

# St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) Junior School

Seaview Road, Morwenna Park, Bideford, Devon, EX39 1EL

<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 November 2015
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils told inspectors, 'This school has come a long way since the last inspection, we all enjoy working hard!' Consequently, they enjoy school, and their attendance is above average.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to inspectors expressed positive views, saying their children are happy, well looked after and kept safe.
- The strong commitment of leaders, governors and staff to continually move forward and make the school even better has ensured that teaching is now good and attainment has risen.
- Good teaching and the well-planned curriculum capture pupils' interest, so they work hard and make good progress. The care with which pupils reflect on their learning is a real strength.
- The majority of pupils achieve well, including those who are more able, those with identified special needs and those who are disadvantaged. When pupils leave the school, attainment matches national averages, and more are attaining above this in reading and mathematics.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils feel safe and secure because they are well cared for, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils acquire traditional British values, become responsible individuals, and respect and appreciate different cultures and religions.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is securely improving but does not yet result in outstanding achievement.
- Despite recent improvements during the last 12 months, progress for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support in reading is still slightly below national levels.

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

- Raise the quality of all teaching to outstanding so that achievement becomes outstanding, particularly for pupils who receive SEN support in English by:
  - ensuring that the assessment of reading and spelling is always used accurately and staff set challenging targets, especially for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, and ensure that they know how to reach them
  - building on the existing strategies to help these pupils talk about, plan and organise their work
  - providing additional opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to address their misconceptions and to practise their learning.
  
- Further develop the impact of leaders and managers in the recently established federation leadership team by:
  - developing leaders' skills in using the performance data they have gathered to regularly check the effectiveness of additional support given to accelerate pupils' progress and to accurately plan for further school improvements.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong partnership, ably supported by governors, middle leaders and staff. They have a clear focus on improving the school for every pupil and give a high priority to ensuring that they all have an equal opportunity to do well, both academically and socially. The strong drive, determination and commitment of the executive headteacher to improve the school has led to significant improvements in all areas since the school's last inspection.
- Leaders accurately evaluate what the school does well and what needs improving. Effective action plans are in place, for example, to further increase progress for disadvantaged pupils. These plans are beginning to produce results but are still at an early stage of becoming fully successful.
- Since the previous inspection, a rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching has been put in place. Evidence from regular lesson observations, scrutiny of workbooks and analyses of progress information enable leaders to provide appropriate professional development so that staff continually enhance their skills and thus raise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive the support they need. However, the school's 'second precision' teaching approach, to further accelerate the progress of the pupils with lower prior attainment and close gaps with their peers, has only recently been introduced. Leadership is well aware that its monitoring of the impact of this work needs time and further development to become fully effective.
- Middle leaders' contribution to school improvement has improved since the previous inspection. They check pupils' learning, support staff well and share their specialist subject knowledge.
- School leaders make good use of pupil premium funding to provide additional help and support. This enables disadvantaged pupils to progress well and any performance gaps between them and their classmates are rapidly closing.
- Sports funding is used well, and provides a range of activities across the school. More pupils are taking part in sports and physical activities and staff have learned new skills, for example in dance.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has created a harmonious school environment. Pupils mix happily, and inspectors observed trusting and supportive relationships. These were particularly evident during lunchtime visits from younger children from the infant school in the federation. Pupils acquire traditional values, such as friendship, tolerance and respect, through assemblies, lessons and the good example set by all adults in the school.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural society. Well-planned 'family group' sessions provide regular opportunities for pupils to experience democracy in action and have their say about matters that concern them. The school's well-planned curriculum allows pupils to regularly explore different religions, and develop respect for different lifestyles and cultures. Pupils' tolerance and respect for other cultures is shown by their clear pride in their link with children from Kenya.
- The well-planned curriculum is suitably adapted so that each pupil can make good progress in all subjects, and gain the mathematical and English skills they need across the curriculum and for the future. Popular clubs and experiences enrich learning, including working with professional sports coaches, and visits to museums and local sites, such as beach cleaning at Northam Burrows.
- Parents feel well informed through newsletters, messaging, the website and parents' evenings, and leaders and staff are always willing to meet parents. Without exception parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the positive impact that the headteacher has had since the last inspection.
- The local authority and the Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust provide good support for the school. Leaders and governors have made full use of these bodies to improve provision and develop staff skills.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet current statutory requirements. Child protection training is up to date and staff understand their responsibilities in this important area.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors bring a valuable range of skills. They know their school and the pupils well because they visit regularly and are fully informed through updates on achievement, progress information and reports from senior leaders. Consequently, they ask pertinent questions, challenge leaders and hold them to account, for example about what is being done to raise attainment of lower-ability pupils.
  - Governors use a range of information and reports from pupil progress meetings to compare the

school's performance with other schools locally and nationally. They check the use of pupil premium funds and know that this is effective because the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is narrowing.

