

# Margaret Wix Primary School

High Oaks, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6EL

<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2016
<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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The new headteacher has effectively united staff to build on the existing strengths of the school.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have effectively addressed the issues from the last inspection. They have ensured that teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved and are good.
- Teachers plan activities that interest and motivate pupils to learn.
- Children in the early years make good progress due to good teaching.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective due to the consistent application of the school's policy.
- As a result of the support they receive, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Support for pupils with additional learning needs, such as pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those with English as an additional language is highly effective. Their progress is rigorously monitored and, as a result, they thrive.
- From their starting points, pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. In 2015, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are well behaved, happy and proud of their school. They feel safe in school. Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, children in the early years are left too long working on their own without adult conversation. As a result, they are not always given sufficient opportunity to explain their learning.
- Although attendance is improving, there are still a few pupils whose attendance is too low.
- In Key Stage 1, inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) over time has resulted in the slower progress for some pupils in reading, writing and spelling.

## **Full report**

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

- Further accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 by continuing to improve the quality of phonics teaching so that pupils reach higher levels of attainment in their reading, writing and spelling skills.
- Strengthen the early years provision by ensuring that the quality of adult conversations with children when they are working on their own or in small groups is consistently good.
- Continue to work with families to improve the attendance of the few pupils who do not come to school regularly enough.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher has effectively united staff to build on the existing strengths of the school. The overwhelming majority of staff are proud to be at the school and agree that it is well led and managed. Parents also agree.
- Leaders have created a positive attitude within the school. Relationships are positive between senior leaders and staff, pupils and parents. Pupils learn in a supportive environment where they are encouraged to achieve their very best.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to improve all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. Rigorous systems have been introduced to accelerate the pace of improvement. Tighter performance management has ensured that staff are held accountable for the achievement of pupils in their class and that they are supported to improve their teaching through training and coaching. Pay awards are linked to teachers meeting their targets.
- Leaders and class teachers effectively track pupils' progress. Regular progress meetings are held between senior staff and class teachers to discuss progress information and to look at the work in pupils' books. Pupils who are falling behind with their learning are quickly identified and provided with the support they need to quickly catch up.
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is highly effective. This is because the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability along with pupils who speak English as an additional language is carefully tracked. The school provides a comprehensive programme of one-to-one teaching, small group work and in-class support. As a result, these pupils are making good academic progress and participate fully in the life of the school.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about the progress of work within their area. They regularly monitor the quality of work in pupils' books and know about the quality of teaching in their subject. They meet regularly with senior staff to discuss the impact of improvements they have introduced.
- Parents are welcomed into the school to share their child's achievements through regular year-group 'sharing' assemblies. Pupils share what they have been learning in class with other pupils and their parents. The school also runs workshops for parents that help them to understand the new curriculum and help their child at home. During the inspection, Year 4 parents attended a workshop on mathematics. Those parents present were appreciative of this opportunity. 'It's really great to come in and learn with the children. It helps you to help them with homework,' reflects a typical comment.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and ensure they have the same opportunities as their classmates. Two additional part-time teachers are employed to work with groups of children and pupils from the early years up to Year 6. These pupils receive support with their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Eligible pupils are supported financially so they can attend school visits and trips.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding has been used to employ sports coaches who work alongside class teachers training them to deliver high-quality sports lessons. These coaches also deliver sports lessons and lunchtime and after-school clubs, for example football, netball, gymnastics and tennis. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their sports lessons and appreciate the opportunities to attend sports clubs, where attendance is high. Pupils also participate in sporting events and competitions.
- The school provides a balanced curriculum that ensures pupils cover a full range of academic and creative subjects. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils learn about and celebrate different cultures, religions and lifestyles. They enjoy music, art and design, and design technology lessons. Trips and visits support their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils visited KidZania where they used mathematics related to manufacturing food products, measurements of ingredients used to make chocolate and fractions to work out the amount of ice in ice cream.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of non-sporting clubs such as gardening, art, cooking, drama, cheer leading and choir. They take part in music festivals and drama productions.
- The school has worked closely with the local authority and benefited from training to support the development of writing, mathematics and teaching in the early years. The school uses its improvement partner to validate its judgements on the quality of work within the school. The local authority has every confidence in the capacity of school leaders to continue to secure school improvement.

