

Martinshaw Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119925
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379909
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gurdip Bhamra
Headteacher	Andrew Raben
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry Elston

Additional inspector

Lindsay Hall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by eight teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curricular planning documents and examples of the ways in which the school supports different groups of pupils. Information from questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 59 parents and carers were also taken into consideration.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, where the large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has recently gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark and Eco-Schools awards. Over the past two years there have been considerable staff changes. The headteacher has been unavoidably away from school since November 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- The school is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average in mathematics and average in English. This represents satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. In English, while most pupils read well, their attainment in writing lags behind that in other subjects. This is because they are not always given sufficient time to complete writing tasks in English lessons and expectations of their written work in other subjects are not high enough.
- Children make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills typical for their ages. They enjoy their work and develop their reading and personal skills particularly well.
- Teaching and pupils' learning are satisfactory. Inspection evidence concurs with parents and carers that their children learn faster in some classes than others. Sometimes the work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities.
- While behaviour is good overall, not all teachers make the rules clear enough and some time is lost in lessons. The action to improve behaviour over recent years has been effective and pupils, as well as parents and carers, say how this makes Martinshaw a safe and happy school.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in the way they think deeply about those less fortunate than themselves and develop a clear sense of justice and fairness.
- The leadership team has done well to maintain a high level of staff morale in challenging circumstances. Its members are ambitious and show a good commitment to school improvement. Their actions to rectify weaknesses in writing are starting to bear fruit and some of the work in pupils' books shows that progress is accelerating.

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- The school has been successful in introducing a creative curriculum that makes learning fun, and topics such as 'mythical creatures' have done much to motivate boys and raise their attainment.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, ensure that pupils in all classes learn equally well by teachers:
 - giving them clear guidelines on how to behave
 - ensuring that tasks are demanding yet achievable for all groups of pupils.
- By July 2013, raise attainment in writing to the levels reached in reading and mathematics by:
 - giving more time for pupils to write in lessons
 - expecting more of the quality of their writing in all subjects.
- With immediate effect, ensure all staff are taking action to bring about these improvements by the senior staff:
 - checking rigorously on the quality of teaching and learning
 - giving teachers clear guidelines about how to improve their practice
 - providing them with more opportunities to learn from the best practice in school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a satisfactory start to school. They enter the Reception class with broadly typical skills for their ages and the large majority attain the levels expected by the end of the year. The good teaching of word-building skills is evident in the way children read well and learn how to tackle new words.

At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is average in mathematics and writing and above average in reading. While progress is satisfactory, it is faster in Year 2 than Year 1. Pupils enjoy reading and develop their language skills well through activities such as describing the distinctive features of a giant and working out whether or not he is friendly. Their writing is imaginative, but sometimes brief. When given the time, however, they produce some exciting work, and one wrote, *'One beautiful afternoon the Billy Goats Gruff saw an amazing view of sweet, juicy grass'*. In mathematics, pupils count accurately and have a secure understanding of the properties of simple shapes.

By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment over recent years in the national tests has

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been above average in mathematics and average in English. This remains the case. Pupils in the current Year 6 read with good expression and many can skim texts quickly in books and on computers to gain information. Throughout the key stage, pupils' writing is imaginative, but sometimes its quality is restricted by the lack of time to put their good ideas on to paper. Their mathematical skills improve well because of the very effective mental mathematics sessions that hone their skills and good opportunities to use their knowledge in all subjects. As a result, by Year 6 pupils calculate quickly in their head and solve complex problems about real-life situations. While these achievements in English and mathematics represent satisfactory progress, it is uneven across the key stage, and the rapid gains made in Year 5 and 6 mask some slower progress lower down the school.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They do well in their reading because of the good teaching of how to build sounds into words. In writing, however, while they make satisfactory progress, they do not always have sufficient time in lessons to write more than a few sentences.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, parents and carers concur with the inspection evidence that teachers have a good knowledge of subjects and explain new work clearly. They make lessons fun by planning a lot of practical activities and effectively using the interactive whiteboards to help pupils reinforce their learning. Pupils in Year 5, for example, learned much about how to improve their work by editing one of their stories on the whiteboard. Most teachers employ good strategies for managing behaviour. Pupils learn, for example, the rules about putting their hands up and listening to each other's answers. In a minority of lessons, however, the teachers accept answers from those who call out and this wastes time as pupils compete for attention. Teachers are good at teaching basic reading and number skills and this gives pupils confidence to tackle challenging work. In writing, however, they sometimes focus too much on the strategies pupils should use to produce exciting stories and leave too little time to complete them.

