

St Margaret's School, Tintinhull

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123855
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340442
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Whitlock
Headteacher	Lesley McDonald
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons and four teachers. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff, and informally met parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's plans, policies, and records of progress made by the pupils and 46 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers.

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

- ? steps taken to improve attainment in mathematics
- the rate of progress this year by pupils in all classes
- ? the consistency of teaching, given the recent changes to the structure of classes
- the effectiveness of the way the school assesses pupils' progress and helps them to understand how to improve
- ? the clarity of leadership and its awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the context of very recent staff changes.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school. Numbers have fluctuated considerably in the last two years, first rising and then falling, and the school reduced from five to four classes in February 2010. All pupils and the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in mixed-age classes, each in their own designated classroom. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. These needs are varied but frequently severe, including emotional and learning difficulties and physical disabilities. The new headteacher took up post four weeks before the inspection and there have been several other changes of staff and their deployment during the last year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has come through a period of staff changes and uncertainties, has a number of significant strengths and is securely placed to move forward under the new leadership team. The most notable strength is the outstanding behaviour of the pupils, often exemplary and never less than good. They behave extremely well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils show an exceptionally sensitive and thoughtful approach towards one another, especially those who experience problems. Almost all aspects of their personal development are good as is the care, guidance and support they receive from the entire staff team. The support for potentially vulnerable children is exceptional. A high proportion of the parents and carers responding to the inspectors' questionnaire endorse these qualities with comments such as: 'My son's happy at school, he talks enthusiastically and confidently about what he's doing at school and is moving forward under the staff's watchful eye and nurturing ethos.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and attainment is broadly average by the time they leave the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress in their first year. Progress by older pupils is less consistent, although good in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching is varied. Much is good but whilst there are outstanding features, there are also a few weaker elements. Teachers know their pupils well but do not always make best use of this information to ensure they are all sufficiently challenged. In some lessons, the pace slows and there is a lack of clarity about the intended learning. The school has well-established systems for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, it has been slow to focus on the potential of the most able and ensure they are fully extended by the curriculum and in day-to-day lessons. The school is introducing new curricular planning materials, bought a few months ago, but does not make the best use of them. The school monitors pupils' progress regularly through the year but it does not set targets for the end of each year group in order to raise attainment.

The new headteacher has been quick to conduct a series of checks on the school's performance and is rapidly gaining an accurate view of all aspects of the school, including those areas in need of improvement. She has identified the need to strengthen the effectiveness of information given to the governing body, the way the performance of teachers is managed and the use of end-of-year targets designed to raise attainment. The new leadership team is united in its recognition of these areas for improvement and staff morale is high. This indicates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- ? Ensure there is more good or better teaching in all classes by December 2010, by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice already in the school
 - ensuring teachers consistently use assessment information to carefully match activities to the wide range of abilities in their classes
 - ensuring intended learning is clearly explained, with sufficient challenge and pace maintained throughout lessons
- Introduce by July 2010 a clear system for setting end-of-year targets and monitoring progress towards them for all pupils in Years 1?6.
- ? Strengthen procedures to check the school's performance by
 - establishing by September 2010 an annual programme for monitoring the work of the school
 - improving within the next school year arrangements for managing the performance of teachers
 - by October 2010, increasing the range and quality of information received by the governing body to enable them to hold the school fully to account.
- ? Establish shared long- and medium-term curriculum plans by December 2010 that:
 - incorporate, where appropriate, recently purchased materials
 - fully reflect the needs of the most able pupils
 - provide increased opportunities for all pupils to learn about communities beyond the local area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

With relatively few pupils in each year group, attainment fluctuates from one year to the next but over time it is broadly average. It has often been higher in reading, writing and science than in mathematics. Attainment on entry is in line with age-related expectations. Evidence from lessons, pupils' work, discussions with pupils, and the school's assessment records shows the rate of progress by pupils varies. In the Year 5 and 6 class, it is good and, this year, many Year 6 pupils work at levels above the national average. Progress by pupils in Years 1 to 4 is less rapid, but never less than satisfactory, and good in some lessons. Attainment in mathematics is improving, especially mental arithmetic. The gap between attainment in English and mathematics is closing as a result of changes in the way the subject is taught. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and they receive frequent and carefully targeted additional support from the teachers and well-qualified teaching assistants. Pupils collaborate very well together and demonstrate positive attitudes to solving problems and carrying out investigations. They use computers confidently and their speaking skills are good. These, together with their positive attitudes to learning, are key factors in their good preparation for the next stage of their education.

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Pupils' good personal development is a strength of the school. Their good spiritual, moral and social development is evident in the caring way they listen and attend to one another. For example, they burst into spontaneous applause to encourage one another in a 'wow' moment and reflect sensitively in assembly when discussing the loss of precious objects. They talk with pride of their musical and drama activities in school and in the village, but they have a more limited understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain beyond rural Somerset.

Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that adults are always there to help them if needed. Many contribute to their school and wider communities. They conscientiously take on jobs to help around the school, with older pupils supporting younger ones as school councillors or class monitors, and in the local community by, for example, carol singing or performing poetry. The Healthy School award reflects pupils' good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They approve of the school's encouragement to avoid chocolate and crisps in their snack boxes. At playtimes, they energetically make the most of the extensive field and climbing frame and know they need to seek protection from strong sunlight. Pupils enjoy school a lot. Whilst attendance is average, they arrive punctually and cheerfully, with pupils, parents and carers and school staff mingling together at the start of the day.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

There is good care, guidance and support for all pupils throughout each day and for all year groups from induction on entry to transfer when they leave. There is always an adult watching out for them and helping them to feel safe. Inappropriate behaviour is very rare indeed and is dealt with well by the school. The support for vulnerable pupils is excellent, with the school working strenuously in partnership with parents and carers and with external agencies. Staff have willingly undergone additional training to enable them to respond to specific needs. There is an extensive team of assistants, enabling one-to-one support for individual pupils and a quiet refuge when needed. The school offers a stimulating, well-maintained and exceptionally clean environment for all the pupils.

