



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ST MARGARET'S SCHOOL**

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St Margaret's School

Full Name of School	St Margaret's School
DfE Number	202/6014
Registered Charity Number	312720
Address	St Margaret's School 18 Kidderpore Gardens London NW3 7SR
Telephone Number	020 7435 2439
Fax Number	020 7431 1308
Email Address	enquiry@st-margarets.co.uk
Principal	Mr Mark Webster
Chair of Governors	Mrs Caroline Bradford
Age Range	4 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	156
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	5-11: 65 3-5 (EYFS): 10 11-16: 81
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 156
Head of EYFS Setting	Ms G Wilson
EYFS Gender	Girls
Inspection Dates	11 Mar 2014 to 14 Mar 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. They attended registration sessions and assemblies and the arrangements for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Beryl Fawcett	Reporting Inspector
Ms Susan La Farge	Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Mr David Morgan	Team inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Simon Mozley	Team inspector (Former Deputy Head GSA school)
Miss Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1884 in Hampstead, St Margaret's School is a day school for girls aged from four to sixteen. The school moved into its current premises in 1943 and since then various improvements and additions have been made to the main building. Several local facilities are used for games. The school is an educational charity, with a governing body of nine members.
- 1.2 St Margaret's aims to provide a secure, caring and challenging learning environment in which girls are encouraged to strive for excellence in all they do. The school seeks to place respect for others at the heart of the school community, within which the potential and talent of each individual can be recognised, nurtured and realised. It aims to ensure that education is seen as a partnership between pupils, parents and teachers.
- 1.3 The school has 156 girls on roll, 3 of whom are aged four to five, 72 are aged five to eleven and 81 are aged eleven to sixteen. Its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one Reception class, housed in a classroom with its own outdoor space. Entry to the school is based on informal selection procedures for the younger children, and more formal written tests for older pupils. Transfer to Year 7 for pupils already in Year 6 is normally routine. The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average, with around a fifth of pupils having ability that is well above average. Few pupils are of below average ability.
- 1.4 Many girls come from business, professional and diplomatic families. The majority live within five miles of the school, with a few travelling a significant distance. About a third come from ethnic minorities. Most girls stay on at St Margaret's until they have completed their GCSE studies at the end of Year 11.
- 1.5 The school has no pupils with statements of special educational needs, but has identified twenty-one pupils as having some form of special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), mostly mild dyslexia. Sixteen of these pupils receive special support from the school. Sixteen pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives special support.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main Findings

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good. In the EYFS children of all abilities and needs make good progress in relation to their starting points, and in the junior and senior parts of the school pupils demonstrate good levels of understanding across the curriculum. Pupils with SEND are able to achieve well alongside their peers in accessing all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding, supported by the broad and balanced curriculum. The best teaching encourages independent, challenging and open-ended learning in the senior school but this is less well developed at other ages and across some areas of the curriculum. The effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) from the EYFS to the most senior part of the school is a particular strength. ICT is an integral part of the learning process in the senior school and facilitates high levels of co-operative learning. Given the size of the school, a good range of co-curricular activities complements achievements within the classroom.
- 2.2 Pupils of all ages have an excellent standard of personal development and this is supported by excellent pastoral care. Pupils are extremely considerate, courteous and friendly. Trusting, open relationships are a defining feature of the school. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and by the time they leave the school develop into confident, independent young people. Pupils have a self-regulated sense of right and wrong and their moral development is strong. They are socially aware and gain understanding of different cultural values and beliefs. Attention to provision for their welfare, health and safety is exemplary. Regulations, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, are carefully checked to ensure a safe and protective environment.
- 2.3 Under the strong leadership of the chair of governors the governing body knows the school well and contributes effectively to the support and monitoring of its work. The quality of leadership and management is good. That of the EYFS ensures that the children are well cared for in a welcoming and safe environment, although arrangements to evaluate the quality of the curriculum provision, planning and assessment are not yet sufficiently rigorous or embedded. In the main school, effective leadership and management ensures that the school's aims are fulfilled, policies have been implemented and the safeguarding of pupils is secure. Clear educational direction is evident in the good standards achieved at the end of Year 6 and in the outstanding GCSE results. In recent years, new leadership and direction have given a fresh sense of educational purpose. Nevertheless, monitoring and oversight of subject provision and performance are very widely spread and are not effectively co-ordinated within the junior school. The school has responded to recommendations made in the previous inspection. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Links with parents, carers and guardians are strong and reflect the school's aim to ensure that education is seen as a partnership between pupils, parents and teachers.