Teachers mostly plan work well to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and this ensures that the highest- and lowest-attaining groups achieve well. In the less successful lessons, however, the work is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. As a result, some finish early while others have to wait for help and waste time.

There is some outstanding teaching that inspires pupils, creates a sense of wonder and leads to rapid progress. In these lessons, the teachers give just the right amount of guidance on the task and then provide opportunities for all groups of pupils to discuss their work, share ideas and then work at their own ability level.

Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading and mathematics across the curriculum but less so in writing because of the over-use of worksheets in the broad 'themes' that require just a few words. Teachers make

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detailed assessments of pupils' progress in lessons, and use these well to plan future work. They mark pupils' work promptly and are good at suggesting how it could be improved.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour and personal development prepare them well for the future. Parents and carers say how much they value this. One comment, typical of many, concluded, 'Children are made to feel valued and they respond by acting with consideration and respect for others'. When the rules are made clear in lessons, pupils listen carefully and persevere well with challenging work. Pupils are eager to learn, get down quickly to work and show great respect for adults and other pupils. They rarely experience bullying or harassment, and when it does happen they feel that adults manage it well. They are very punctual to lessons. Attendance rates are high and maintained at this level by rigorous systems to discourage unnecessary absences.

Pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues and speak knowledgeably about the need to keep safe and eat nutritious foods. This is reinforced very well by their enthusiastic involvement in the school's vegetable patch. Older pupils in particular understand the need to take care when using the internet and have a good appreciation of the potential hazards of fire and busy roads. They are involved well in the community and have a good reputation for their participation in local singing events. Pupils reflect deeply on issues and even the younger ones use their imagination to speculate what it would be like to fly like the snowman in their reading book. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues and one class wrote thoughtfully about what they would do if they found a cash machine giving out free notes.

Leadership and management

Despite the many disruptions to the leadership team, the school runs smoothly and areas for improvement are ambitious and clear. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The leaders have done much to enhance pupils' cultural awareness through visits and visitors representing different faiths and backgrounds. They have established fruitful links with a school overseas. The presentation of pupils' writing has improved and pupils now show a great pride in their work. There has been some progress in raising the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, but some inconsistencies remain. Recent absence by senior staff has restricted the evaluation of teaching and learning and the support given to less experienced teachers.

The leaders have introduced a broad and balanced curriculum with a good focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their creative and social skills. It encourages pupils to reflect on their world, and their work on the tropical rainforests shows how much they care about the fragility of some environments. A strength of the curriculum lies in the good use of computers to bring subjects to life. Pupils enjoy researching their topics and show

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good skills using search engines. The curriculum is currently incomplete and leaders are now rightly focusing on improving the quality of writing in subjects other than English.

The leaders take good note of the views of pupils, parents and carers when they plan for the future. Regular communication between home and school enables parents and carers to air any concerns, and pupils have conducted an excellent survey to improve the way homework is set. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and pleased with the way it enhances their children's personal as well as academic development. A few are critical of the way the school manages behaviour. Inspectors found that rare instances of poor behaviour are managed well, but actions are not always communicated effectively to parents and carers.

The governing body supports the school well, and has been instrumental in ensuring staff have good opportunities to develop their skills through additional training. Its members show a good commitment to safeguarding systems and these are robust. They use their skills satisfactorily to challenge the school's leaders and hold them to account. The governing body works closely with the leaders to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. They promote equality well, have a sound awareness of the performance of different groups of pupils and have established rigorous systems to tackle any form of discrimination. The governing body manages a good breakfast club that provides a small number of pupils with an enjoyable, safe and stimulating start for the day.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Martinshaw Primary School, Leicester, LE6 0BB

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside, even when it was so cold. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. Your school is satisfactory, which means that while some things are good, others could be even better.

We were impressed with how hard you work. You read well and are good at mathematics. Your writing is exciting, but sometimes you could write more. You behave well, and this helps to make school a happy place. You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Even the youngest ones think a lot about people in the world who are sad or have too little to eat. Your headteacher and senior staff run the school smoothly. You work hard at the activities provided for you and enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school. Your teachers make learning fun and are good at helping you when you find things difficult. They work really closely with your parents and carers to make sure they know how well you are doing at school. All staff at the school take good care of you and keep you safe.

The headteacher and your teachers are always looking for ways to improve. We have asked them to:

- make sure all lessons as good as the best ones
- help you to make even faster progress in writing.

You can help by getting down to work quickly and concentrating really hard until you have finished. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston
Lead inspector.

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