

Martock Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123856
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380750
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Ian Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Singleton
Headteacher	Elizabeth Wilson-Chalon
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	18–19 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ian Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

Margaret Faull

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by nine teachers totalling approximately four hours. They visited a further 12 part lessons and small group sessions such as those for teaching letters and sounds. The inspectors also heard a sample of pupils read in Year 2. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' attainment and the progress they make, data on attendance and plans for improvement. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 97 parents and carers, 72 pupils and 27 staff.

Information about the school

Martock Church of England VA Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils that are known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is around the average. There are a privately run pre-school and an after-school club on the school site. These services are not managed by the governing body and were not visited during this inspection.

There have been successive changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. The substantive headteacher left the school in July 2010 and the school was led by an acting headteacher, recruited from another school, until July 2011. The new substantive headteacher took up her post in September 2011.

The school's work was recognised by the Healthy School award in 2010. The school's performance met government floor standards in 2011, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- This is a satisfactory school that has improved markedly over the last 18 months. Attainment has risen and pupils are making stronger progress following successive changes in leadership and a period of decline. The new headteacher has grasped the issues promptly and worked vigorously to sustain these improvements. A number of middle leaders are new to their roles and are beginning to secure the further changes necessary. The absence of measureable targets in the plans for improvement makes it difficult for leaders to evaluate progress towards the intended outcomes.
- Pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils' rates of progress have improved noticeably in reading and writing, reflecting the concerted efforts that have been made. Progress in mathematics has been weaker, but recent actions taken are beginning to bear fruit. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that pupils' progress is uneven across the school and the proportions of pupils that securely reach the levels expected for their age are not high enough in some classes. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching, including that in the Early Years Foundation Stage, has improved and has several strengths. Nevertheless, not enough use is made of pupils' learning targets in lessons and pupils are not sufficiently guided to evaluate their work against the learning outcome. The curriculum provides a wide range of enrichment opportunities through visits and a variety of after-school clubs. However, pupils do not undertake a broad enough range of work in mathematics.
- The high quality relationships fostered by an inclusive, Christian ethos means that pupils enjoy school and feel safe. These features also account for pupils' good social, emotional, spiritual and cultural development. Their good behaviour and higher-than-average attendance have contributed strongly to their strengthening achievement. The quality of care for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is of a high standard.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, ensure that pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics, and a very large majority attain the levels expected for their age by:
 - detailing the measurable improvement expected in each year group
 - broadening the range of mathematical work undertaken by pupils
 - making better use of assessment information to direct teaching and to inform the next lesson.
- By July 2013, build on the strengths in teaching so that it secures consistently good progress in all lessons by:
 - making greater use of pupils' learning targets and success criteria in lessons
 - ensuring that learning always proceeds at a suitable pace
 - ensuring that adults ask a greater range of questions to assess pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking.
- Ensure that all middle leaders, particularly those new to the role, have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to drive improvements and evaluate the difference that actions have made against clear success criteria.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons, pupils enjoy learning because of the varied activities and the high quality relationships they have with adults. For example, during a literacy session in Year 1, the class teacher used newsreel footage skilfully to develop pupils' comprehension skills and teach the letter sound 'ew'. In this lesson, pupils worked with high levels of interest to write the corresponding letters in similar sounding words successfully. Pupils frequently discuss their learning enthusiastically in pairs and small groups, then apply themselves to tasks with sustained concentration. While pupils know where to find their learning targets, they are not sufficiently clear about the small steps they need to take to progress to the next level. This is because targets are not discussed often enough in lessons and there are limited examples of pupils' work on display to illustrate the progression between different levels.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall, but an increasing proportion make good progress. Gaps in children's levels of development are closing because more children are working securely within each area of learning by the time they leave Reception.

Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. Their attainment in writing and mathematics is also average, reflecting the variations that exist between classes. One reason for this is the limited range of mathematics work present in books. Pupils are enthusiastic readers because of the daily focus on

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early literacy skills and the extensive use of personal reading programmes. In lessons, younger pupils were seen drawing successfully on their knowledge of letters and sounds to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils were observed in a guided reading session using higher reading skills confidently to identify evidence in the text in support of their answers. Pupils make stronger progress in reading and writing than in mathematics, reflecting the school's recent priorities. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving.

Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Carefully planned programmes of support and the capable assistance from well-trained adults ensure that tasks are suitably matched to their individual needs. Although progress is improving, when taken over a more sustained period they make similar progress to their peers.

The overwhelming majority of responses from parents and carers agreed that their child is making good progress. Inspection evidence shows that, although increasing proportions of pupils are making good progress, this is not consistent across all classes and year groups.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers hold very positive views on the quality of teaching their child receives. Pupils are making greater progress because the quality of teaching has improved and it makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. This is equally true of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers use their knowledge of subjects well and illustrate key teaching points confidently using new technologies. In the most effective lessons, teachers question pupils incisively and move learning on at a brisk pace. For example, in one mixed-age mathematics lesson, pupils demonstrated a very clear understanding of the learning objective. This was because the class teacher gave a crisp and clear explanation then moved swiftly around the class, challenging and supporting individuals while they completed the task. Consequently, they made good progress. However, these features are not present in all lessons, which accounts for the variation in pupils' rates of progress.