2.(b) Action points

Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Extend and develop the range of teaching that encourages independent, challenging and open-ended learning for all pupils, to share and reflect the most effective practice that exists in the school.
2. Extend the management structure to provide regular oversight, monitoring and support of provision in the junior part of the school.
3. In the EYFS, establish rigorous procedures to regularly monitor and evaluate curriculum provision, planning and assessment.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. In the EYFS children of all abilities and needs make good progress in relation to their starting points because of the encouragement and support they receive. In the junior and senior parts of the school (the main school), pupils demonstrate good levels of understanding across the curriculum. They are mature and confident in approaching every subject. Speaking skills throughout the school are excellent. The youngest children express themselves clearly and confidently in their conversations and listen attentively and the older girls are articulate and fluent debaters who can discuss a range of topics with insight and flair. Throughout the school, pupils have highly developed skills in listening and well-developed abilities in reading, writing and creativity. In the EYFS, children work confidently with numbers to ten and beyond. In mathematical and science subjects in the main school, pupils have very good levels of knowledge and good skill levels; their ability to apply their knowledge is, however, less developed.
- 3.3 The strongest lessons use open-ended tasks and sophisticated questioning to facilitate independence of thought, as was seen in a senior school lesson where the inclusive approach to the main focus of the lesson encouraged pupils to make connections across subject areas and led them to unanticipated conclusions. However, opportunities for independent thinking are less well developed at other ages and in other areas of the curriculum.
- 3.4 The use of ICT is a particular strength of the school. In the EYFS, children use computers independently and are able to manipulate a mouse with confidence. ICT is an integral part of the learning process in the senior school and facilitates high levels of co-operative learning; it was used naturally in a range of activities, from mapping in geography to preparation for literary study in English. By contrast, interviews with senior school pupils identified the library as an underused resource.
- 3.5 Extra-curricular activity complements the achievements within the classroom. Pupils perform with distinction in Trinity Guildhall speech and drama exams; a Year 9 pupil has a top ten national ranking for swimming. Regular netball fixtures are held and results are good, given the numbers available for each team. During the week of inspection, pupils were very highly placed in a worldwide online competition for knowledge of French vocabulary.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND are identified on the school's learning support register. Teachers support individuals' learning outside timetabled lessons. Supervised prep time for GCSE pupils is well used to provide extra support. SEND pupils are able to achieve well alongside their peers in accessing all areas of the curriculum. The register of higher ability pupils is well ordered. In the best lessons observed, effective strategies for extending the brightest pupils were seen but this was not consistent across all ages and subjects.
- 3.7 Results in junior school standardised tests are higher than national norms. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at age eleven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. GCSE performance has been above the national average for girls

in maintained schools, and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils of all abilities make good, sometimes high, progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.

- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. EYFS children enjoy their learning and are particularly enthusiastic when they can be active learners, as was seen in ICT and music. Throughout the main school, the girls respond with enthusiasm and high levels of engagement to every task set. Pupils are attentive at all times. They take pride in their work, presenting it very well and demonstrating excellent habits of organisation. They show a readiness to take responsibility for their own learning and are reflective learners who support their peers in a respectful fashion. Their unfailingly positive approach underpins their learning throughout.
- 3.9 Most pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11 and the large majority go on to their first choice of sixth-form provision.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.11 The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good coverage of the requisite areas of learning. The curriculum is suitable for all ages and also for the range of abilities and needs, consistent with the aims of the school. In the EYFS, curricular provision is effective in providing firm foundations and specialist teaching adds very significantly to the children's learning experience. The time given to linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas provides a well-balanced education for all pupils. In responding to a previous inspection recommendation, the wider curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for senior pupils to broaden their experience beyond the limits of their exam courses. The girls are well prepared for their progression to another stage of education at age sixteen.
- 3.12 The school broadly follows the National Curriculum and, in the junior school, additional subjects include French which, together with personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education, aim to fully develop pupils' potential. In the senior school, girls are given the opportunity to study a second modern foreign language in Year 7. All follow GCSE ICT from Year 9 and, at GCSE, follow a common core set of subjects as well as choosing from a range of options. However, the time allocation for physical education (PE) in Years 9 to 11 is below the recommended level. The curriculum is reviewed regularly on the basis of educational need. The move to all girls doing additional science at GCSE, for example, reflects a decision-making process that ensures that the curriculum and timetable is appropriate to all the pupils' needs. The girls expressed satisfaction with the choices available and did not feel that they were limited by being part of a small school. The extensive investment in ICT has been effective in supporting the delivery of many aspects of the curriculum.
- 3.13 Support for EYFS children with SEND or with EAL is appropriate, although more able children are not always challenged to go beyond the sometimes rather limiting expected outcomes. The provision of a support plan for other pupils with SEND is efficient and extra lessons are seen as a positive support by those girls. However, this information is not always used effectively by staff in adapting teaching and planning of the content of lessons for these girls. Equally, for those identified as having a higher ability, the curriculum is not always tailored to their individual needs

and staff are not always aware of the need for specific strategies to fully develop these individuals in line with the school's aims.

- 3.14 The pupils feel that they are extremely well supported in their studies and, where it is felt necessary, additional teaching is provided at lunchtime or after school by most subject teachers.
- 3.15 The extra-curricular programme offered at the start of each academic year represents a wide range of activities for the size of the school, covering the areas of sport, music, drama, creative arts and debating, as well as academic pursuits. Whilst it appears to provide opportunities for all the girls to realise their potential and develop their talents, as the girls move through the school they are less involved in this range of activities. Where extra-curricular clubs are well-supported they provide an excellent addition to the school's academic curriculum such as the Year 7 mathematics club which was initiated by two pupils, the running club and the excellent atmosphere in Year 5 library club.
- 3.16 The PSHE and citizenship programmes contribute considerably to the pupils' personal development throughout the school and appropriate careers guidance supports decisions in Years 9 and 11, with all girls undertaking a period of work experience in the summer term of Year 10. The school has introduced a skills grid to allow girls to recognise the wider skills that they can develop through extra-curricular activities, as well as '125 Things To Do', and this challenges pupils to develop a range of skills which support their personal development.
- 3.17 Pupils benefit from a number of links with the local community: They visit a retirement home to help at Christmas and a homeless shelter to deliver donations from the harvest festival; the school chaplain conducts assemblies relating to Christian festivals; the junior choir performs for the local community; and one of the houses supports a children's charity in Cambodia.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The quality of teaching across the school is good.
- 3.19 Some teaching observed was excellent and the small class sizes make a significant contribution to the pupils' achievement and progress, and to the school's fulfilment of its aims.
- 3.20 In the EYFS, the best teaching provides opportunities for children to engage actively with their learning. Planning covers all areas of learning but does not always respond effectively to children's changing needs and interests. The easily accessible outside area is under-used to provide active and challenging learning opportunities.
- 3.21 In the main school, the teaching is effective as relationships with the pupils are excellent. The teachers know their pupils extremely well and give generously of their time to help individual pupils in their learning by providing extra support outside the timetabled lessons.
- 3.22 The teachers generally have enthusiasm for their subject and good levels of subject knowledge that is communicated well to their pupils. Much teaching makes effective use of interactive whiteboard resources, ICT and other appropriate teaching tools. In the best lessons, teaching is well planned and identifies individual pupils' needs. Teaching uses a variety of methods within lessons. In the more effective lessons,

