

St Margaret's Catholic Primary School

Glossop Road, Glossop, SK13 6JH

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There has not been enough good teaching in the last few years to promote consistently good achievement, and pupils make more progress in some year groups than others.
- Teachers' expectations of the progress pupils can make in lessons are not always high enough.
- Too many pupils do not make enough progress in writing, and they do not get enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve real-life problems.
- Work is not always demanding enough for the more-able pupils.
- Teaching assistants do not yet have the necessary skills to provide extra work for pupils who have difficulty with their learning.
- Subject leaders do not have enough first-hand opportunities to observe teaching to judge standards in their subject and plan for improvement.
- The governors do not have a thorough system for checking how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- The children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress.
- Behaviour is good. Children care for each other and show respect to adults.
- The school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure. They enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher provides strong and supportive leadership. She and the new leadership team have eradicated inadequate teaching.
- Standards in reading are consistently above average by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes during five lesson observations and a series of short visits to other lessons. The headteacher joined the inspector on all of these visits.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, two members of the governing body, teachers, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of informal discussions with parents and carers on both mornings of the inspection, and questionnaires completed by staff. There were not enough responses from parents and carers on the online Parent View to take account of their views by this method.
- He scrutinised a wide range of school documentation and data relating to teaching and learning, behaviour and safeguarding, and heard pupils reading.

Inspection team

David Edwards, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most classes are taught in mixed-age year groups. The Nursery and Reception children are taught in one class.
- The headteacher at the time of the last inspection left in December 2011. The school was then led by an acting headteacher until the appointment of an executive headteacher in January 2012. She is also in charge of a neighbouring school through an informal federation arrangement, but the two schools have separate governing bodies.
- In January 2012, a temporary assistant headteacher joined. She teaches and manages the Early Years Foundation Stage. A temporary class teacher joined from the partner school in September 2012 and teaches pupils in Year 6. A part-time teacher was employed to teach Year 3 each morning from September 2012.
- Fourteen pupils from Year 6 in the partner school are taught in the same class as the four pupils in Year 6 from St Margaret's. They remain registered at their own school.
- Virtually all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average, while the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority, is well above average.
- The school's most recent test results cannot be judged against government floor standards, because there were not enough pupils in Year 6 to make such comparisons statistically valid.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics and writing, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - making sure that teaching is consistently at least good, with more outstanding teaching to accelerate pupils' progress
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their skills to solving real-life problems in mathematics
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics and topic work, so that it is more informative and guides pupils to understand their next steps in learning
 - consistently teaching pupils the skills they need to evaluate the quality of their own work and that of others
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in different subjects
 - making sure that work is always hard enough to stretch more-able pupils
 - training teaching assistants to support underachieving pupils more effectively.
- Give subject leaders regular opportunities to observe teaching, so they develop a clear view of standards and can plan effectively to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Ensure that governors thoroughly and regularly check the work of the school, so they can hold leaders to account for its work, and particularly how well pupils are doing, by:
 - teaching them the skills of analysing school and national data so that they are fully aware of how much progress pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make from Year 1 to Year 6 is slower than in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is better in reading and mathematics than in writing. Not enough pupils, particularly those who are most able, reach the standards expected for them in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Children join the Nursery with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception class, where they feel safe and secure and play and work well together. Good progress in learning about letters and sounds (phonics) helps them to develop their early reading and writing skills.
- The school has improved its systems to track the progress made by disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The resulting information is used in planning work for these pupils, and teaching assistants help and guide them to keep up with other pupils. However, no additional focused work is planned to accelerate their progress, and teaching assistants are not yet skilled in providing such work.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in upper Key Stage 2. For the past three years in mathematics and for two years in reading, results in the Year 6 national tests have been above average. However, progress in mathematics has not been good enough in Years 1 to 4. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem-solving tasks.
- School leaders have rightly identified the need to improve writing across the school so that pupils reach at least the levels expected for their age. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to extend their writing skills, particularly in topic work, because teachers use too many worksheets that limit the amount of work pupils can record. This is not the case in Year 6, where pupils write extensively about a variety of subjects and their work is of a much higher quality.
- Pupils take pride in their work, which is generally well presented. Opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- During the past few years, the quality of teaching has been inconsistent and has not raised achievement to the levels expected of pupils in each year group. However, it has improved since September 2012 with new teaching staff, better checking of teaching, and sharing of good practice. More outstanding teaching is required to accelerate pupils' progress so that they can consistently reach or exceed the levels expected of them.
- In the Nursery and Reception class, teaching is good because teachers have a good understanding of the children's needs. They use this to plan purposeful learning activities both indoors and outside. They check on children's learning through the day and guide them well in their activities to improve their understanding.
- In most lessons the activities planned by teachers interest and engage pupils, although they do not always demand enough from more-able pupils to accelerate their learning.
- Teachers generally ask effective questions to probe pupils' thinking and check on the learning that has taken place. In a well-taught English lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, pupils were using their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills to describe a character from a Second World War novel they were studying. The role play thoroughly engaged them and helped pupils of all abilities to make good progress, and the teacher took every opportunity to check on

pupils' learning.

- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not always high enough. A scrutiny of pupils' work in topic books showed that all pupils, apart from those in Year 6, are given the same tasks based on prepared worksheets and the same questions to answer. Often, the answers required are too basic and do not make enough demands on pupils, particularly the most able, to extend learning or to give them opportunities to enhance their writing skills.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons in all year groups, and the school has invested its pupil premium money effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They provide effective support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as those supported by pupil premium funding so that they can make as much progress as their classmates and attainment gaps are closing. However, the school has not set up extra support on a small-group or individual basis to accelerate their progress of these pupils. Some pupil premium money has been used to provide enrichment activities such as violin playing, which has increased pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- The marking of pupils' work in English gives them a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve it. However, this is not the case in other subject areas, especially in mathematics and topic work.
- Pupils are not taught sufficiently well how to evaluate the quality of their own work or that of their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and carers say this is a safe school, where behaviour is good in and out of lessons. Pupils say they feel safe. Staff make sure that they are aware of the potential risks of using mobile phones and the internet. Pupils demonstrate good understanding about these threats to their safety.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes contribute well to their learning. They collaborate well and support each other in lessons. For example, in a discussion on African myths in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils listened carefully to each other and valued the different ideas put forward.
- Pupils enjoy school and say they feel well cared for. All pupils are welcomed and valued, and staff go out of their way to ensure that their individual needs are catered for. Parents and carers agree that their children are happy in school. As one said, 'It is because of the family ethos of the school.'
- Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and parents and carers appreciate this. School records show that there have been no exclusions for some considerable time and poor behaviour is rare. There have been no recorded incidents of a racist nature.
- Pupils say that they do not see bullying as an issue in school and this view was echoed by parents and carers. Instances of bullying are extremely rare, and pupils are confident that if any does occur, staff will quickly sort it out.
- The school has worked successfully with parents and carers to improve attendance, which is now average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The high turnover of staff in the last two years has made it difficult for leaders to establish and

sustain consistently good teaching throughout the school, and this has had a detrimental impact on learning and progress. The executive headteacher is showing strong and supportive leadership and is now bringing stability to leadership at all levels. Her vision for improvement is shared by the new leadership team and all staff.

- Recent changes to the leadership structure mean that some staff have recently taken on new roles. Consequently, senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects are not yet fully effective in helping the headteacher to lead the school.
- The teacher in charge of English has had training to help her in her role and has put her skills to good use in planning what should be taught when. This has led to better teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and higher standards in reading. Neither she nor the new subject leader in mathematics have had enough opportunities to visit other teachers' lessons to get a clear view of standards and plan improvements. Writing remains an area requiring improvement, because the school has been unable to raise standards for the last two years.
- The headteacher observes lessons regularly and provides feedback to teachers about their work. She has been supported in this work by a local authority adviser. Teachers say that they find the feedback helpful and it helps them to improve their teaching. The school makes good use of detailed information from lesson observations and the progress pupils make to decide pay increases for teachers.
- The local authority has supported the school during the changes in leadership and provided advice to the executive headteacher and subject leaders. The help provided to the literacy subject leader has led to improvements in reading.
- Pupils are taught a wide and balanced range of subjects, but do not get enough chance to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills when learning in different subjects. Good opportunities in subjects and the way the school teaches values help to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding, although pupils have few opportunities to develop their multicultural understanding by experiencing communities beyond the immediate locality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the reports of the headteacher and senior managers. The progress that teachers and leaders make towards their individual targets is discussed regularly with the headteacher, providing a suitable basis for salary progression. Any underperformance is identified and relevant opportunities are given to staff to develop their professional skills through training, including partnerships with local schools. The governing body makes certain that pupil premium money is used effectively and that safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements. However, governors are not in a position to effectively hold the school account for its actions, because they do not have thorough monitoring and evaluation systems and rely upon the school reporting about pupils' progress. They do not have the skills to analyse assessment and tracking data, so they cannot yet ask searching questions about the progress pupils make.

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	112911
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401320

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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Cartwright
Headteacher	Margaret Hyde
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
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