## ■ The governance of the school

- The governors are very supportive of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they do not shy away from asking questions about the school's performance. They provide a good balance of support and challenge for senior leaders.
  - Governors know what is happening in the school as a result of visits, regular discussions with school leaders and scrutiny of the school data. They have a detailed understanding of school progress information and the progress of different groups of pupils.
  - Governors ensure that pay awards are carried out appropriately, based on pupil performance.
  - Governors use their skills appropriately and ensure their training is up to date so they can carry out their duties effectively. They ensure that the school's finances are well used. This includes the impact of the pupil premium and sports funding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work with pupils. Staff and governors are appropriately trained according to the latest guidelines.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- As a result of actions taken by senior leaders, teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive and teachers plan lessons that are interesting and capture pupils' interest. For example, in mathematics in Key Stage 1, pupils were learning about capacity and how to measure liquids by making potions.
- Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developed and consolidated through tasks that are challenging. Pupils are encouraged to work out solutions for themselves and to solve problems creatively. Many examples of this were seen in mathematics work.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting pupils' learning. They are well trained and understand the needs of the pupils they are supporting.
- Actions taken by the school to improve standards in writing have been effective. Writing is well taught and pupils are now using more complex sentence structures to improve the quality of their work. Inspectors saw many examples of extended writing in English books and in other subjects such as history and geography. Pupils' ability to spell correctly is being developed through weekly spelling homework and staff ensuring that pupils correct their spelling mistakes.
- Teachers mark work regularly and use the school's marking policy consistently. From Reception, pupils are given age-appropriate targets to help them improve their work. Teachers make sure that pupils make the necessary improvements to their work. As a result, good progress is made by most pupils. Pupils say the comments on their work help them to improve 'because it reminds us what we should be doing'.
- Phonics teaching (letters and sounds) has not been taught consistently in the past. The headteacher has made changes to the way phonics is being taught. In addition to whole-class teaching, pupils are also now taught in small ability-level groups. Inspectors noted that this is having some impact on improving pupils' phonics skills but there were still some inconsistencies.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying and the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying occurs occasionally but have confidence in staff dealing with it. All pupils know who to go to if they have a problem or that they can use the 'worry box'.
- This is a multi-cultural school and pupils, irrespective of their background, get on well together because they respect one another's race and culture. Pupils told the inspectors that racism does not happen and school records confirm it is very rare.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school because 'teachers look after us'. They are taught how to keep themselves safe when using technology and have a good understanding of internet safety.
- All parents who expressed a view feel that their child is well-looked-after and safe in school. The

overwhelming majority also feel that the school deals well with any incidents of bullying.

- The school works very closely with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive the level of support they need. Parents comment favourably about the level of support their children receive.
- The curriculum makes a valuable contribution to pupils' health and well-being. For example, in personal, social, health and economic education lessons pupils learn about road safety, forming relationships and peer pressure. In cooking and nutrition lessons, they learn about balanced diets and how to cook.
- Weekly sharing assemblies support pupils' personal development. In the Year 3 assembly, pupils read confidently and talked knowledgeably about their learning. Their enjoyment of learning was evident.
- In 2015, attendance was below average due to the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. As a result of robust action taken by the headteacher, attendance is now close to average. Pupils have responded positively to the rewards given for attendance and punctuality and enjoy being awarded 'HEDY' bear for being 'here every day' and 'OTIS' for being 'on time in school'. However, there are a minority of pupils whose attendance is still too low and has an impact on their achievement.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around the school. At playtime and lunchtime they play well together with due care for one another and for health and safety. They show respect for one another and adults.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils describe the school as a 'happy school with friendly teachers'.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They apply themselves purposefully, work well and are keen to learn. Pupils take care with their work and exercise books are well presented.
- Adults provide a vibrant learning environment. Classroom displays help pupils to learn. Pupils look after the school environment because they are proud of their school.
- The school works closely with parents and agencies to effectively support the behaviour of those pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and staff agree that pupils are well behaved.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is now good. All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The high proportion of pupils that join the school partway through their primary education, often with English as an additional language, can impact on the results in nationally published information from teacher assessments and tests. Even so, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 in 2015 reaching the expected Level 4 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from their previous starting points, especially in reading and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are higher than those reported at previous inspection. Pupils leave Year 6 as confident learners, well prepared for secondary education.
- School information showing pupils' current progress and the quality of work seen in pupils' books indicate that pupils continue to make good progress across a range of subjects in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers' higher expectations and pupils' positive attitudes to learning result in pupils producing good-quality work.
- In recent years, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and spelling skills has been held back because the teaching in phonics has not been sufficiently well targeted to meet pupils' different ability levels. As a result, at the end of Key Stage 1, historically, too few pupils have reached the higher levels of attainment in reading and writing. Leaders' actions to improve the teaching of phonics are starting to pay dividends. The progress and attainment of current pupils in Key Stage 1 is improving. Even so, some variability in the quality of phonics teaching remains and this still continues to hamper progress in reading, writing and spelling.
- Pupils are encouraged to read both in school and at home. The popular 'Give Me Ten' initiative encourages parents to read with their child for 10 minutes every day. More pupils are now reading at home. They talk enthusiastically about reading and enjoy the rewards attached to this scheme. Reading diaries show that most children read at home each evening.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. They benefit from the high level of support they receive. In Year 6 in 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making at least expected progress was above other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. The gap between the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and other pupils nationally is closing.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Current pupils' work and the school's progress information shows they are making good progress across a range of subjects. Pupils respond well to activities that require them to think more deeply.
- As a result of good teaching and effective leadership, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Staff have a clear understanding of how to meet their individual needs.
- Pupils that speak English as an additional language, including those with limited spoken English when they join the school, make good progress from their starting points. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is broadly in line with their classmates.