such as a senior school lesson that encouraged debate, based on pupils' knowledge and understanding of different points of view, the teaching used more open-ended questioning, ensured that the pupils were appropriately challenged and promoted independent thinking and interest for them. In less successful lessons, however, the teaching was more limiting and unexciting in its presentation. Currently expectations for the more able pupils vary across curriculum areas in the school. In the lessons where individual pupils' learning needs were addressed by providing different tasks, the learning for all pupils was improved, as seen in a senior school science lesson. Confident subject knowledge ensures that pupils are appropriately challenged and this enables pupils to make better progress. ICT is used much more effectively than at the time of the last inspection and enhances the pupils' learning. In Years 10 and 11 much of the teaching incorporates the use of the portable devices and this helps to develop active and independent learning. Although ICT is being introduced in some form to all pupils, it is not always used effectively across all areas of the junior school curriculum.

- 3.23 Work is regularly marked and across the school there are excellent examples of constructive marking which tells pupils how to improve and make further progress. The well-conceived new marking policy is set to provide greater support and guidance to pupils but has yet to be fully implemented and there are currently inconsistencies across the school and within subject areas. Examples of assessment for learning are evident in various subjects and where this helps to inform planning the learning outcomes are improved.
- 3.24 Much assessment information is well used to inform teachers' planning, support effective teaching and improve outcomes for the pupil, as was seen in a junior mathematics lesson. Peer assessment is also well used by some teachers and had a positive effect on pupils' progress in several junior and senior school lessons observed. Annual standardised assessment in the junior school in English and mathematics and across the senior school provides valuable data to ascertain pupils' progress and performance and help highlight pupils requiring additional support or extension work. In the EYFS, however, regular assessments are not made to ensure the best outcomes for all children and track their progress.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages throughout the school have an excellent standard of personal development, in line with the school's aims, being extremely considerate, courteous and friendly. They are confident and self-aware in their approach to others in the school and to visitors.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Their high levels of self-awareness lead to trusting, open relationships that are a defining feature of the school. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and develop into confident, independent young people. They feel safe and secure in a supportive learning community where they celebrate each other's successes. They feel valued and take pride in the praise, rewards and accolades they receive. The considerate, caring and reflective attitude that they bring to their work and play show an awareness of a non-material side of life.
- 4.4 Pupils have a self-regulated sense of right and wrong which is shared by all, including children from the earliest years. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of good conduct, and their behaviour, characterised by their good manners observed throughout inspection, was exemplary and reflects strong moral development. They are encouraged to develop a wider understanding of their roles and rights in society, as seen in a Year 7 PSHE lesson, as well as develop an understanding of the concept of morality. In lessons, strong co-operation and a respect for the views of others was evident where paired or group work was undertaken. They have strong opinions which promote fair play and equality. Charitable giving is evident in a range of activities including donations to local charities as part of the harvest festival, as well as house fund-raising for a Cambodian charity. At an early age, pupils are encouraged to take the initiative in organising fund-raising activities, such as for a national charity on World Book Day.
- 4.5 The pupils' social awareness is well developed. Girls are very confident in expressing their views of the school and the security they feel in being part of a supportive and caring community. Their ability to consider the needs of others and appreciate the world around them illustrates the school's success in this area. Girls have a number of opportunities to take on leadership roles and the school council provides a good forum through which they can express the pupil voice and influence change. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on honesty, high standards of behaviour, respect for others and self-discipline which is supported by the whole school community. Pupils are given effective opportunities for personal growth through the PSHE and citizenship curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
- 4.6 Through religious education in the junior school, lessons and assemblies in the senior school, and the celebration of festivals, pupils explore different cultural values and beliefs. Displays of pupils' art work and drama performances develop the pupils' appreciation of aesthetic stimuli. Pupils benefit from a number of local cultural visits as well as an overseas trip to Spain that further enhance their personal development. Through citizenship, they have a good understanding of services and institutions in England and learn to develop a balanced view of a range of issues.

