

# St Margaret's CofE Primary School

Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7AP

**Inspection dates** 10–11 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher offers strong leadership to her new team of school leaders. Together with the committed governing body, they are raising achievement, improving teaching and promoting the well-being of all pupils in this improving school.
- The standards pupils achieve and the progress they make by the time they leave are broadly in line with averages overall and are good in writing.
- In Key Stage 2, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils frequently make rapid progress in writing and mathematics.
- In recent years, results at Key Stage 1 have often been above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation stage is good and gives pupils a strong start.
- The school has created a variety of imaginative and challenging programmes and activities that are successfully boosting the level of pupils' literacy.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils show strong attitudes to learning and work and play together happily. This results from the school's work to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' safety is a key priority for the school and pupils say they feel safe. Many take on responsibilities, such as looking after younger pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most effective teaching that exists in the school is not shared frequently enough with all teachers and support staff.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always good enough and this aspect of their writing is not given enough attention by staff.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and considered the 35 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered responses by parents and pupils to recent questionnaires from the school.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Edginton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Margaret's CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. A very small minority have English as an additional language but none are currently at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those previously known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average. This group represents around one tenth of the pupils in the school.
- Approximately one twentieth of pupils is disabled or has special educational needs. This is below average.
- A private company runs a before- and after-school club on the school site. This did not form part of this inspection. The school runs clubs at lunchtimes and after school and these are included in this report.
- The early years provision is part-time (for either the morning or afternoon) for Nursery age children and there is one full-time Reception class.
- In the last school year, the headteacher and governors have appointed an almost completely new team of school leaders.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Share the best practice that already exists in the school more widely so that the quality of teaching is made even better and pupils' progress and attainment are further increased.
- Ensure teachers follow a consistent approach to the development of pupils' handwriting, particularly in the use of joined up writing and the use of pens.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has made the pursuit of excellence a key feature of the school's vision and ethos. With a largely new team of school leaders, she is improving the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour in this well-managed school. Their work is assisted by supportive staff, parents and governors.
- The new school leaders of mathematics and literacy have ensured pupils are keen to learn and acquire new skills. They have used a wide variety of imaginative approaches, as well as careful grouping of pupils, to ensure they make at least good progress. This is particularly true of the most-able pupils and those who are disadvantaged. Their impact, along with other school leaders, such as the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and governors, demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement. Leaders recognise that the school has not done enough to encourage pupils to pursue the same high standards in their handwriting and 'penmanship' that they show in other subjects.
- The school carefully plans and measures the impact of the additional funding for the pupil premium and primary school sports and physical education. The school is able to demonstrate that pupils have high levels of participation in additional sports and increasingly lead healthy lifestyles from Nursery to Year 6. Disadvantaged pupils receive additional support in lessons and cost is never a barrier for their participation, for example for educational visits and residential courses. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.
- School leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and, together with governors, ensure that teachers have the support and appropriate training they require. The school is aware that many of its staff possess high quality skills but these are not shared with other teachers and support staff on a regular basis.
- The school makes good use of local and church partners and is working closely with a group of local schools to develop new forms of assessment that reflect the changes in the new National Curriculum. The school has established a partnership with Birmingham City University to supervise trainee teachers and this has enabled staff to develop their mentoring skills.
- The school works hard to promote good relations with parents and the wider community. As well as regular reporting of pupils' progress, this has resulted in parents taking an active role in the life of the school, for example, in the running of the new school library. Parents are positive in their comments about leadership and management and consider it to be a safe and happy school. The school works effectively with external agencies when appropriate.
- Pupils are fully engaged by a range of subjects that encourage them to make links between different areas of knowledge and with the wider world. Pupils' books show examples of literacy and numeracy skills being applied in scientific or historical investigations. Teachers are skilled in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons and activities. This results in pupils who are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. They make regular visits to places of worship, such as churches, mosques and temples and to local galleries and museums. This has helped them appreciate the values and customs of people whose beliefs may be different to their own.
- The local authority's support has been effective in the delivery of training to staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of their roles in supporting and challenging school leaders. Separate committees have well-defined responsibilities and individual governors have specific areas of focus. The governors with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils and for mathematics are particularly well-informed and effective. Governors have received training from the local authority to enable them to

understand how well the school is doing compared to other schools. They are aware of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further, both in the short and the long term. Governors regularly come into lessons and look at pupils' books, which helps to keep them well-informed about the quality of teaching. They are equally well-informed about the recent changes to assessment practice and the new National Curriculum and know how the school is responding to them.

