulation, even when the work is of not of high quality. Pupils are given limited guidance on how to improve. This was raised as an issue in the previous inspection and although there has been a recent focus on improving marking, there is not enough evidence of it being consistently implemented across the school.

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. The school is working to provide a meaningful and relevant theme-based curriculum, and, although there are signs of some success in this area, there is no specific curricular provision for the most able pupils, including the gifted and talented even though this group of learners were an identified area of weakness in the last inspection report. School development planning suggests that work on creating a policy for this is at an early stage.

Pastoral care is of high quality and supports pupils well. Pupils know that there is always an adult to turn to if they have any concerns. Systems for safeguarding are adequate, although documentation relating to these important systems is disorganised and not presented clearly. As a consequence, the overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory rather than good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the appointment of the headteacher, leaders and managers have taken action to bring about some improvements since the last inspection and their vision for pupils' personal development is communicated appropriately to all staff. Nevertheless, there is much more to do and some significant weaknesses remain, such as attainment in English, and the progress made by the most able pupils. There is little evidence that such shortcomings are being addressed with the necessary urgency. Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is overgenerous in assessing the impact of provision on the outcomes for pupils. Development planning is weak. It includes inaccurate analyses of national

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published data and does not identify the most important issues currently affecting provision, such as the need for a greater level of challenge for the most able pupils. Intended outcomes and impact are not always identified. Although relative weaknesses in English are acknowledged, the impact of strategies to address these has not been sufficient.

The governing body cares about the school and its profile within the local community. Nevertheless, apart from one or two members, their involvement in the day-to-day life of the school is limited, and this restricts their contribution to rigorous and effective evaluation of provision and outcomes. Governance does not sufficiently challenge the school to address weaknesses and bring about improvement and has too little impact on the direction and work of the school. This combined with governors' lack of awareness of their duties in relation to safeguarding and the school's single central record, means that governance is inadequate.

The school is making a concerted effort to improve engagement with parents and carers, and there are signs of some improvement here. Parents are responding well to this and are building productive relationships with staff.

The school shows a commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities, and staff are keen to ensure that pupils from different social and ethnic groups have access to all that the school offers. However, there is little evidence of success in meeting the academic needs of the most able pupils, including the gifted and talented. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has started to develop its work in this area, but this is at a relatively early stage. Safeguarding procedures are compliant with requirements and help to assure pupils' health and safety, but the school's approach to documentation for safeguarding lacks rigour even though this aspect of the school's work was found to be inadequate in the past. As outcomes for pupils are inadequate, the deployment of resources to provide value for money is also inadequate.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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<p>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</p>	<p>4</p>

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery class with overall skills that are below typical age-related expectations, the weakest area being in mathematics. They make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with below average skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning through the range of opportunities provided for them. They are encouraged to live healthily, taking exercise indoors and out and enjoying healthy snacks at breaktimes. Children behave well and develop their social skills effectively.

There are a number of exciting activities in the Nursery and Reception classes from which children enjoy choosing. However, Reception-age children in the Year 1 class do not have the same quality of play-based learning. Adults interact with children regularly and are supportive, but children are not always challenged enough in order to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills at a rapid pace. Staff work with children indoors and out, but observations of children are not sufficient for staff to plan their next steps in learning clearly. The use of data is not developed fully, making it difficult to track the progress of individual children.

From September 2009, leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been in transition, with a number of staff involved in day-to-day and longer term management. This model of leadership is not effective because no individual has a clear and complete overview of provision and outcomes for children. There is confusion regarding the responsibilities of individuals in supporting and managing staff and a lack of accountability. This is having a detrimental impact on the overall effectiveness, which is now considerably worse than at the time of the last inspection. The capacity for sustained improvement of provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage is therefore inadequate.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

<p>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Taking into account:</p>	
<p>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</p>	<p>4</p>

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents returning questionnaires was relatively low, representing approximately one fifth of all parents and carers. Most parents are supportive of the

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school. Few chose to write additional comments; these included a very small minority who raised concerns about the rate of progress made by their children. The inspection confirms that some pupils do not progress as rapidly as they should.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 284 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	61	16	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	48	20	45	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	36	23	52	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	34	23	52	4	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	15	34	25	57	4	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	34	25	57	2	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	36	26	59	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	30	25	57	2	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	41	18	41	5	11	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	39	9	20	5	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	25	27	61	2	5	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	19	43	21	48	0	0	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	39	23	52	2	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School, Oldham OL8 4QS

As you know, I visited your school recently, together with two other inspectors so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

We were pleased to hear that you feel happy and safe in school. Most of you behave well and are kind towards each other. One thing that really impressed us was your knowledge of healthy eating and the importance of diet and exercise. We thought it was fantastic that you grow and sell your own vegetables!

Over the last few years test results in science by the end of Year 6 have risen well and are now above average. There have also been some improvements in your skills in mathematics. However, standards in English have been too low for some years now. We have asked the school to address this, and have suggested that you are always given work that really challenges you to think hard, so that you make the best possible progress. We have advised the school to put together very clear plans for improvement to help things to move on really quickly. We think that it would be good if the governors were more involved in improving your school. Finally, we have recommended that some changes are made to the way in which the Reception and Nursery classes are managed. We have judged that your school requires special measures. This means that it will get some extra help and will be visited regularly by inspectors who will check that things are improving. You have an important part to play in improving your school. One way that you can help is by telling your teachers if you think that the work is too easy or too hard for you, so that they can make sure you have everything you need to make really fast progress, especially in English.

Yours sincerely

Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

Lead inspector

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