- 4.7 The children in the EYFS gain high levels of independence by the end of Reception and firm foundations are set to prepare them for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave the school, pupils have reached an outstanding standard of personal development.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.8 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 The high quality of pastoral care supports the school's aim to respond to the needs of every individual in a secure and caring environment. The school's positive ethos is evident throughout its excellent approach to pastoral care.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, provision for the children's well-being is excellent. Welfare is given high priority and the children are extremely well cared for. Staff act as very good role models and promote the standards of behaviour expected. Throughout the school, pupils speak very warmly of the family-like atmosphere in the school and the concern for younger pupils shown by the older girls is striking. Staff, including the key person in the EYFS, know the pupils in their charge very well and effective, well-managed pastoral records ensure the proper management and oversight of pastoral issues. Pupils feel safe and supported in the school environment and were clear that they had people to turn to should they need to be further helped.
- 4.11 Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They speak very positively about the quality of the school meals which provide well-balanced menus and they are guided to adopt a healthy life style and understand the need for regular exercise. The school is pro-active in inviting outside speakers to talk on important issues, such as the workshop on relationships during inspection week, which was much valued by Year 11 pupils. Pupils receive effective guidance from their tutors; pupils are helped in making choices for continuing their education beyond sixteen.
- 4.12 Behaviour is excellent throughout the school and any reinforcement of this is relaxed in style. The anti-bullying policy is appropriate and effective systems are in place to ensure staff familiarity with this and other policies. The rare instances of tensions between pupils have been handled very effectively and issues resolved well. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 Pupils are confident that they are listened to. From using the suggestions box to joining the school council, which successfully lobbied for the introduction of hoodies, girls feel able to play a constructive part in the work of their school. They are confident that they can make a difference, and effect valuable change. This is encapsulated in the words of one Year 9 girl: 'You can voice yourself at our school.'

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.14 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.15 All matters of welfare, health and safety are dealt with rigorously and ensure that the school is a secure and safe environment for all its girls. In the EYFS, the children's well-being and safeguarding are central to all that the setting does, and are enhanced by thorough attention to welfare, health and safety.
- 4.16 The safeguarding arrangements, including child protection, show high regard for the official regulations and attention to detail in monitoring their implementation. All staff are appropriately trained in line with their level of responsibility for child protection and are required to acknowledge their awareness of associated regulatory procedures. Policies relating to welfare, health and safety are in place and are reviewed regularly. These ensure that all necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards and that risk assessments for activities in school and during trips are effective. Suitable measures are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards.
- 4.17 Provision and care for pupils who are ill or injured are exemplary and ensure that pupils confidently seek help when they need it and that communication with parents is quickly established. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets requirements.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and correctly stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Under the strong leadership of the chair of governors the governing body knows the school well and contributes effectively to the support and monitoring of the work of the school. The governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. They take a keen interest in the EYFS setting and have a good understanding of the requirements. Maintaining effective oversight of the school and, working as a governing body as a whole, the governors are extremely supportive and discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Frequent contact between the chairman and principal ensures that issues are discussed regularly and that decisions are suitably challenged. The board receives full and regular reports from the principal and at times has benefitted from presentations from senior staff that explain developments in the school. They understand the school's special features and share a common vision for its future.
- 5.3 Governors combine the effective oversight of the school's educational standards and the efficient management of resources and finance that have enabled the successful development of the school since the last inspection. The development of facilities has been both imaginative and effective. They are committed to the achievement of high standards and to providing a proper preparation for the challenges of adult life and work. They give attention to the regular oversight of health and safety, and review child protection and safeguarding arrangements each year. Monitoring of policies and procedures is carried out appropriately.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents and others, is good.
- 5.5 Leadership and management of the EYFS ensure that the children are well cared for in a welcoming and safe environment. However, arrangements to evaluate the quality of the curriculum provision, planning and assessment are not yet sufficiently rigorous or embedded.
- 5.6 In the main school, effective leadership and management ensure that the school's aims are fulfilled, policies have been implemented and safeguarding of pupils is secure. Members of the senior leadership team work well together and are united in a strong sense of purpose that communicates itself to the staff, providing them with effective support and ensuring that pupils do well. Clear educational direction is evident in the good standards achieved at the end of Year 6 and in the outstanding GCSE results. The strengths in leadership are reflected in pupils' excellent personal development, the quality of their relationships with one another and with staff and their confidence in ownership of the school and willingness to contribute to all aspects of school life. The development plan sets appropriate priorities and ensures that these are costed and achieved within reasonable timescales.

