

School report



St Margaret's CofE Primary School

Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, Lancashire, M16 8FQ

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points.
- Different groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, have made better than expected progress to exceed national levels by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a great strength of the school.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good and pupils are keen to learn. There are excellent supervision and care arrangements for pupils.
- The partnership with parents is outstanding.
- Leaders have established a clear direction for the school which fully involves parents and other partners leading to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are well informed and hold leaders to account through the effective work of their committees.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few cases, teachers' planning does not always take full account of individual pupils' abilities in reading, writing and mathematics or their levels of understanding, especially for pupils learning English as an additional language. This means some work is too hard for some pupils.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when activities are not pitched well enough to meet pupils' needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 24 lessons or part lessons during the inspection. Three lessons were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. There were 21 teachers observed in total. Three teaching assistants were observed providing interventions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, middle leaders, other teachers, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and 11 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). A recent questionnaire survey for parents (receiving 93 responses) conducted by the school was also considered. Inspectors met with the chair of the parent council and with a number of parents who attended the Family Sharing event.
- A telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors listened to individual pupils read, both in and out of lessons. They observed pupils moving around school and at break and lunchtimes.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, its report on how the school is performing, governing body documents and policies relating to special educational needs and disability, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Margaret's CofE Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has increased in size since the last inspection from 417 to 470 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average as is that of those whose first language is not, or believed not to be English. In total, there are 20 different languages spoken at the school.
- There are a higher proportion of pupils than average that arrive or depart from the school at different times during the school year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium (the pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after) is well above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of changes since the last inspection that have included the development of a new school leadership structure and recruitment of new teaching staff.
- The school is part of the Heart of Manchester partnership of eight local primary schools that includes one nursery school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or outstanding in order to raise achievement, by:
 - making better use of assessment information about pupils' attainment to pitch teaching at the right level for pupils' different levels of ability and need, especially for those pupils learning English as an additional language
 - making sure that teaching and support staff regularly check on pupils' understanding and the progress during lessons and then adapt teaching and activities as necessary.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge well below the expected levels for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage entering Key Stage 1 with standards which are close to national levels. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, all groups, including those from different minority ethnic groups and pupils learning English as an additional language, have made good progress, some exceeding national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils of different ages, who arrive later at the school, make good progress, mostly from well-below expected levels.
- Children develop writing and number skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage through activities that capture their interest, for example, when dismantling a chain of connecting bricks and ordering them in blocks of three.
- Occasionally, some pupils are set tasks that prove too difficult for them and this hinders their learning. For example, when younger pupils were asked to roll out a 'worm' with play dough so that they could explore the terms 'shorter' and 'longer', they found the first part of the task too difficult. Consequently, they were not able to do the measuring task.
- Pupils read regularly and with great enjoyment. A lower than average proportion of pupils met expected levels in the end of Year 1 annual check on their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics), but on the retest in Year 2, pupils exceeded expected levels.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils are helped to develop independence and resilience, and to think carefully about a range of subjects. For example, when they work with partners to calculate halves of numbers or when they consider and record ways to help them stay safe. The most able pupils in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson were determined to calculate areas of shapes and worked above expected levels for their age with sustained enthusiasm. The most able work well when placed in ability sets, particularly when developing their higher-level writing skills in a variety of contexts.
- Some pupils find it difficult to keep on-task when the activity and learning objectives are the same for all pupils, regardless of their ability. For example when a Key Stage 2 class were asked to interpret a bar graph, some pupils found the work too easy.
- Disabled pupils and for those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because they get the support that they need. This reflects how well the school promotes equal opportunities.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding exceed the levels attained by their peers by about one term (both in school and nationally) in writing and match them in reading and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspectors agree with the school that teaching is good and that it has improved since the previous inspection. In some lessons, strong teaching makes effective use of information about pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in order to ensure that new learning builds on their current understanding.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants make effective use of learning journals to record what levels children start with and record the progress they make daily to inform the next steps of learning. Bilingual teaching support staff provide very good support for pupils whose first language is not, or believed not to be English.
- In Key Stage 1, some good examples of well-informed planning were observed. Teachers used information about pupils' learning needs to make sure teaching and extra support was pitched at the right level for their different abilities. Consequently, pupils' learning was swift and purposeful. In one lesson, for example, the least able pupils were supported by a teaching assistant to use single cubes when counting amounts up to 10. The most able pupils independently used blocks

of 10 units to do a more demanding task but with larger numbers. As a result, different groups made good progress.