There are good relationships between all the adults and pupils and this helps promote a calm and purposeful learning environment in lessons. Teachers plan interesting activities from a broad curriculum and make helpful connections between subjects. They take care to make their classrooms interesting places in which to work. New planning materials were introduced recently but the school has not fully worked out the best way to use them to ensure a progression of skills, or the adaptations needed to short- and medium-term plans to meet the needs of the most able.

Pupils respond well when challenged and clearly want to do well and to please, for example when Year 5 and 6 pupils discussed the finer points of imagery before writing poetry. The teacher carefully and skilfully targeted challenging questions to individuals and consistently demonstrated high expectations of all. Clear targets and good visual stimuli led to good progress and some very well constructed and imaginatively presented poems. In the same lesson, pupils reviewed each other's work in some detail, helping them to be clear about their achievements and how they could improve further. These good strategies are not embedded across the school at a time when it is introducing new systems for assessing pupils' work. At present, assessments are not always used to ensure activities are sufficiently matched to the wide range of different needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes and this slows the pace of learning. In a few lessons, the over-long teacher explanations are not clear and the pace of learning slows when pupils are not sure about what to do or are not fully extended. Marking is often good, for example by teaching assistants responding to their groups' mathematics work, but this is not consistent for all groups and classes.

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	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has achieved much in a very short time. She clearly has the confidence of the staff and already knows nearly all the pupils. She has systematically embarked on finding out about all aspects of the school's work and taken decisive action to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. She is already clear about most aspects of the school's work, including those elements that need to improve, and is well supported by the small leadership team. The headteacher has acknowledged the need to extend the information exchange with the governing body and to revise the process for managing teachers' performance. The school's clearly structured development plan accurately reflects the main priorities for improvement. It rightly includes a priority to promote community cohesion beyond the immediate locality as the school recognises the need to promote better understanding of communities elsewhere in Britain. The school responds well to its local community's needs, reaching out to various groups and minorities. It strongly promotes equal opportunities and does not tolerate discrimination. This is evident in the way pupils and adults relate one to another and also in the comprehensive programme of additional support and guidance which ensures potentially vulnerable pupils are fully included. This enables all pupils to flourish and play a full part in the life of the school. The governing body is supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities. However, it does not fully hold the school to account for its work. The governing body ensures diligently that there are comprehensive arrangements to safeguard pupils and these are implemented robustly by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly, following very careful and sensitive induction arrangements. They confidently use the extensive indoor areas and the secure designated outdoor area which, since February, they share with a few Year 1 pupils. Children make good progress based on their entry points. Last year, an above-average proportion attained the learning goals expected for their age, and children this year are again on track to exceed national expectations. For example, they have a good understanding of letters and sounds and several can already confidently write simple sentences. Teaching and assessment strategies are consistently good. The teacher and teaching assistant carefully involve the children and gather their ideas when planning new topics. They set up a good range of activities to ensure a balance between adult-led experiences and a chance for independent play and free-flow in and out of doors. Both adults carefully observe the children's responses and gather detailed assessment information to plot their progress and help plan next steps. Detailed folders record the children's progress and experiences and these are regularly shared with parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers replied to the inspectors' questionnaire. A large majority of them respond positively to each question, with a high proportion agreeing that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A very small minority disagreed with the way the school deals with inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found that the rare incidents are managed well. Others expressed concerns about not being informed of progress, and progress being insufficient. Inspectors have some sympathy about the rate of progress as it is not consistently good across the school. Several parents and carers raised concerns about the recent changes to class structure part way through this school year. The enforced move to four classes has been managed well and is enabling the school to make the best use of the available accommodation.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret's Primary 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	65	13	28	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	70	11	24	3	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	39	20	43	5	11	3	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	43	19	41	3	7	3	7
The teaching is good at this school	22	48	21	46	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	33	24	52	2	4	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	41	27	46	2	4	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)	16	35	20	43	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	39	21	46	2	4	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	48	14	30	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	37	24	52	3	7	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	16	35	19	41	1	2	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	43	23	50	0	0	3	7

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Yeovil
BA 22 8PX

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school with lots of good things and some that need to improve. We were particularly impressed by your brilliant behaviour, and by the way you are so thoughtful towards one another. Very well done! You are good at helping out around school, for example working as school councillors, raising money for the Haiti appeal or by being class and playground helpers. Many of you told us you feel safe in school. Your parents and carers agree. This is because all the adults in school take good care of you and are always there to help those of you who have problems from time to time. We are pleased you recognise how important it is to eat healthy food and do lots of exercise.

In lessons, you listen very carefully, get on with your work sensibly and make satisfactory progress. Your teachers and teaching assistants make your classrooms interesting places to be and the displays celebrate your work and help you with your learning. Your new headteacher is getting to know everyone very quickly and already has several ideas about ways to improve the school. We have asked her to work together with the other staff and the governing body on four things to make the school even better by:

- helping teachers to use all the information they have about you when planning work so it is not too hard or too easy, to keep lessons moving quickly, and explain more clearly what you are going to learn
- making sure the school is clear about how much progress each of you could make over a year
- introducing better ways for senior staff to check how well everything is working around school and for sharing the information gained with governors
- giving you more chances to learn about people in different communities across Britain.

You can help by working hard, telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult, and continuing to be helpful around the school.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead Inspector

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