- They make sure that salary rewards are only given to staff when their pupils learn well, and that staff performance management leads to further professional development to improve both teaching and management skills.
- Governors ensure that sports funding is used to increase pupil participation through the provision of a wide variety of sports activities that pupils enjoy, and to help staff learn new skills to pass on to their pupils.
- Governors make sure all pupils are well equipped for future life and that the school teaches them traditional values to equip them ready for their future lives in a modern British society.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**is good**

- Inspection evidence and school records confirm that the quality of teaching is rising, due to leaders' monitoring and professional development provided for staff. Consequently, all pupils progress well and attainment is rising.
- Pupils say their teachers make them work hard, and agree that this is a good thing. Favourite lessons include English, mathematics, art and physical education. They particularly value the thorough way in which their work is marked and their daily response time when they respond to their teachers' written comments that help them improve their work. One pupil commented, 'If you are struggling, you can look back at teachers' comments to help you.'
- Good relationships between pupils and with staff aid learning and good progress. The majority of pupils are keen learners, apply themselves well and concentrate in lessons. Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure that all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them, developing flexible grouping, based on the clear progress information provided by the school's detailed assessment systems.
- Teachers know their subject well and ask open questions that challenge their pupils to think hard, give reasons and explain their answers. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the teacher's insistence that the class should be 'learning not doing' encouraged pupils to set their own level of challenge. This saw them attempting increasingly complex strategies for subtracting negative amounts of money.
- Writing and mathematics are taught well, and there have been improvements in the development and presentation of mathematics skills over time. Most pupils are confident readers, but teachers do not always provide lower-attaining pupils with the opportunity to broaden their skills by reading a wider range of books.
- Good assessment systems provide lots of information about how well pupils are doing. Staff use this information to plan work, to stretch those who find learning easy or to spot where additional help is needed. The high quality of written feedback provided by staff is being used effectively to raise standards. However, staff do not always use information about progress in spelling and reading accurately to provide challenging targets for the less able to attain higher.
- Teaching assistants support learning well and contribute effectively to pupil progress, especially for those who find it hard to learn in a whole-class group or who may be vulnerable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**is good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils benefit from good-quality care. Pupils and families who may be vulnerable receive extra support in class or through the school's strong links with external agencies, so these pupils can participate fully and progress as well as their classmates.
- The school is a calm, harmonious place where pupils grow and become increasingly mature and reliable. They enjoy roles of responsibility, as members of 'family groups' and helping younger pupils.
- Pupils know that they are responsible for their actions and are well aware of the difference between right and wrong. Rewards, such as the 'headteacher's certificates' and 'family group points', for helping or behaving well at lunchtimes, promote good manners and consideration for others.

- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in most different situations and the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) coordinator has recently revised the school's approach to sex and relationships education in order to further improve provision in this important area.
- Pupils value their education. Attendance is above average, few pupils are persistently absent and this has been the case over time. Any absences are quickly followed up to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and on time.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School records, previous reports and inspection findings show this is typical over time, and parents and pupils agree. There is no record of any discrimination and exclusion is only used in the most extreme circumstances. All pupils understand how behaviour is managed, and say the visual warnings on 'wow' charts and the 'time out' system are fair.
- Good behaviour and supportive relationships result in learning proceeding smoothly in lessons and outside class. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning so they work hard and progress well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say bullying is not an issue, but a very small number of parents told inspectors they disagreed or were unsure. Pupils understand bullying takes different forms such as cyber bullying, and know they must always tell an adult about any sort of bullying. They are confident staff listen to and act on any concerns they have. There is no racism. Records of behaviour incidents are kept and show the impact of the school's actions.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- School information and inspection evidence show that attainment is rising and progress is speeding up. The majority of groups of pupils make good progress from starting points typical for their age. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics is now close to the national figure. When they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.
- Attainment when pupils leave the school is typically close to national averages in all subjects. In 2015, pupils achieved well above the national average in reading and maths. Although it is early in the school year, pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to at least match the previous year's outcomes in all subjects, and more are expected to reach higher levels.
- Over time, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved because of improvements in teaching, both in mathematics lessons and in using and applying their skills in other subjects. In 2015 the strong focus on improving pupils' motivation, attitudes to challenge and mathematical reasoning resulted in a rise in achievement. Pupils in Year 6 progressed rapidly, with a small number attaining Level 6 in mathematics.
- Achievement in reading and writing is good, with pupils developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Evidence from work around the school indicates the breadth of learning, and pupils are able to explain how they have applied their literacy skills in their other work, for example in history and science. Starting in Year 3, pupils are encouraged to use 'Have a go' spelling books, which is developing their confidence to tackle new words. Pupils' grammatical knowledge is also being improved effectively through the recently introduced 'punctuation boot camp' sessions.
- Pupils who find it easier to learn are given additional challenges to extend their ability to think and reason. An example of this was shown in a Year 5 mathematics book where a pupil was encouraged to write a detailed explanation for the pattern produced by a line graph when recording temperature. Those pupils with particular talents such as gymnastics are signposted to external clubs or organisations.
- Staff know their pupils who are disabled, who have special educational needs and those with lower prior attainment well on an individual basis. Support and help with learning enables these pupils to progress as well as their classmates in most areas. Leaders have rightly identified the need to increase progress for this group by developing additional opportunities to help pupils think about, discuss and address their misconceptions.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They make good progress, often progressing faster than their classmates. In 2015 almost a third of the pupils in Year 6 were disadvantaged, and their attainment was behind their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing. However, these gaps had closed compared to previous years. Carefully used pupil premium provides well-targeted support, so these gaps are closing rapidly for disadvantaged pupils who are currently within school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113453
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005785

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Crossman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Cole
<b>Telephone number</b>	01237 473569
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-margarets-junior.devon.sch.uk">www.st-margarets-junior.devon.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3–4 July 2013

## Information about this school

- This junior school is broadly average in size.
- The school is a founder member of the Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust and has recently formed the Northam Schools' Federation with one other local school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above the national average. Pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 14 lessons and the inspectors were accompanied by the executive headteacher and deputy headteacher during several of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The lead inspector met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 27 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors also took account of 71 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection, and received two letters from parents. Both inspectors also spoke informally with a number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupil progress, school improvement planning, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, local authority checks of provision and pupils' progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Stuart Busby, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Rafferty, team inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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