- The governing body is particularly effective in measuring the impact of its work, including the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding. They have a clear understanding of the system for the appraisal of teachers, and know how the school manages salary progression, rewards good teaching and tackles underperformance. Together with school leaders, governors ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding. Governors uphold the values of the school and ensure that pupils are aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures in modern Britain. They make themselves available to parents and have a high profile within the school.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They say they love being at school and readily share their learning about new things with their friends. Their positive attitudes are reflected in their improved level of attendance, which is in line with the national average, and the popularity of lunchtime and after-school clubs. There are very few persistent absentees and any exclusion of pupils from the school is extremely rare.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous, and are welcoming to visitors. They behave well when moving around the school and during playtimes, and act sensibly during lunchtimes. There is almost no low level disruption in lessons.
- Staff, governors and the vast majority of parents are also of the opinion that behaviour is good. On the rare occasions when a pupil finds it hard to handle their feelings and rules are broken, the school works hard with parents, and external agencies when appropriate, to ensure that they get back on track. The school's own behaviour logs show that, over time, behaviour is good.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They say any bullying is rare and is swiftly dealt with when it does occur. They understand the importance of tolerance and older pupils have an understanding of the potentially negative effect of extreme views.
- Pupils make a particularly strong contribution to the life of the school. There are numerous opportunities for pupils of all ages to take on responsibilities, often learning about the democratic process as they make speeches to advance their case. They are developing a good understanding of what 'majority voting' means. Pupils run their own, very influential, school council, as well as a worship group. The group lead special assemblies and services at the church, and is open to all faiths. In addition there are pupil play-leaders who are trained to mediate on the playground, and pupil office managers who help with the smooth running of the school. All these activities contribute to their very strong preparation for their future education and for life in modern Britain.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This is the view of the pupils themselves, parents, staff and governors.
- The school keeps pupils safe both in school and on any educational visits or outings. Its checking on all visitors to the school is rigorous. Pupils develop a very secure understanding of the importance of staying safe, for example by doing their own risk assessments in physical education.
- Pupils have a very thorough knowledge of how to stay safe when using the internet. The pupils' own e-safety committee played an important role in the school recently, securing a national e-safety award.
- Pupils are clear that unkind or prejudice-based language has no place in their school. School leaders take every opportunity to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, celebrating tolerance and diversity whenever they can.

**The quality of teaching****is good**

- Teachers know each individual pupil well and ensure there are strong and warm working relationships between pupils and staff. This contributes greatly to the positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and good progress that pupils display in lessons. The work of skilled support staff ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress that is equally as good as that of other pupils.
- A scrutiny of pupils' books reveals the many ways in which pupils' writing is being improved by teachers' emphasis on the need for writing to be accurate, for example in spelling and grammar, and imaginative. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' work so that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve and carefully record pupils' growth as writers as they move through the school. This motivates pupils to build on their work and gives them confidence, particularly when tackling the extended homework tasks they are set. Teachers regularly celebrate instances of excellence and effort, for example in the weekly 'Sentence fit for a King or a Queen' competition, and this encourages pupils to extend their thoughts and experiment with language. These are key factors in their often rapid progress in writing.
- The school's has recently made improvements in reading a priority and this has led to pupils showing an increasing love of literature. Teachers regularly act as model readers, sharing photographs of their favourite places to read, and this helps pupils understand how to use their voice to make their reading interesting. Pupils can be seen eagerly taking books from the newly refurbished school library, staffed by pupil librarians. There has been good use of summer 'reading tents', as well as a 'readathon', to encourage reading across the school, and these are popular with pupils of all ages and with their parents. The school is careful to monitor the engagement of all groups of pupils in these activities, including disadvantaged pupils, who have consequently demonstrated improved achievement in literacy in the current school year.
- Teachers have recently given considerable focus to the teaching of mental mathematics and problem-solving skills. This has given pupils a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. The use of hand-held computers has been introduced to increase the level of challenge in some mathematics activities at lunchtimes and this, and the 'maths clubs' targeted at the most and least able, is driving up standards. Teachers are boosting the progress of the most-able mathematicians in particular, by encouraging them to use the technical language of mathematics accurately. Pupils have also been introduced to very demanding work, for example, through carefully selected GCSE level mathematics examination questions. All groups of pupils benefit from these approaches, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom make particularly strong progress in mathematics.
- Although pupils show pride in the presentation of their work, their handwriting is not always up to the same standard. Teachers do not all encourage pupils to use joined up writing and pens. This means that pupils are not as ready as they could be for writing at secondary school level.