- Occasionally, teachers do not plan work that enables all pupils to make rapid progress because the learning objective is unclear or work is set at too high a level, particularly for the least able pupils, or those learning English as an additional language. For example, when Key Stage 2 pupils were learning about grammar and punctuation rules some pupils were unclear about what they needed to do. On occasions, teachers and other adults do not check regularly enough in lessons on pupils' understanding and the progress and then adapt activities when necessary to do so.
- In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, the planning made clear references to pupils' levels of ability to provide a variety of tasks that met the needs of all pupils. The teaching assistant was well deployed to check on the most able group while they calculated areas of shapes; the least able were overseen by the teacher when using reasoning to solve mathematics problems.
- In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, the teacher used her good subject knowledge when questioning and when guiding pupils with differing ability levels to use more complex sentences in their writing. Direct teaching for a small group of less able pupils ensured that these pupils made good progress. Marking was used well to ensure pupils knew what they had achieved what they needed to do next to improve their work. Because this feedback and guidance was clear and helpful, pupils responded well and were able to refine their work.
- Individual education plans and interventions are used well to the benefit of different groups, for example, when the most able pupils in Year 2 were provided with appropriate activities to extend their skills in adding decimal numbers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils engage in lessons and play well together at break times, making good use of the range of play equipment and support of sport coaches deployed through additional funding for physical education and sport.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers and are keen to do their best in lessons. This positive attitude helps them to learn and to make the most of the opportunities provided.
- Excellent supervision arrangements in all parts of the school ensure that pupils behave responsibly on the corridors and up and down stairs.
- Teachers explain to pupils how they can manage everyday risks, such as when crossing the road or using the internet, and these messages, together with the school's routines and procedures for keeping pupils safe, help pupils to learn about safety and to stay safe.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and caring. They say they feel safe and well-supported by staff if there are any problems. Many benefit from the from the 'Place2B' provision when they receive emotional support. Some parents also make good use of this facility.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is outstanding because there is a tremendous community spirit underpinned by the excellent work of the parent council and related Family Sharing days. On these occasions, parents are given the opportunity to observe and share in the work of their children along with other parents. The parent council is a valued representative body in the school community.
- There are few bullying incidents in school. Any incidents are clearly reported and followed up with parents. There have been no recent fixed-term exclusions. Attendance is in line with national averages and there is minimal persistent absence. Occasionally, large groups of pupils are absent during religious holidays.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour at the school and agree that pupils are well cared for and safe. They appreciate the regular updates they have about their children's progress in attendance, behaviour and learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching has improved and is now good and all groups have made good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Skilled senior leaders and governors work extremely well together with the newly formed middle leadership team to set a clear direction for the school. Governors have appointed four teachers to become phase leaders. They work to improve and develop provision in each of the key stages and report to senior leaders and the governing body about teaching and achievement. The outstanding partnership forged with parents has been a major achievement as they are fully supportive of the school's work on behalf of their children.
- The quality of teaching is accurately monitored by leaders so that teachers know what they need to do to improve lessons. Strong links with the Heart of Manchester partnership of schools have led to a sharing of good classroom practice, particularly in the development of newly qualified teachers.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support that has helped to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. It judges that the school has good capacity to continue to make improvements because of the positive impact made by senior and new middle leaders so far since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and the senior team 'lead from the front' to improve teaching. They know that for the school to be even better, all teachers' planning needs to take full account of each pupil's ability level to ensure that they are engaged in all lessons and make the progress of which they are capable.
- There are robust systems and policies in place at the school which lead to safe practices and a concerted drive to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. Performance management of teachers is closely linked to the school improvement priorities.
- The curriculum provides equal opportunities for pupils to increase their learning, for example, in lively French lessons or stimulating physical education lessons. Educational visits to local faith centres, museums or other places of interest serve to enrich pupils' learning. After-school clubs and activities have led to greater involvement of boys and girls in inter-school competitions in football and netball. Wonderful teamwork was observed when children took part in the school's nativity play; this was an excellent example of how well the school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils
- Additional funding for physical education and sport has been well used to increase participation of boys and girls in competitive games outside school and to improve the quality of sports teaching in the school.
- The school meets the requirements for safeguarding, with staff checks routinely made as well as following safer recruitment procedures. Staff and governors receive updated training in safeguarding on an annual basis.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed about the work of the school through new committee structures that involves groups reporting to the full governing body. Governors have received further training on understanding data on the school's performance so that they can ask challenging questions of leaders about the quality of teaching and the achievement of different groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language. They manage the school finances well, making very good use of pupil premium money and additional funding for physical education and sport. They have overseen the good progress of all groups, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding who achieve at or above national expectations. Governors hold the school and its teachers to account because they know about the work of the school through their link roles. Performance management and other school policies are reviewed on an annual basis. Teachers' performance outcomes are then matched by governors to any salary progression.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105493
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	429630

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Smith
Headteacher	Alison White
Date of previous school inspection	28 May 2012
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