

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Crossgate Peth, Durham, County Durham DH1 4QB

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

A strong sense of community helps pupils at St. Margaret's school to feel safe and cared for. The warm Christian ethos underpins all areas of the school. Adults encourage pupils to 'let their light shine out and be a force for good'. Pupils learn the importance of tolerance and understanding. They warmly welcome new pupils to the school.

Calm and purposeful classroom environments help pupils to learn well. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and enjoy discussing their learning with friends. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic and polite. The restorative approach to behaviour management teaches them to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. Most pupils say that bullying does not happen in this school. They understand how to resolve simple arguments. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they are worried.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Teachers, and teaching assistants, skilfully adapt resources to match pupils' learning needs. Pupils' emotional health is a priority. Thrive support sessions help to reduce times of stress and worry. This helps pupils get ready to learn. Pupils say they feel safe in school 'because they know the adults care'.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that has many areas of strength. This begins in Reception where expertly designed learning opportunities introduce the vocabulary and knowledge children need for future learning. The well-sequenced curriculum for mathematics provides opportunities for pupils to recall and build on their prior learning. Teachers use effective questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. The music curriculum is ambitious. Leaders make sure that pupils learn to sing, understand rhythm and play a range of instruments. Year 2 pupils demonstrate their early understanding of musical notation during their class violin lessons. Teachers build on this in Years 3, 4 and 5, where pupils learn to master the ukulele.

Teachers use well-timed assessments to find out what pupils know. They quickly identified gaps in learning caused during the period of remote learning and are addressing these effectively. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment in order to help pupils embed new knowledge. Although pupils have regular opportunities to recap on prior topics, occasionally they struggle to make connections between this knowledge and what they are learning now. For example, in science, Year 6 pupils did not link their investigations into the human circulatory system to previous learning about the human body.

Leaders have introduced a new sequenced approach to the teaching of early reading. This begins from the very start of Reception. The reading leader has delivered

training for all staff. She has provided teachers in Reception and Year 1 with additional coaching and support. This has helped to ensure that children get off to a strong start. The restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic have limited the opportunities for the reading leader to monitor and support phonics provision in other year groups. Provision in these year groups is less consistent. As a result, some pupils in key stage 2 who still struggle to read do not always receive the support they need to catch up quickly.

Overall, the curriculum for personal development is strong. In Reception, adults design some outstanding learning opportunities which encourage positive interactions and develop children's understanding of risk. Pupils in all year groups learn how to look after their physical and mental health. Teachers use the zones of regulation to help pupils to recognise and manage their emotions well. Leaders use the Smart School Council approach to encourage every pupil to contribute to whole-school decisions. Daily collective worship provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on and discuss values such as courage and community. Teachers help pupils to develop an understanding of healthy relationships and respect for others. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their understanding of the protected characteristics.

Leaders provide all staff with a wide range of professional development opportunities. They care for their staff and want them to do well. Staff are proud to be part of this school. The members of the governing body provide highly effective support to leaders. They monitor curriculum developments carefully and make sure that resources are used effectively to support future improvements. Leaders benefit from the additional support of the diocese and the local authority. This has helped to strengthen subject leadership and support the introduction of the Thrive programme.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has ensured that all staff have the training they need to keep pupils safe. There are regular opportunities for staff and governors to discuss challenges in the local area that may impact on pupils in school. The headteacher provides regular updates which keep the safeguarding agenda at the front of everyone's minds. Staff raise and act on concerns effectively. They use the electronic recording platform well. Leaders monitor this carefully to identify any areas for support. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and offline. They know that there are adults in school who will help them if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 2, support for pupils in the early stages of learning to read lacks consistency. Some adults do not have a secure knowledge of how to teach phonics well. This means that some vulnerable readers do not always receive the

support they need to catch-up quickly. Leaders should ensure that all adults receive the guidance and support necessary to deliver consistently high-quality daily early reading lessons.

- Teachers do not routinely use the assessment information they gather effectively to enable pupils to embed and make connections in their learning. This means that pupils do not build effectively on prior learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment as part of learning in order to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss and make links between important areas of subject knowledge.

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	114230
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10216272
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gianna Ulyatt
Headteacher	Helen Tait
Website	www.st-margarets.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school runs the School Direct initial teacher training programme in partnership with Northumbria University.
- The last section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was completed on 23 May 2019. The overall judgment grade was excellent.

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 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and music. 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 also spent time in the Reception classrooms and met with the early years leader. Inspectors met with the subject leader for personal development and viewed samples of pupils' work and displays around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- Inspectors met with teaching assistants to discuss provision for pupils with special education needs.
- The lead inspector met with the early career teacher, the induction tutor and mentor to discuss the training and development programme.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors discussed the single central record, checked procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors met with staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and the impact of any training received. Additionally, inspectors met with members of the governing body to discuss their statutory responsibilities.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the end of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, including 90 free-text responses. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to the staff's and pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Alex Thorp, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Williamson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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