

# St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Bracknell

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110033
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	356676
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Parkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Frances Valentine
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Pembroke Bracknell RG12 7RD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 424030
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 304041
<b>Email address</b>	head@office.stmargaretc.bracknell-forest.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were seen and nine teachers were observed. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The school's work and a wide range of documentation were reviewed. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school development plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and pupils and from 89 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Whether teachers develop the pupils' independent learning skills well enough.
- The curriculum and how well it provides for higher-ability pupils.
- The role teachers play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

## Information about the school

St Margaret Clitherow serves the local parish and is an averaged sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage though an increasing number are from a wide number of minority ethnic groups. Currently there are few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English though the numbers of pupils that speak English as an additional language is increasing each year. An average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about half the national average. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Investor in People award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Margaret Clitherow is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The headteacher's enthusiasm, determination and close attention to detail are felt in all aspects of the school's life. Parents and carers, staff and pupils acknowledge her very positive influence. Parents and carers recognise the importance of the school in their children's lives and appreciate its numerous qualities. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are unanimous in saying that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. One representative view was: 'The school has been really good for my daughter and for her needs. The school supports her in every way.' Pupils' individuality and uniqueness are celebrated well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This means that the community is harmonious and cohesive and its diversity is seen as a cause for celebration. Staff know the pupils well and they provide good levels of care, guidance and support resulting in pupils feeling totally safe, behaving exceptionally well, adopting excellent healthy lifestyles and having positive attitudes to school and learning. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils develop into mature, responsible and reflective pupils.

Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in each year group. By the time that they reach Year 6, standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Although pupils' progress is good overall, it is satisfactory in mathematics. Fewer pupils attain the higher level at the end of Year 6 in mathematics than in English or science. This is because sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of what higher-ability pupils can achieve. Furthermore, pupils' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in practical mathematics and investigations is not sufficiently well developed.

The reason why pupils enjoy school and learning is that the quality of teaching is good. Relationships are particularly strong because teachers manage pupils well and this leads to their outstanding behaviour which has a positive effect on learning. All classrooms are characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils enjoy the many opportunities that they are given to work in pairs and small groups. As one pupil remarked: 'We love learning. Our teachers really help us when we are stuck. It's OK to get stuck sometimes because that means that we are going to learn something new.' This mature thought stems from the school's well-founded emphasis on strengthening the pupils' independence in learning. This is achieved by teachers almost always ensuring that pupils are clear about lesson objectives and how the activities set help to meet them. There are, though, some inconsistencies in teachers' marking. Although marking is supportive, it does not always highlight areas for improvement. There are two parts to this shortcoming. First, it means that some pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, are not always sure of whether they have met the lesson objectives. Second, pupils are not always helped

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to understand what they need to do to meet their long-term targets, particularly in mathematics.

Leadership and management are good. There is close and careful monitoring of the school's provision. Tracking data of pupils' progress are of good quality. Taken together these twin aspects enable senior leaders to have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further and also to ensure that self-evaluation is accurate. This results in the ensuing school development plan being of good quality and a useful tool in bringing about improvement. The school has responded well to the improvement points raised at the last inspection, particularly in the strengthening of writing skills. The removal of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and lifting of standards in English and science demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the attainment of higher-ability pupils in mathematics by:
  - strengthening pupils' mathematical investigational skills
  - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Remove inconsistencies in teachers' marking by:
  - ensuring that comments focus on the extent to which lesson outcomes have been met
  - helping pupils to know what they have to do in order to meet their longer-term targets.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Most children enter the Reception class with skills, especially communication, language and literacy skills and personal skills, that are below those levels typically found. Good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and each year group ensures that both boys and girls achieve well. This has resulted in standards being raised to above average levels in English and science at the end of Year 6. These outcomes indicate good progress and achievement given the pupils' starting points. The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms this picture of good achievement for all groups of pupils. Good progress is secured because most teaching is good. In lessons teachers generally provide good challenge for pupils whatever their abilities. However, this is not always the case in mathematics. Higher-ability pupils achieve well overall, though progress and achievement for these pupils is only satisfactory in mathematics. This is because teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for these pupils. Even so, in some mathematics lessons the challenge is good. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher's lively and effective introduction to a lesson on reflective symmetry captured the pupils' interest well. Here, the teacher ensured that activities met all groups of pupils' learning needs and good progress was made in the lesson with higher-ability pupils extending and applying their knowledge well. Due to effective provision, those that have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. They have a highly developed understanding of right and wrong and this is reflected in their excellent

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behaviour around the school. It is also shown in the above average levels of attendance. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons. They are lively, questioning and keen to engage inspectors in conversation about their school. Their excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles is exemplified by their keen understanding of the need to exercise and even the youngest children have a good knowledge of healthy eating. Pupils are proud of gaining the Healthy Schools award. They thoroughly enjoy taking on responsibilities such as through the influential school council and by being a peer mediator. One peer mediator was most dismayed that he was unable to put his training into effect: 'There aren't any problems so I don't have to mediate at all', he remarked! Pupils' good inter-personal skills linked to good progress mean that they are prepared well for their move to secondary education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching is good and this is the main reason for pupils' good progress and achievement. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and develop good relationships with the pupils. Lesson planning is thorough and generally shows how different groups are to be catered for, and the best includes subsequent evaluations showing how well individuals and groups have progressed. In most lessons, the pace of learning is good, though on occasion when teachers talk for too long, learning is satisfactory because pupils become restless and their concentration and behaviour dips. The use of assessment information is mostly good, with teachers making good use of this information to help plan

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future lessons. However, its effectiveness is lessened because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking.

