

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Margaret's Infant School

St Margaret's Infant School, Orchard Street, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9AE

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Paula Fewtrell. This school is part of The Westbrook Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Oliver Allen, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Norley.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has lofty ambitions for its pupils. Aspirations are consistently high and impressively fulfilled. Pupils flourish with confidence, happiness, respect and determination, aligning with the school's vision and values.

Pupils achieve highly across the curriculum, learning and remembering knowledge and skills over time while producing great work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The school adapts tasks and provides help to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to shine and thrive.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils work hard and show enthusiasm, kindness and respect. Starting in the nurturing Nursery, expectations are high, and relationships are warm. As pupils move through the school, they become responsible and conscientious members of an inclusive and ambitious school community. Pupils are proud of roles such as being members of the 'Calming Crew', 'Play Rangers', 'Eco Squad' and 'School Learning Council'. These opportunities help pupils to make a tangible difference to school life.

The school uses its outdoor environment to enrich pupils' mental and emotional well-being. Pupils benefit from this throughout the curriculum and as part of active lunchtime play. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One represented

many other's views that the school provides 'exceptional care and compassion' to ensure that pupils 'really matter'.

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

Since the previous inspection, highly effective leadership has driven impressive improvements at the school. Children begin to develop their love for reading from the moment they join the early years. In Nursery, children love story time. They thrive through opportunities to discover stories and language. In the Reception Year, children swiftly learn to identify letters and sounds. This boosts their early writing journey alongside their blossoming reading skills. Consistency throughout early years and Year 1 ensures a highly effective approach to the teaching of early reading. Where pupils may need extra help, the school provides effective targeted support. This ensures that pupils become fluent and confident readers, enjoying a diverse range of books to prepare them for the modern world.

The school has designed its curriculum precisely with detailed skills and knowledge. Professional development from the trust ensures that teachers' subject knowledge is strong across the subjects. Well-designed learning ensures that pupils learn and use key vocabulary, discuss ideas and apply their understanding. They remember knowledge over time and produce high-quality work.

Pupils with SEND progress well because of shared expertise across the school. Teachers, support staff and leaders collaborate constructively with parents and outside agencies to find vital help for pupils' individual needs. The school reviews this support to target the resources or adaptations that will make the most difference for pupils.

By the end of Year 2, pupils' writing is accurate, detailed and accomplished. In mathematics, pupils learn to apply concepts and skills to solve tricky problems. Rich experiences using numbers and shapes in early years help children to develop strong foundations. These same high standards are evidenced across the curriculum. For example, in design and technology, pupils investigate, plan and evaluate projects such as how different wheels and axles work. They work well together and acquire new skills adeptly. The feedback that staff provide to pupils is clear and helpful. This means that misconceptions become learning opportunities. Pupils are proud to make improvements to their work and to showcase their learning.

Attitudes to learning are highly positive. Classrooms are purposeful and calm. Beginning in Nursery and Reception, the school's expectations always aim high. Pupils are proud to meet them throughout the school. The school provides highly effective support to families to ensure strong attendance. Since the pandemic, the school has reduced absence rates to be significantly better than the national average.

Personal development and pastoral care are strengths. In addition to leadership opportunities, the school develops pupils' character through a wealth of experiences. For example, singing in the local community and proudly representing the school in trust sports events. With the River Medway nearby, swimming lessons and work on water

safety are prioritised. Online and road safety are also integral to the school's well-designed programme. Through a range of visitors and experiences, pupils are taught to listen to the views of others, celebrate differences, and embrace diversity. These experiences prepare them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.

Governors and trustees know their duties well. They fulfil them with skill and expertise. Leaders at all levels lead by example and dedication. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of the school's priorities. Training opportunities and workload considerations support positive well-being for all. Staff are proud and motivated. The school serves its community with a welcoming and reflective approach. It is continually improving, and pupils thrive as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Margaret's Infant School, to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2011.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144133
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10379909
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Norley
CEO of the trust	Oliver Allen
Headteacher	Paula Fewtrell
Website	www.stmargaretsinf.medway.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Westbrook Trust.
- The school shares a site with St Margaret's Church of England Junior School.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, inclusion leader, teachers, subject leaders and support staff.

- The inspector met with a range of trustees and governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- The inspector heard pupils read and observed how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke to a range of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector spoke to a range of parents and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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