

Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's Academy

Barewell Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4PA

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 June 2023

Outcome

St Margaret's Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of kindness, respect, responsibility and aspiration are central to how pupils behave and learn at St Margaret's Academy. Pupils value the strong and nurturing relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The vast majority of pupils uphold the high expectations that staff have of them. They show care and support to each other across the age ranges. Pupils know the impact they have on the school in their roles of responsibility. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn.

Pupils are enthusiastic and talk about their learning with pride. They know how this helps them get better in different subjects. Pupils are aware how subjects link together so they can transfer their knowledge. They use the 'seven skills of St Margaret's' successfully to support their language for learning. Pupils study a broad range of subjects, including learning outdoors. The outdoor lessons build pupils' resilience, independence and teamwork skills well.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to enrich and extend their learning in the classroom. It prepares them well for the next stage in their education and to become active participants in their local community.

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

Leaders provide a rich and ambitious curriculum for pupils right from the start, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is designed to give children in Reception a secure foundation in their knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Adults skilfully develop children's language and extend their learning. Staff build curiosity and encourage children to concentrate and think critically. Staff focus on vocabulary development. They increase children's independence through approaches such as 'choice boards'. Children are well prepared for learning in key stage 1 and beyond.

Pupils' 'busy time' in key stage 1 strengthens the strong start they get in Reception. It provides opportunities for targeted learning to precisely meet the needs of pupils and

address any gaps in learning. Subject leaders support this effectively. They use information about their areas of responsibility to provide a well-sequenced curriculum. This is continually strengthened through their monitoring and evaluation. Despite leaders ensuring that many areas of the curriculum are well embedded and secure, there remain some areas where consistency and expectations are not as high. Where this happens, pupils' attitudes towards learning are not as strong, and consequently they do not learn as well as they could.

Reading is a priority. Leaders have strengthened how well pupils learn, including those at the earliest stages of reading. Furthermore, leaders promote a culture of a love of reading by all. Pupils read regularly. They enjoy a range of different authors and text types, as well as books from different subjects in the curriculum. Children in Reception develop phonic knowledge well. Teachers identify misconceptions quickly. When pupils fall behind, teachers help them to catch up.

Provision for pupils with SEND is an area of strength. Staff know the barriers to learning that pupils face. They adapt learning successfully to overcome these barriers. In addition, where it is required, leaders provide a well-planned nurture programme. When pupils receive additional support outside the classroom, leaders ensure that this is targeted with precision and has minimal impact on their whole-class learning. Leaders have focused their efforts to create an inclusive approach to meeting the needs of all pupils. However, there is a small minority of pupils who cause some concern for their peers when they are finding their time in school tricky. Pupils appreciate that staff support these pupils and work to minimise the impact of the challenging behaviour demonstrated by this small minority. Despite this, some pupils say that this can disturb their learning and their experience of school.

Pupils' wider development is a school priority. Pupils gain a wealth of experiences and opportunities to increase their awareness of the world around them. They make a difference through fundraising and helping others. Leaders have forged strong community links, particularly with a local retirement home. As a result, pupils show tolerance and awareness of difficulties others can face. This extends to the inclusive nature of the school community and their acceptance of differences and challenges faced by others.

Those responsible for governance know the school's strengths and current areas of focus well. They use this knowledge to provide effective challenge and support. This helps senior leaders to drive school improvement. Leaders are alert to staff well-being and workload. As a result, staff show commitment and dedication to get the very best from pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and welfare of pupils are a priority for leaders. They know pupils well and work closely with external agencies. This ensures that they can offer support and guidance for vulnerable families at the earliest opportunity. Staff receive the necessary training to make

sure that they are alert to pupils who may be at risk of potential harm. Their knowledge and vigilance are maintained through regular revisiting of school priorities.

Pupils feel safe. They learn to be aware of risks through the curriculum. They can recall learning about staying safe when online and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is not a wholly consistent approach to the high expectations that leaders have for pupils at the school. At times, this means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is fully embedded and staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils. This will mean that the strong practice seen in some areas is replicated across the school.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils disturbs the learning and impacts negatively on the experience of school for some pupils. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to consider their actions to support the small minority of pupils who struggle with their behaviour and attitudes towards learning. This will help to reduce the impact this has on other pupils' learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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](#)' 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	136602
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10256672
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Bennett
Headteacher	Timothy Hughes
Website	www.stmargaretstorbay.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in a single-academy trust.
- The school has a local authority enhanced provision on site. It caters for pupils with hearing impairment.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinators. In addition, the inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair, trustees and members of the board of trustees. The inspector talked to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, science and design technology. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspector scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspector listened to the views of parents and carers at the start of the day. The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspector evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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