**The achievement of pupils****is good**

- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are typical for their age in most areas of learning and make good progress. As a result of their enjoyment of their lessons and their desire to do their best, they leave the school at the end of Year 6 with standards in English and mathematics that are frequently above those found nationally.
- In Key Stage 2, progress in writing and mathematics is consistently strong, with an increasing proportion of pupils making accelerated progress. Progress in reading improved in the last school year and was in line with the national average. However, fewer pupils made more than the expected progress than in the previous year because their starting points were higher. The school has high expectations of its pupils and work in their books and the school's own records show that those currently in the school are making good progress. This is evident not only in their literacy and their numeracy, but also in science and in their topic work.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. As a result they

achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Reception and in tests at the end of Year 2 that are above those found nationally. They also achieve above the national average in the Year 1 check of their understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also good and pupils are generally well-prepared for the next stage in their education. However the handwriting skills they will need at secondary school are not developed consistently through the school, particularly their use of joined-up writing and their ability to move from pencil to pen.

- The most-able pupils regularly achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics and teachers give pupils every opportunity to extend their learning. Many of the most-able pupils currently in the school are making accelerated progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils form a very small part of the school population and insufficient numbers were represented in the results of national tests in 2014 to report in detail on their attainment. The school is successful in promoting the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, and the pupil premium funding is used well to support individuals. They make good progress, some from lower-than-average starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics. Many reach the same levels of attainment as other pupils. Some disadvantaged pupils are among the highest achieving pupils in the school. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well because they have regular, additional and well-targeted support in small groups, as well as one-to-one support from teaching assistants. A school governor has specific responsibility for these pupils and ensures that there are no barriers to their achievement.
- The school provides well for the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They make good progress throughout the school as a result of carefully planned programmes of support and the skilled one-to-one assistance they receive from additional staff. The school monitors the progress of other groups of pupils well, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and these pupils achieve as well or better than other pupils.

### The early years provision

is good

- While children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding typical for their age, their knowledge and understanding of the world is often limited. This is speedily addressed by the good quality of teaching they are given. Teachers' lively approach to lessons draws children into the activities and promotes enthusiastic learning. Praise and carefully targeted questions are used effectively to boost confidence and to stimulate children's curiosity, particularly of the most able. Teachers are often heard telling the children, 'I like the way you're thinking', demonstrating the emphasis they place on developing children's problem-solving skills and intellectual awareness.
- After a stimulating start in Nursery, children make good progress in Reception. For the last two years the proportion of children finishing Reception with a good level of development has been above the national average. As well as making good progress in recognising letters and the sounds they make (phonics), children develop a love of books and are able to share their favourite authors and illustrators. Children leave Reception well-prepared for the type of learning they will encounter in Key Stage 1.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage communicates her high expectations to staff and children, meeting the full range of children's needs, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs well. This is achieved through a focus on each individual child, with detailed records being kept of their progress in all aspects of their learning, including their coordination and balance and their skill in using and mixing colours.
- Children's behaviour is good. They quickly learn to take turns and to share, and show their growing understanding of the school's values. They learn about other faiths and cultures, and develop tolerance and an understanding of the hurt that 'unkind words' can cause. They enjoy their time outdoors, showing a resilience to wet and wind and a good knowledge of how to stay safe. Traditional games are popular in the playground and help to promote their physical health. For these reasons they make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103995
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	449298

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Martin Rutter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Stackhouse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 357 2758
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