

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands B43 7AP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Margaret's Church of England Primary School are happy and exceptionally well behaved. They live and breathe the school's values that help them to understand what thankfulness and forgiveness really mean. The Christian ethos of the school underpins all aspects of school life. Community links with the church provide rich opportunities for pupils to engage in charitable work, developing empathy and kindness. Leaders aim for all pupils to value, respect and care for others, and they do. Everyone is welcome in this inclusive school.

Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. This is because they rise to leaders' high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Staff are caring and supportive. Pupils enjoy the strong, positive relationships they form with teachers and other adults. Pupils know that bullying and the use of derogatory language are not tolerated. As a result of feeling happy, safe and well supported, pupils achieve well.

From the start of early years, children settle in well. They are eager to get into school in the morning. Parents and carers are very happy with the way the school supports their children. If any issues occur, most parents say that staff sort things out quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour. Staff and governors share this ambitious vision. Pupils rise to the challenges they are set. Staff rarely need to remind pupils about the expectations for behaviour and for learning.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard on the areas for improvement that were identified. This has paid off. The teaching of reading is now a strength of the school. Most pupils learn to read fluently and confidently by the end of Year 1. Those pupils who need extra help are well supported to catch up. In wider reading sessions, older pupils learn how to analyse texts in more detail. This rich experience helps pupils to enjoy a wider range of books and helps to broaden their vocabulary.

The curriculum in most subjects has been refreshed recently. Subject leaders have received effective training in curriculum planning. Leaders use their infectious passion for their subject to plan an engaging curriculum, making good use of the school's locality. Pupils' learning is carefully sequenced. In the Reception class, children learn about the Great Famine in Ireland and grow their own potatoes. This topic is revisited when older pupils learn about emigration. Pupils develop in-depth knowledge of the cause and effect of historical events. They can explain the difference between primary and secondary sources and why this is important in history.

Leaders give teachers regular feedback on their teaching. They provide teachers with effective support to improve their practice. However, teachers' use of assessment to identify pupils' misconceptions in lessons varies in its effectiveness. Leaders have identified this as a priority for improvement.

Teachers ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, regardless of their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in lessons. They learn the same curriculum content as their peers. Teachers adapt resources appropriately. Support assistants provide extra help when necessary. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress.

In early years, most children make strong progress in reading and mathematics. However, children's progress in writing is weaker. Staff do not intervene readily enough to guide children to the activities that will best support their needs. Children with speech and language needs make slower progress than their peers. This is because opportunities are missed for children to practise their language skills.

COVID-19 affected school life in many ways. The school's normally high attendance figures are now lower, reflecting extended absences due to COVID-19 infections in the spring term of 2022. At the start of the autumn term in September 2021, some pupils struggled at first to sustain their concentration after the disruption to their education caused by the pandemic. Leaders have tackled this sensitively, for example by providing flexible breaktimes. Teachers know their pupils well. They use a variety of effective approaches to help pupils build stamina for learning. Pupils who previously struggled no longer struggle to concentrate on learning.

Pupils enjoy contributing to the Christian life of the school and participating in community fundraising events. Pupils develop leadership skills as playground leaders or online safety team members. The pupil 'SWITCH' team meets weekly to plan assemblies and celebration events, reinforcing the school's core values. Pupils play a highly positive role in creating the respectful, caring environment in school. Parents are pleased that their children are so happy here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils well. They are well trained to spot changes in behaviour. They report any concerns they might have about pupils' safety or well-being. Leaders monitor these reports to ensure that any trends are picked up quickly. They work closely with parents and external teams where necessary to make sure that pupils and families receive the support they need.

Leaders make sure that pre-employment checks are carried out on all staff before they start working at the school. Staff receive regular safeguarding updates and training to refresh their knowledge. This reminds them that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' use of assessment is variable in its effectiveness. As a result, some pupils make stronger progress than others because they receive helpful, timely feedback on their work. Leaders should ensure that teachers develop their use of assessment in lessons further to give all pupils more immediate, constructive feedback on their learning.
- Staff in early years do not support children's learning consistently well. This leads to some pupils making slower progress, particularly in writing and speech and language development. Leaders should take steps to improve the quality of provision in early years further by:
 - providing further training and development for staff to strengthen support for children's learning, particularly in relation to writing and speech and language
 - ensuring that planned activities are closely related to the learning objectives and that children are guided more deliberately towards the activities that will best support their learning needs.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103995
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10210912
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Martin Rutter
Headteacher	Jayne Stackhouse
Website	www.stmargaretscofeprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's most recent inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 of the school's religious character took place on 29 September 2016. Section 48 inspections were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, and restarted in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school’s website prior to the inspection and spoke to the headteacher and the deputy headteacher on the telephone about the school’s context and curriculum.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL, the SEND coordinator, governors and the school’s adviser from Sandwell local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding and behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey, as well as responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Philip Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

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