

St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124782
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	354325
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon David Cutts
Headteacher	Mrs Kim Kelway
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
School address	Bolton Lane Ipswich IP4 2BT
Telephone number	01473 251613
Fax number	01473 251613
Email address	stmargaretschool@rmplc.co.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed seven teachers and a teaching assistant in 14 lessons. They held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff and had informal discussions with parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's assessments and tracking of progress; planning; policies and procedures, including those for ensuring pupils' safety; and logs recording incidents and the action taken. They also analysed 75 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether standards have improved this year following a dip in 2009
- if behaviour is as good as the school suggests
- the monitoring of provision, including teaching, and its effectiveness in addressing any weaknesses.

Information about the school

This average-sized primary school is close to St. Margaret's Church in the heart of Ipswich. About two thirds of the pupils come from the parish. The percentage of pupils believed to be entitled to free school meals is much lower than average. About 15% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and although increasing year-on-year, this proportion is less than in most schools, with very few pupils at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A few have statements of special educational needs for specific learning or speech and language difficulties. The school has Healthy Schools status. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2009.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St. Margaret's has an accurate and well-deserved reputation as a good school. There is an ethos of care and support amongst pupils and staff, and all are valued and respected. As a result, pupils develop into mature and thoughtful individuals who work hard and, as their high levels of attendance shows, enjoy their schooling. There is a strong sense of community within school and with the church. However, leaders, managers and governors have correctly identified that opportunities to promote community cohesion in the wider world are limited and have plans in place to address this.

There has been some inappropriate behaviour and discrimination in the past. However, new procedures for promoting good behaviour and consistent behaviour management have reduced these significantly and behaviour is now good throughout the school. The pupils themselves are now actively engaged in promoting good behaviour and take their many responsibilities in school very seriously. Their contribution to the wider community beyond school is more limited.

A dip in progress in 2009 has been analysed and measures put in place to improve the provision. As a result, standards in Year 6 are now well above average and pupils make good progress throughout the school. These prompt and effective measures to address weaknesses, generated through an accurate assessment of the school's needs by the senior leadership team, demonstrate the school's good potential for further improvement.

Effective teaching ensures pupils of all abilities receive the support and challenge they need. Many pupils are skilled in evaluating their own performance and that of their peers. They know their targets and some are beginning to set their own. However, some do not always respond to their teachers' thorough and helpful marking, missing opportunities to improve their work. Teachers' knowledge of what is expected of each year group has become much more accurate as they work together to evaluate their pupils' work. This enables them to address any underachievement and help pupils excel. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They are working together to build on the good curriculum to ensure the skills pupils need are taught in ways that sustain pupils' enthusiasm for learning. At present, however, in spite of their mature attitudes and eagerness to learn, pupils are not yet involved in helping to decide for themselves what topics they would like to study.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn effectively through extremely well-planned learning opportunities that they choose for themselves. The staff know exactly what each child can do and what needs to be mastered next. However, the

children and their parents are not involved in selecting items for their records of achievement or 'learning journeys', missing opportunities for them to celebrate achievement, see progress throughout the year and limiting the teacher's knowledge of achievements at home.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils take more responsibility for their learning by:
 - ensuring all respond to their teachers' wise written advice
 - allowing them to contribute to planning the topics they wish to study while maintaining the rigorous development of skills
 - encouraging children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their parents to contribute to their individual 'learning journeys'.
- Extend opportunities to promote community cohesion by:
 - providing opportunities for engagement beyond the school and church communities with other ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups within the United Kingdom and worldwide
 - helping pupils to become more involved in supporting local, national and global initiatives.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Almost all pupils join Year 1 with the knowledge and skills expected of their age and many exceed them in some areas of learning. By the end of Year 2, standards have been above, and sometimes well above, average in recent years. However, because there are more pupils with learning difficulties in the present cohort, pupils are working at levels that are at, or slightly above, age-related expectations. Girls have consistently made better progress than boys in Key Stage 1, but this is reversed in Key Stage 2 as boys rapidly match, and sometimes exceed, the rate of progress made by the girls. Pupils' eagerness to learn both independently and with their peers ensures that they make good progress in lessons. Their work is well presented and they strive to achieve their teachers' objectives for the lesson. They make good use of their literacy, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. Their skills in identifying what methods to use when solving problems is a particular strength in mathematics, preparing them well for the future, and pupils are encouraged to challenge each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive good support, both within class in small groups and, for some, individually.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that they are well cared for. They enjoy their lessons and their many opportunities for sport. Most make healthy choices at lunchtime and have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Their good behaviour and responsible attitudes permeate the school. Although there is still occasional teasing on the playground, pupils feel confident that they can seek support from adults or older

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

pupils. Most pupils are reflective and empathise with others. This empathy, combined with a good dose of humour, often generates lively and interesting stories and poems. Their good quality singing and instrumental work make a strong contribution to their good spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of their secure subject knowledge to generate lively and relevant lessons. Basic skills are taught thoroughly and regularly, and then applied to other tasks so that they become embedded. For example, whatever the subject, pupils throughout the school are expected to use good punctuation and an extensive vocabulary. Good relationships and a brisk pace ensure pupils get the most out of their lessons. Teaching assistants provide good support and teachers provide notes to help them support the pupils that they are working with effectively. Good questioning in lessons and thorough marking test pupils' understanding and ensure that they know how to improve. The most effective teachers adapt their planning during the lesson to meet pupils' needs or to extend learning. Occasionally, the over reliance on writing

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

rather than experimentation, or the insistence on silence rather than discussion, makes learning more pedestrian.