## Early years provision

is good

- Over time, the majority of children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills that are similar to those typically found. During their time in the early years, children learn quickly and make good gains in their learning and development. Consequently, outcomes are good with the majority finishing the Reception well prepared for their move into Year 1. In 2015, the proportion that reached a good level of development was 75%, which is some way above the national figure.
- Many children that join the Nursery come from the adjoining pre-school. Staff make visits to see the children and liaise with staff. Staff make home visits and hold information events for parents. Parents and children have the chance to visit the Nursery and Reception classes prior to starting.
- Parents are encouraged to join in activities, especially in the Nursery class.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the children. She has created a nurturing environment where children settle quickly, no matter when they arrive, and quickly acquire good learning habits. The proportion of children reaching the expected levels of attainment by the end of Reception has increased.
- Children learn in a stimulating environment. Classrooms are spacious and well resourced. The range of outdoor play equipment provides good opportunities for children to learn and develop their physical skills.
- Teachers plan interesting activities which enthuse children. For example, in Reception, children were learning about map reading and used their knowledge to make a map of a zoo. They were very proud of their maps and presented their ideas confidently to their classmates.
- Children behave well and know how to stay safe. With supervision, they are encouraged to experiment with equipment and resources to learn that making mistakes is part of learning.
- Children with special educational needs receive a high level of support from adults who are well equipped to meet their specific needs. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to develop specific programmes to address their individual needs. These children are integrated into the Nursery and are making appropriate progress.
- Funding to support disadvantaged children is used appropriately. These children are making good progress from their starting points.
- Children often join the Nursery or Reception Year mid-way through the year. These children are welcomed by other children and soon settle in. As a result of accurate assessment and planning work that meets their needs, they make good progress.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's independent learning skills as well as developing their understanding and knowledge through questioning by adults. Inspectors observed some good examples of this; for example, children forming their letters correctly in order to write the names of their friends and family. However, during times when children can choose activities for themselves and are working on their own or in small groups, adults, particularly in the Nursery, sometimes miss opportunities to encourage children to talk about their learning. They are sometimes left too long without any adult conversation and this hampers chances for children to explain their learning and develop language skills.

## School details



<b>Unique reference number</b>	117188
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10009143

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shaun McLean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Damien Johnston
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 759232
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.margaretwix.herts.sch.uk">www.margaretwix.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@margaretwix.herts.sch.uk">admin@margaretwix.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25–26 March 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are above average. About half of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of heritages, with pupils from Asian and Asian British, mainly Bangladeshi, heritage being the largest group.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The early years provides part-time Nursery education and full-time education for children in the Reception class.
- Pupil mobility is high. A much larger than average proportion of children join or leave the school other than at normal times. Many of the pupils who enter the school mid-way through the year do not speak English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. They visited 11 lessons to observe learning. Inspectors visited classes to talk to pupils about their work and to review work in pupils' books. The headteacher accompanied them for one learning observation and visits to lessons. Three work scrutinies of pupils' work in all subjects were also carried out.
- Inspectors listened to a group of Year 2 pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors visited two assemblies.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with two groups of pupils, along with informal conversations with others at break and lunchtime. They took into account the 12 responses from the pupil questionnaire.
- A range of documents were examined, including the school's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' academic progress, and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leader of English, the early years leader, special educational needs coordinator and four members of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 51 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 22 members of the school staff were considered.

## Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector

Charlotte Wood

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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