

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105323
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	287195
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gail Prosser
Headteacher	Mrs K Perry
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002
School address	Heywood Road Prestwich Manchester Lancashire M25 2BW
Telephone number	0161 7731432
Fax number	0161 2537250

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school near to the town of Bury. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. There is a significant proportion of pupils who have little expressive English on entry. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award and being highly commended in the Mike Lord Memorial Award for environmental development in Bury.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Margaret's is a good and improving school. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and a clear direction for the school. Pupils' achievement is good. By the time they leave school in Year 6, they have reached above average standards and made good progress in relation to their starting points. A declining picture at the end of Key Stage 1 has been turned around. Indications are that this year, for the first time in four years, the pupils in Year 2 are set to reach challenging targets. Children settle in quickly in the Foundation Stage. Their progress is satisfactory rather than good. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leader. Good procedures to make middle leaders more accountable have resulted in tighter monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and more effective assessment systems in some subjects. This is not yet widespread and the school has this as a priority. The school's keystone is that pupils are treated as individuals. Pupils thrive on the level of attention and care they receive. Their personal development and well-being are good and their attendance and enjoyment of school are outstanding. They become more confident and assured as they move up through school. They are comfortable talking to visitors and speak to them at every opportunity. Parents support the school overwhelmingly and are particularly grateful to the headteacher for her leadership and approachability.

Teaching and learning make a good contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Teaching is no more than satisfactory in the Foundation Stage because children's learning through play is not planned carefully enough. The pupils in Key Stage 2 make particularly good gains in their learning because they are excited and well challenged in their lessons. The curriculum is good and the range of enrichment activities is outstanding. Sporting and music clubs, in particular, are well attended and relished by the pupils. Good partnerships with outside agencies bolster the good care, guidance and support that the pupils receive.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school provides good value for money. The maintenance of high standards in Year 6 and improvements evident in standards for Year 2 show good capacity to improve still further. The school knows itself well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in the Foundation Stage so that the children make the same good progress as pupils in the rest of the school.
- Extend good practice in subject leadership so that assessment procedures and monitoring and evaluation are more consistently rigorous.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of pupils reach challenging targets and make good progress in relation to their starting points. Children join the Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with national expectations, although their social skills are lower. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage because of appropriate teaching and care for their personal development. They join Year 1 with average attainment and broadly satisfactory social skills. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress is good overall. The greatest gains in learning are made in Key Stage 2, where there are more strengths in the teaching. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities

make the same good gains in their learning as their classmates. Pupils who have little expressive English also make good progress. Standards in Year 6 are high in all subjects. A decline in standards in Key Stage 1 has been arrested so that these pupils now reach above average levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite, self-assured and welcoming. There are significant strengths in their personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very keen to speak and listen. For example, Year 4 discussed whether playtimes should be abolished and concluded that this was not a good idea. The school council represents pupils from throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage, and makes a good contribution to school improvement. Children's social skills are less secure in the Reception class and they are not always sure how to behave. Pupils' behaviour is good in the main school and they respect each other because of the respect shown to them. They play well together and enjoy working in the garden and using the adventure playground. Nonetheless, they say they would appreciate more equipment to use at playtimes. Attendance is well above average and pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school. They appreciate their role as members of a community and are involved in numerous fundraising activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Key Stage 2 classes. Typical strengths in lessons include teachers' ability to engage pupils' interests and make learning fun. For example, they use a good range of practical activities and games. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn, and good classroom management promotes positive attitudes to learning. Well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties or with little expressive English. Small group teaching in the Reception class is effective because it is clearly planned. Outdoor play and independent work are not as well organised and some children flounder because their activities are not purposeful enough. Assessment information is used well to plan work to meet pupils' differing needs. Teachers' marking offers pupils encouragement but does not consistently tell them what is good about their work and what they can do to improve it next time. The teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 1 has improved through a number of initiatives, such as better assessment. As a result, pupils now make faster progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The strong focus on literacy and numeracy ensures that there are good links between subjects and these promote pupils' basic skills well. Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have enhanced pupils' computer skills. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, but resources are limited for developing outdoor play and enhancing role play activities. The curriculum is enriched by a focus on environmental issues and this helps pupils to learn about living in an ecologically sustainable way. Special projects, for example, in science, music and art, give all pupils much to enjoy and are especially appealing to the most talented pupils. The

curriculum makes a very good contribution to the fitness of pupils through a very wide range of extra clubs and coaching opportunities. Activities such as a large choir, gardening, chess and computer clubs, as well as residential experiences, contribute further to pupils' personal development. Pupils enthuse about the many visits and visitors they have and how this makes their learning fun and exciting.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school and know that there is always an adult to turn to if they have any worries. This is because of the school's very strong caring character, a safe environment and very good relationships between adults and pupils. Adults reward pupils' successes and boost their self-esteem, and pupils say they feel well supported in lessons. Measures to safeguard pupils, for instance, child protection arrangements and risk assessments, are in place. Pupils with specific extra needs are well supported by highly skilled staff and outside agencies. This ensures good achievement. Pupils make a happy transition to and from school because of good liaison with outside agencies and parents. Pupils' academic progress is regularly monitored, enabling teachers to identify where extra support or challenge is needed.

Pupils are not always involved enough in assessing their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been single minded in her determination to continue to raise standards and achievement. This has been instrumental in improving performance at the end of Year 2 and in developing the role of middle leaders. Commitment to the pupils' care and personal development is intrinsic to the school's character. As a result, pupils are very happy to be in school. The headteacher is supported by a very good governing body who are led by a highly committed and effective chair of governors. Governors are supportive and involved, and many of them take the time to come into school. Particular governors are responsible for individual classes and follow them right through from Reception to Year 6. The senior leadership team runs the school well. Strategies to distribute leadership are beginning to involve middle leaders taking more responsibility for pupils' performance and school improvement. Examples of this are in the improved monitoring and assessment procedures in physical education, mathematics and ICT. The school understands its strengths and weaknesses and shares this with staff and parents. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and it has a good reputation in the local community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Prestwich, M25 2BW

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to Mr Alston and me when we came to your school. You were very keen to speak to us and to tell us all about your school. Like you and your parents, we think yours is a good school. You help to make it so effective because of your good behaviour and keenness to learn. You are taught well and make good progress in your work. By the time you leave school, you reach high standards. Your standards had been much lower in Key Stage 1 but that has begun to improve. Children quickly settle into school because of the satisfactory teaching in the Reception class. We want this teaching to be as good as in the lessons in the rest of the school. Your headteacher and senior leaders know how well you are doing and look after you very well. We want all the leaders of subjects to share in looking at how you are getting on with your work.

Your attendance is excellent and you really enjoy being at school. You mix well with each other and the adults you work with and you also know how to keep safe. We would like you to help your headteacher to keep improving the school, by continuing to work as well as you can.