The school provides an attractive learning environment and the space is used well despite the fact that some classrooms are difficult to arrange due to their shape. The curriculum is stimulating and engages pupils by giving them a wide range of experiences particularly in music and drama which are taught by specialist teachers. The curricular provision for higher-ability pupils is mostly good with the school providing a good range of activities to meet their needs both in school and also in partnership with local schools. Subjects are linked together well to provide meaning to learning. This is particularly the case for literacy skills. The school is rightly considering how mathematical skills can be integrated as effectively into topics and themes. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of visits out of school and also by focus weeks such as those for geography and art.

Parents and carers agree that pupils are looked after well. Pupils' welfare and safety are paramount and this is evident in the good and rigorous protection procedures and the care given for vulnerable pupils. Teachers know their pupils well, providing appropriately for those who require a more tailored approach.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Clear-sighted leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher has led the school for a number of years with unflagging enthusiasm and determination. She is supported well by senior staff. They check the school's performance rigorously and offer constructive advice and training. The school's commitment to training and development for staff is reflected in gaining the Investor in People award. Some subject leaders, such as those for English and mathematics, make a good contribution to the school's self-evaluation process. In some subjects such as science and information and communication technology it is senior staff who monitor provision because some staff are on maternity leave and this has left a gap. Teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and senior staff's vision for further improvement is shared by all the staff who are equally committed to providing the best for the pupils. The governing body fulfils all its legal obligations well and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff by ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements are robust and of good quality. As well as supporting the school, the governing body holds the school to account well for its work.

In many respects the school promotes equality effectively. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and the school works hard to enable all groups to access the wide range of

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opportunities available. However, because higher-ability pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as in English and science, this limits the effectiveness of the promotion of equality of opportunity to good. The school is a cohesive community and leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens within the school's Catholic ethos. There is very good involvement with the church, local community and schools. The school also celebrates the wide range of minority ethnic groups present in the school particularly well and this helps all pupils to gain a good understanding of other cultures.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are keen to learn, they play together well and are well behaved. They achieve well and show high levels of enjoyment because teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. Children make particularly good progress in their reading and writing skills and by the time that they enter Year 1, most children attain the expected goals in all areas of learning. Staff provide well for the children's welfare. They provide a warm, caring environment and instil confidence in the children. The indoor learning environment is attractive and provides a strong focus on the development of the children's communication and literacy skills. A good range of activities is provided in the classroom and staff ensure that there is a good balance between activities that the children choose themselves and those which are directed by adults either in group sessions or with the whole class. The outdoor environment is less enticing. The space is cramped and there is no hard surface for wheeled toys, and even though there is occasional access to the playground, this restricts children's choices and the free-flow of provision between the indoor and outdoor space. Staff note down children's achievements well and use these effectively when planning future activities. Even though there was a lack of confidence in

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the staff in judging achievement, good training ensures that these assessments are now accurate.

Staff enjoy a close partnership with parents and carers and they frequently provide activities and ideas for them to help their children at home. Partnerships with partner pre-schools and nurseries are less well developed. Nonetheless induction arrangements are well organised and many parents and carers commented on how well their children settle.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The headteacher and staff clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents and carers who returned the questionnaires. A number of individual comments reflected the good care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents and carers were unanimous in saying that their children are safe and that teaching is good. Inspectors agree with these views. The numbers of parental criticisms were very few. All parents and carers that responded said that overall they were happy with their children's experience at the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret Clitherow Primary School 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 89 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	63	71	25	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	67	29	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	46	47	53	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	46	45	51	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	44	49	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	44	48	54	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	56	38	43	1	1	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)	35	39	42	47	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	45	47	53	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	37	49	55	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	42	47	53	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	55	39	44	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	58	37	42	0	0	0	0

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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



26 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Bracknell RG12 7RD**

Thank you all for the warm welcome that you gave to us when we visited your school. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. You make good progress in your learning and learn well in all classes because your teachers make sure that your lessons help you. You told us that you enjoy school and learning and you feel exceptionally safe. Your behaviour is excellent and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is an area in which your teachers make sure you shine. Your headteacher is doing a good job and you are lucky to have such a dedicated team of staff.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things that need to be improved. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do two things. First, to make sure that those of you who find learning easy, do as well in mathematics as in English and science. Your teachers need to make sure that you have lots of practical mathematics to do so you can apply your good knowledge when doing investigations. They also need to make sure that they give you hard work in maths to help you to learn more. Second, we have asked teachers to make sure that their marking always helps you to learn. They need to make sure that their comments focus on lesson objectives and also to make sure that you know what you need to do to meet your longer-term targets.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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