- 5.7 In recent years, new leadership and direction have given a fresh sense of educational purpose through the collection and collation of performance data and focused discussions on aspects such as teaching methodology. A new appraisal system has been introduced and promises to be an effective tool to improve and monitor teachers' performance and to identify training needs. Nevertheless, the management role within the largely single-person subject areas, particularly in the junior school, is not always supported by a good understanding of subject leadership and ways in which the role might be carried out systematically. Currently, monitoring and oversight of subject provision and performance are very widely spread, largely the responsibility of one person across the school as a whole, and not effectively co-ordinated within the junior school.
- 5.8 The school has responded to all recommendations made in the previous inspection. Entries in the single central register are now correct. With regard to the recommendation about curricular provision for senior pupils, across the range of the curriculum, senior pupils have sufficient opportunities to broaden their work beyond the limits of their examination courses. They also benefit from PSHE, the skills grid, talks from outside speakers, cross-curricular courses and involvement in competitive sport. As they move up the school, far fewer choose to participate in the cross-curricular courses but choose to follow courses such as art that offer a very different approach to learning. Strategies to devolve some of the school's management tasks have been introduced and continue to be developed. In the EYFS, more effective policies have been developed but the range of learning opportunities continues to lack breadth.
- 5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, and all required checks, policies and records are in place. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements.
- 5.10 The premises are well maintained and provide a safe environment. The school runs efficiently due to the care and expertise of all staff, including administrative staff, who work hard to support the pupils.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are strong. This reflects the school's aim to ensure that education is seen as a partnership between pupils, parents and teachers. The strong partnership that is developed with parents of the youngest children is maintained as pupils progress through the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely positive and enthusiastic about the school. They were particularly appreciative of the progress their children make, the curriculum provided and the standards of behaviour. They would wholeheartedly recommend the school to other parents.
- 5.12 Communication with parents is well developed and they have considerable opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children, from listening to reading or accompanying classes on trips to holding useful workshops on money or on particular careers.
- 5.13 A comprehensive but still developing website, the school prospectus and the parents' handbooks provide all current and prospective parents with detailed information about the school. Parents particularly value the weekly emails and fortnightly newsletters which give valuable information on all that is happening in the

school. The school's 'open door' policy is appreciated and allows the vast majority of queries or concerns to be dealt with swiftly and informally. Equally staff can be contacted by email and they endeavour to respond promptly.

- 5.14 Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through regular parents' consultations and written reports. Reports throughout the school are encouraging, celebrating achievement and in most cases setting targets to help younger pupils understand how they can make further progress and help older pupils set their own targets.
- 5.15 The active 'Friends of St Margaret's' organises a variety of social and fund-raising events. The success of these events has enabled many valuable resources to be purchased for the school, including e-readers and theatre tickets for older pupils.

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.