

St Margaret's C of E VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101233
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	335682
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Brittain
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Ejvet
Date of previous school inspection	6 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent two-fifths of the time looking at learning and visited 20 lessons taught by 14 teachers, and held meetings with the chair of governors, the headteacher, other staff representatives and a group of pupils. They looked at a range of documentation, for example that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation and information to track pupils' progress. Parent, staff and pupil questionnaire responses were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- signs of a reversal from the fall in levels of attainment and in rates of progress by the end of Year 6 in the past two years
- boys' attainment compared to that of girls
- the progress of, and provision for, pupils in Years 3 to 6 who find learning more difficult
- the range of opportunities for pupils to learn about and use information and communication technology (ICT).

Information about the school

This is a larger than average two-form entry primary school with 15 classes including the Nursery. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage begin the Nursery in the September following their third birthday dependent on available spaces. They attend part time, either morning or afternoon. About 70% of the Nursery children transfer to the Reception class. They transfer in the September before their fifth birthday; the youngest children commencing full time after the autumn half term. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are higher than the national averages. Just over four-fifths of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Black or Black British African. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than in most schools. Most of these have learning difficulties and a small number have statements of special education needs. The school provides care out of school hours in breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Margaret's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Some aspects of the school's work are good. Its partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and is reflected in their strong support and involvement. One parent/carer writes, 'I think overall the school is doing well' and another writes that she likes the school because it promotes her child's education as well as his faith. Pupils develop well personally, and this is reflected in their good conduct and positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe in school and undertake their roles, such as play leaders, conscientiously. Their good attendance reflects their good enjoyment of school. Pupils get involved well in local community events, which supports their all-round development. Pupils' knowledge of healthy living is excellent and is shown in their keen involvement in the good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. These represent a stronger feature of the curriculum in which there is satisfactory provision for ICT.

Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in reaching average standards. Current Year 2 pupils show signs of improving progress. Results have fallen in Year 6. The good progress rates reported previously have not been maintained in the past two years. Inspection evidence does not indicate a significant upturn yet. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities does not always match their individual needs well enough. Teaching assistants demonstrate satisfactory skills when working with small groups. The attainment of boys and girls is similar. Pupils are soundly prepared for their future education.

The staff provide good pastoral care and pupils have confidence in the staff if they are troubled. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. The school is developing its arrangements to involve the pupils in setting targets for their future academic work but the use of assessment is not as well developed as it could be. While the school tracks the pupils' progress regularly, the analysis of their progress is not rigorous enough, for example in identifying the reasons why some individual pupils have failed to make sufficient progress and in rectifying this.

Strategic planning has good elements such as the well-conceived school development plan. Nevertheless, the monitoring of school developments, and of teaching and learning in different subjects, is not sufficiently robust and formalised so that a clear view is obtained of strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is over generous in some areas of its work. Balancing these weaknesses against the good elements in leadership and management which include good governance, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' rates of progress and raise levels of attainment further by:
 - matching work to all pupils' needs more consistently in lessons
 - developing further the skills of the teaching assistants
 - reviewing the timetable of the special educational needs leader so that more time is allocated to interaction with the pupils.
- Increase the rigour and robustness of the use of assessment by:
 - making more effective use of tracking data
 - ensuring that pupils know more clearly what they must do to improve their work
 - developing greater consistency in the quality of marking.
- Improve the quality of monitoring by:
 - increasing the range of strategies staff use to monitor teaching and learning
 - formalising the reporting of monitoring procedures of staff with responsibilities
 - overseeing key priorities and delegated duties more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils reach average standards and make satisfactory progress from the end of the Reception Year. Progress has sometimes been good in Years 1 and 2 with pupils reaching above average standards, but overall the pupils' progress in these year groups is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is highest in reading in Years 1 and 2. Writing has been a weaker element but the school's increased emphasis on getting pupils to write more frequently and for different purposes is showing encouraging signs of improvement.

Results have been falling and rates of progress slowing by Year 6 in the past two years, although pupils have mostly reached levels around the average. While pupils with disabilities are well provided for enabling them to make expected gains in learning given their disabilities, other pupils with learning special educational needs and/or disabilities have not always made sufficient progress. There are three main reasons for this. Teaching assistants are not always provided with enough information and the necessary skills to meet these pupils' needs when they teach small groups, and the tasks are not always adapted well enough to these pupils' specific needs. Furthermore, the skills of the teacher with the specialist knowledge are not deployed as well as they might be to profit fully from her skills and knowledge.

Pupils usually enjoy school, particularly art and sport. Their keen engagement in after-school and competitive sporting activities, combined with their knowledge of a good diet and practising sensible eating, contributes to their excellent healthy life-styles. Pupils are considerate to one another, and behave well in class and around the school, supporting their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils willingly take on extra

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responsibilities such as school council membership, roles which particularly support their social development. The breakfast and after-school clubs also support this good development. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. They engage well with the local community, for example taking harvest gifts to the elderly, and raise funds for worthy causes nationally and globally. The links with projects abroad keep them aware of the needs of others in less well developed countries. The pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education. They acquire satisfactory basic skills and good personal qualities such as teamwork. Pupils have a strong sense of common values across the different ethnic groups represented in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good it really grips pupils' interest and engagement. In one such lesson the teacher shared her own prepared play script for the class to edit. The shared discussion was very effective in modelling how the pupils should edit their own play scripts. Pupils worked very well in the ensuing task with a partner to discuss and improve their work. Teachers deploy

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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good strategies to manage pupils, resulting in respectful relationships which support pupils' positive approaches to learning. Staff use modern equipment well to present lessons visually and to share the lesson aims, although in some classrooms the benefits of this are diminished because the text cannot be seen clearly enough. Staff use learning resources effectively. In a Year 2 class, the pupils made good progress understanding three digit numbers because the apparatus enabled the teacher to flip over numbers in the place value columns to good effect and assist their understanding. In some lessons, the work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs and does not challenge them enough. The work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is sometimes the same as the rest of the class and they need considerable adult support in order to complete it. While some marking is exemplary showing the pupils how they can improve, its overall quality is variable. In the main, assessment is not used well enough to help pupils with their next steps in learning. The recent initiative in writing, giving pupils the opportunity to assess their own competence and where they need to get to, is a good feature.

