

# St Margaret's Church of England High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104720
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	301672
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mrs J Y Tolley

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Male
<b>Number on roll</b>	1,001
School	767
6 <sup>th</sup> form	234 (mixed)
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr B G Ricketts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr D F Dennison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–26 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Aigburth Road Liverpool Merseyside L17 6AB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4271825
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4279430

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	6 June 2007
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Margaret's Church of England High School is an average-sized comprehensive school for boys with a mixed sixth form. Students come to the school from 60 primary schools in the Liverpool area. Students are predominantly of White British heritage and there are very few for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well below average. The school was designated a specialist technology college in 1996.

## 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 school. Parents and students widely support this view. The school's view of itself is accurate, identifying clearly its strengths but also honestly appraising and addressing its less successful areas, such as achievement in mathematics in the recent past. The school has excellent relationships with other institutions and the business community through its technology college status, which have contributed to the curriculum and learning developments across the school.

Students join the school with above average levels of attainment, they maintain high standards and their overall achievement is good; achievement is particularly strong in English and in subjects associated with the school's technology status. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers. The inspection focused on progress in mathematics and found that the actions taken by the school are leading to a notable improvement in students' progress. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what makes effective teaching and inspectors saw evidence of good progress in the lessons they visited. Students rapidly understand new ideas because teachers present them clearly. Effective questioning and well-sequenced activities enable students to build securely on their previous learning. However, the quality of marking is not consistent across the school and does not always give students the guidance they need to improve their work. Similarly, assessment information is not always used effectively to provide an appropriate level of challenge in lessons, particularly for the most able.

Students' personal development is outstanding, although the school itself modestly graded it as only good. Students demonstrated excellent attitudes and a high level of maturity in their discussions with inspectors. Some specifically commented on the good use of assessment in some lessons which helped them improve their work. They clearly enjoy coming to school and value greatly the excellent opportunities they are given to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities. Attendance is high, students show enthusiasm in lessons and their behaviour is exemplary. They speak very positively about the outstanding care and pastoral support they receive throughout their time at the school. They play a very important role in shaping the direction of their school and make a significant contribution to the wider community through, for example, their fundraising and enterprise activities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the frequent opportunities they are given for reflection and expression.

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The school has a very clear vision of its place within the wider community. It is at the forefront of some innovative practice, for example, in its research into the 'classroom of the future' and enterprise activities through its excellent links with higher education and business. It has made good use of its specialist status to share good practice both within and beyond the school. Similarly, the school works very effectively with other schools within the 'Faiths Collaborative' to ensure students can pursue their interests and achieve their goals, particularly in the sixth form. Very effective planning for improvement, based on rigorous analysis of assessment information, leads to the

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school having a very clear understanding of its effectiveness. However, the role of the middle leaders in monitoring the school's performance and raising achievement is as yet at the early stages of development. Issues raised in the last inspection have been tackled very successfully. The very clear direction of the headteacher, strongly supported by the senior leadership team, ensures that the capacity to improve further is good.

The school was visited by two inspectors for one day. Inspectors investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, and care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, interviews with senior members of staff and students, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

### **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

**Grade: 2**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good because students' personal development and well-being are outstanding, they are very well cared for and the curriculum is good. Students enter the sixth form with standards that are broadly average and results in 2006 indicate that their achievement in advanced level courses was satisfactory and an improving picture. Retention rates are high and a high proportion of students go on to higher education. Relationships between students and between students and staff are excellent. Students say that they are treated as adults and have many opportunities to contribute to the life and work of the school. They speak very highly of the support and guidance they receive before they enter the sixth form, during the induction process and when they are considering their future options for learning or choices of careers. Once they embark on courses they invariably complete them successfully. The curriculum is enriched through a well-considered programme for citizenship. The resources and facilities for learning are of high quality. Sixth formers have many opportunities to enhance their learning, for instance, through work related learning, cultural activities and university enrichment courses. The progress students make on their courses is good overall, though this is too variable at present. A revised mentoring system has recently been introduced to enable students of all abilities to maximise their potential. This is yet to be embedded in subjects and it is too early for its impact to be seen. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The issues raised in the last inspection have been resolved very effectively and the capacity to improve further is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the role of middle leaders in raising achievement throughout the school.
- Improve the day-to-day use of assessment information to better meet the needs of individual students in lessons and ensure teachers' marking is consistent in helping students improve their work.

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**Annex B**

# Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16–19</b>
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## Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>NA</b>	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

## Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Does this school require special measures?	<b>No</b>	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	<b>No</b>	

<sup>1</sup> 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.

The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

7 June 2007



Dear Students

**Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England High School, Liverpool,  
L17 6AB**

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour, your very positive attitudes towards your learning and the way you work together with your teachers to make the school as good as it is.

I'm sure you will be delighted, but not surprised, to hear that your school is a good one. You all work very hard and make good progress. This is because the adults are good at helping you to learn and because you take your work very seriously. You told us that you appreciated the support you are given by teachers to help you when you have difficulties. We agree that you are looked after very well and that teaching is good, but think that some of you could do even better in lessons. We have asked the school to make sure that the information teachers have about your progress is used more effectively so that all of you are all able to do your best in lessons. In addition, we have asked that when teachers mark your work they are consistent in giving you helpful guidance on how to improve your work.

The school makes the most of its specialist status as a technology college to give you experience of developing your expertise through enterprise activities. Its collaboration with other schools, businesses and the university also ensure you are able to pursue your interests and reach your goals, particularly in the sixth form. You told us how much you appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for you. You play an important role in helping the school to make decisions. It is understandable that you are proud of your school and of your achievements.

The leadership and management are good and the school has a very clear idea of what it needs to improve further and has plans in place to do this. We have asked them to ensure all teachers, especially heads of department, have opportunity to participate fully in this process. You can help by continuing to work hard.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley  
Lead inspector