The curriculum serves the pupils well, as basic skills are developed and an interesting range of topics make learning relevant. Good use of visits, visitors and residential trips, such as the Year 4 stay at Sizewell, are powerful ways of ensuring pupils enjoy and remember their learning. Support from outside agencies ensures that pupils with specific challenges are well supported. Liaison with other schools not only promotes smooth transition but also provides opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to attain their full potential. The strong links with the church makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. However, pupils do not have any control over what they learn about, so the curriculum, while meeting their needs effectively, lacks the flexibility to respond to their interests and aspirations. Pupils are well cared for in school and have good guidance to aid their personal development. Good attention is focused on their safety and well-being, and any concerns about pupils are followed up swiftly and effectively. The very few pupils who need support to acquire English language skills are helped to rapidly become integrated into school life, and staff work hard to ensure their parents and carers understand any communications from school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the headteacher joined the school three years ago and the arrival of the deputy headteacher in September 2009, the senior leadership team has become an effective and enthusiastic catalyst for improvement. Teachers have moved to teach different age groups so that they now have a much clearer overview of what pupils should be achieving across the school. Regular discussions to grade pupils' work ensure assessment is accurate and used to plan learning and support. Lessons and pupils' work are monitored and help to inform whole school improvement. However, areas for improvement generated by the outcomes of lesson observations are not followed up sufficiently with individual teachers by, for example, forming the focus of the next observation. Subject leaders have been empowered to evaluate provision and progress in their subjects and are working together to generate a more creative curriculum. Staff and pupils alike are ambitious and eager to excel.

Although there have been several new governors recently who are developing their skills, the governing body provides good support, are knowledgeable and, when

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relevant, hold staff to account to improve the outcomes for pupils. They understand the context of the school extremely well but, while links between the school and the church are very strong, they are aware that more needs to be done to promote engagement with a range of community groups further afield. The school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils have access to a good quality curriculum to ensure they have a strong understanding about how to keep themselves safe. The strong spiritual and caring ethos of the school ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and that all are included in all aspects of school life. The very few incidents of racial or social discrimination have not been tolerated and there has been swift action to eliminate them. Engagement with parents is effective and parents are well informed about their children's progress. Many help in school and the very active and effective parent-teacher association has done much to raise money to support school initiatives.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school from many different nurseries or playgroups. They swiftly settle into school life because induction procedures are very good. Each child has a key worker to relate to, and the very effective planning ensures that children are able to initiate their own learning. The teacher knows exactly what she wants the children to learn and the activities enable each child to extend his or her knowledge and skills through exploration and play. Adults keep a close eye on the children's choices in order to ensure that they have a good balance of learning opportunities over time. The teacher, teaching assistants and volunteer parent helpers work with individual children and

groups to teach them the basic skills they need. The very good assessment procedures, as well as excellent relationships and mutual respect between adults and children, ensure that individual needs are met. The stimulating and well-planned learning environment makes learning fun, generates creativity and stimulates critical thinking. Children are very happy, develop very good personal and social skills and are open to a wide range of learning opportunities. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed extremely well and much of the practice is outstanding, enabling children to make very good progress. However, although communication between home and school is good, there is no mechanism to ensure children's achievements at home are used to plan their next steps even more effectively. The children themselves and their parents do not have a record of achievements over time so that they can delight in all their good learning both now and in the future.

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

Most parents are extremely happy with all aspects of the school's work and all those who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school keeps their child safe. However, a few parents were concerned about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found that the school's procedures, which may have had weaknesses in the past, are now effective in promoting good behaviour. The concerns that a few parents expressed about their children's progress have been addressed very thoroughly by the school and pupils now make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margarets CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	65	22	29	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	72	21	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	44	39	52	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	44	32	43	7	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	45	60	27	36	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	43	40	53	1	1	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	52	34	45	2	3	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)	34	45	34	45	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	47	32	43	3	4	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	41	27	36	9	12	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	32	40	53	5	7	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	35	47	36	48	2	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	60	26	35	3	4	1	1

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.



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30 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich, IP4 2BT

Thank you all very much for your friendly smiles, warm welcome and help when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your care for each other, good behaviour and hard work. Well done and keep up the good work.

We agree with you that you are members of a good school. This is because those in charge know what needs to be done and are good at making improvements. You are all well cared for, and you and your teachers are ambitious for the future. Your thoughtfulness and enjoyment of school help to make the school a happy place to learn in. You are hardly ever absent from school, which is another reason why you all achieve well and leave school with plenty of skills to equip you for the future.

We have asked your teachers to make the most of your eagerness to learn by letting you help decide what you would like to learn about. This will make learning even more fun. Your teachers give you good advice when they mark your work but some of you do not take it. We want them, and you, to make sure that you take their advice. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a very good start to school. We would like them and their parents to add special work and achievements to their 'learning journeys' so that all can all see how well they are doing at home and in school. You are members of a strong community in school and carry out your many duties responsibly. We know that many of you are trying to improve the environment and are hoping to gain Eco Schools status. We would like your school to establish contacts with people from further afield in the United Kingdom and worldwide who have different lifestyles, cultures and beliefs. You can then give help and support to others outside school.

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and wish you all the very best for the future, especially those of you in Year 6 who will soon 'pass the baton on to others' as you discussed in assembly when you move to different school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Dawson

Lead Inspector

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