There are particular strengths in the curriculum in personal, social and health education and the good range of extra-curricular sport. The recent introduction of focus weeks such as International Week, in which pupils studied different countries, adds an element of variety. While good attention is given to different subjects, including French, there are limited links between subjects to strengthen pupils' understanding and to add interest. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils who arrive at an early stage of learning English and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pastoral provision for the pupils is good, as it is for the pupils who attend the breakfast and after-school club. The school works hard to make links with families, resulting in the largely positive views they hold of the school. The school benefits very well from the very effective work of the family liaison officer. Helpful transition and induction arrangements ensure that pupils settle quickly to school and transfer smoothly to secondary school. The analysis of the pupils' progress through the tracking mechanism is not yet sufficiently robust to address fully the concerns about individual pupils that the information provides, hence care, guidance and support overall are satisfactory.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

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The governing body is well led. Governors are keenly involved in the school's strategic development. They contribute effectively, seek the views of parents and carers, keep abreast of curriculum developments and genuinely challenge the school as the 'critical friend' to support its best interests. The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent. They are very positive about communication matters and the opportunities to meet staff to discuss their children's education. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory but there has not always been enough oversight and checking when aspects of safeguarding have been delegated.

While there is a clear desire to drive improvement forward seen for example in the initiatives to improve the accuracy and use of assessment to involve pupils more in their own knowledge of their learning, the use of assessment information is still not yet sufficiently developed or embedded. The leadership, management and monitoring of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The new team which has been put in place to oversee this aspect of work has made a satisfactory start and meets regularly. This keeps staff abreast of current school policies and accepted school practice, and helps to develop teaching and learning further. There is scope for deepening the agenda to focus on specific areas that need strengthening, such as greater rigour in the use of tracking data.

The school's equal opportunities policy has not always been reviewed on schedule. It is implemented satisfactorily. Racist incidents are extremely rare and careful attention is given to avoid any discrimination. The school has not always ensured that the provision for specific groups of pupils such as those who have learning special educational needs and/or disabilities meet their particular needs.

The school has a range of partnerships which enable professional advice to be obtained when required for specific pupils. The school works successfully to enhance opportunities for pupils out of school hours and has good links with the church. The breakfast and after-school club are successfully organised. The school gives good attention to community cohesion and this is reflected not only in the harmonious school community itself but also in the very good involvement in the local community and the developing plans for extending links already made within the United Kingdom to a global perspective.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is lower than expected for the children's age. The children make satisfactory progress. Attainment at the end of the Reception class shows a variable picture. They reach standards above those expected in some areas of learning, like knowledge and understanding and creative and physical development, but attainment in other areas, such as in aspects of number, is lower. Black African pupils sometimes do not meet expectations in language because their competence in English is still developing.

The staff manage the children effectively and the children respond positively to the well-established routines. Behaviour is good. The children develop good levels of social confidence, for example registering themselves on arrival and settling independently to different activities. Staff provide a pleasant working environment and prepare the activities well, although the activities do not always develop the children's learning effectively enough. This is because the objectives and the potential for learning in them are not always thought through sufficiently well. While the children discovered the properties of snow through making snow castles staff missed opportunities to extend their learning by asking questions such as 'What if.....?' They do not always develop the children's vocabulary effectively enough through questioning and working alongside children. Assessment is satisfactory but there is a heavy reliance on worksheets as evidence for progress and attainment. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Good care is taken of the children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers express strong support for the school

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and are pleased with their children's education. Written comments were few and did not have a common theme. There is some concern about the small playground resulting in incidents and accidents at lunchtime. The inspection team agrees that the playground is of limited size but the school arranges break times for different ages at different times to try and alleviate this problem. A very small number of parents and carers wrote to express concern about their children's progress. The inspection team's conclusion is that pupils make satisfactory progress overall but that some pupils with learning special educational needs and/or disabilities could make better progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret's C of E VA 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 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 464 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	57	64	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	56	67	43	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	80	52	71	46	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	36	86	56	8	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	44	82	53	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	39	83	54	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	36	91	59	3	2	1	1
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)	45	29	95	61	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	28	92	64	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	41	76	49	8	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	23	91	59	11	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	61	39	81	52	5	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	45	80	52	4	3	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret's C of E VA Primary School, Barking, IG11 8AS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, talking to us about what you do and sharing your work with us. We enjoyed meeting you. You clearly enjoy school and make good friends. We were impressed with the way that you get along so well together. Your knowledge and practice of healthy lifestyles are excellent. We were very pleased to learn that so many of you take part in extra-curricular activities. The staff look after you well and you enjoy happy relationships with them which give you confidence to contribute in lessons. You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach standards expected for your age. The school provides a satisfactory education for you.

We have made three recommendations for the school's further development:

First, we have suggested to the teachers that they increase even more the rate of progress that you are making so that you attain even more highly in your work. Second, that they make better use of the information that they have about your progress when they plan your future work. Finally, we have suggested that they improve the ways that they keep an eye on the school's progress and the work in different subjects.

Thank you once again for your help when we visited. We wish you well for the future and hope that you will continue to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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