Regular training and moderation exercises have ensured that teachers have a clearer understanding of what is expected of pupils at different ages. Teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are more accurate and the information is used increasingly well to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Lesson plans do not focus teaching sharply on those pupils that need to make the most progress. The school's consistent approach to marking is clearly understood by pupils. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their work against detail criteria, which limits their understanding of what is required. Assessments and observations for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are closely linked to all areas of learning, but next steps are not recorded clearly.

The engaging curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school.

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Pupils value the wide range of after-school clubs and opportunities to participate in musical and sporting events. Cultural visitors such as poets and Bulgarian dancers enrich pupils' learning, as do visits to local places of interest. Transition to the secondary phase of education is supported well. For example, film-making and photography experiences at a local academy enable pupils to develop their communication skills through a broader range of media. This, together with pupils' satisfactory achievement and improving levels in basic skills, means that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their schooling.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well, due to the secure routines and close working relationships with parents and carers. In lessons, they show positive attitudes towards learning, demonstrating valuable social skills when playing together and taking turns. Older pupils also behave well in lessons, assemblies and at playtimes. This is because the expectations are clear and understood widely. A few parents and carers that responded to the questionnaire expressed concerns regarding poor behaviour. Occasionally the behaviour of a few pupils does fall below the levels expected. Such occurrences are managed well and the school works effectively with partner agencies to meet the needs of those individuals.

Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of the risks associated with cooking in science or participating in physical activities. For example, they know not to climb on apparatus when it is wet because 'it's slippery'. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are confident in raising concerns with adults. Parents and carers also reported that they too were confident that the school's systems were sufficiently robust to deal with any incidents, should they occur. The school's well-established procedures for promoting attendance have ensured that attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now above average. Members of the school council have initiated several improvements, such as the setting up of a film club and improving facilities at playtimes. More recently, the head boy and head girl acted as ambassadors by accompanying staff on visits to other schools and subsequently addressing a staff meeting to share their findings.

Leadership and management

Members of the governing body have managed the turbulence in leadership effectively and maintained the school's focus on raising standards. They use their detailed knowledge of the school to provide support and challenge in equal measure. The new headteacher has set about providing a clear sense of direction and purpose. Parents and carers recognise the improvements that have taken place and several commented positively during the inspection, that she was 'very professional and approachable to parents' and had made a 'good impression'. These views are representative of many responses and are similar to those of the inspection team.

The school has an accurate view of itself because procedures for monitoring and reviewing the school's work are robust and lead to well-informed plans for

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improvement. These are two of the reasons for the school's increasing success. Another reason is the difference that training has made in improving the quality of teaching. For example, members of staff have observed practice in other schools, changed the way lessons are planned and improved how they teach pupils in small group sessions.

Leaders and managers at all levels use pupil tracking information effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils make. Although expectations of pupils' progress have been raised, detailed targets have not been set to indicate clearly the anticipated improvements in each year group. The new headteacher has worked closely with several middle leaders that have taken up their responsibilities recently. As a result, they are increasingly involved in monitoring such as scrutinising pupils' work. The improvements in pupils' achievement, attendance and the quality of teaching are evidence of satisfactory and growing capacity for further improvement

Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are robust and meet current requirements. Roles and responsibilities are clear and supported by regular training. Relevant policies are kept up to date and records maintained. The noticeable improvements in the achievement of different pupil groups, such as pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, are evidence of the school's commitment to equal opportunities.

Pupils' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted by the frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on values and beliefs through a variety of lessons, themes and assemblies. The Christian ethos engenders a strong sense of community, where pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect towards for each other. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on and discuss important issues such as when considering the notion of 'trust' in assembly or talking about a modern day disaster on the news. Residential visits in Year 4 and Year 6 develop important social skills. The wider cultural understanding is promoted through national and international links to schools in Hackney and Kenya. Visits, such as a recent one for Year 6 pupils to the Magistrates' Court in Yeovil, help prepare pupils for future life in democratic Britain.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Martock Church of England VA Primary School, Martock TA12 5EF

Thank you for the welcome you gave my colleague and me when we came to inspect your school. I enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views on the school. I would like to share with you what we have learned about your school.

Martock Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory school. This means that some things are going well, but there are things that should be better. Here are some of the things that are going well.

- Your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body have worked hard so that lessons have got better and more of you reach the levels expected.
- Nearly all of you enjoy school and feel safe because everybody is included and gets on well with each other.
- You have lots of opportunities to learn by visiting places and participating in after-school clubs.
- Adults in the school take good care of you.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure that you make good progress in every lesson, particularly in mathematics lessons. They will do this by giving you lots of different work in mathematics and ensuring that all your lessons are as good as the best ones. I have also asked your teachers to help you make more use of your learning targets in lessons and to help you check your work. I have suggested that they ask you different questions to make sure that you understand.

You can play your part by remembering your learning targets and carefully following instructions when checking your work. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

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