

St Martin-in-Meneage Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111823
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378367
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Alex Baxter

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	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Robinson
Headteacher	Anne Shipman
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alex Baxter

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited ten lessons taught by three teachers and listened to pupils reading. The inspector also observed break times and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed 25 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by 15 pupils and seven members of staff.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average, but is higher than this in some year groups. Children in Reception are taught in a mixed class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Other pupils are taught in separate Years 3/4 and Years 5/6 classes during morning sessions and as a combined Years 3/4/5/6 class every afternoon. The school meets the government's current floor standards. Since September 2008 the school has worked in partnership with Garras Community Primary School. One executive headteacher oversees the work of both schools and each school has its own assistant headteacher responsible for day-to-day teaching and management. These arrangements are currently under review. Pupils from Garras visit regularly to receive lessons in physical education, religious education and science. Each school has its own governing body. A privately-run pre-school facility operates on the school site; as it is managed independently it was not part of this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- St Martin is a good school. Stimulating learning experiences and a caring ethos include and enthuse all pupils equally. As a result, pupils greatly enjoy school, behave extremely well and make good progress. Parents and carers appreciate these qualities, as one parent typically commented, 'My child is thriving at this school.' Currently, the school is good rather than outstanding because a small minority of pupils do not apply basic numeracy skills in a step-by-step way to calculations. In addition, whilst teaching assistants are used very well to support children in Reception and those with complex needs, they are not always used as effectively to support other pupils in class.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. Pupils apply themselves well and achievement by the end of Year 6 is good overall. Progress in English, especially in speaking and listening, and writing, has accelerated as a result of better teaching, and is now good. Progress in mathematics is also good, but not as consistent as in English.
- Teaching is good overall, with sharp questioning and challenge well matched to pupils' needs. All teachers give good oral guidance to the pupils. However, whilst teachers give clear written information to pupils about how to improve their written work, this is not always the case in mathematics.
- Most pupils and parents feel that children are kept very safe. This view matches inspection findings which find that the school's consideration of safety is outstanding. The inspector also identified above average attendance and excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good leadership stems from the collaborative work of the experienced executive headteacher, other senior staff and members of the governing body. Performance and teaching are managed well, as evident in raised pupils' skills and improved teaching of speaking, listening and writing. These improvements reflect good improvement since the previous inspection and show a good

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capacity to continue this into the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Over the course of the next twelve months, raise the basic numeracy skills of the small number of pupils who find mental mathematics difficult by:
 - focusing more precisely on encouraging pupils to set out and record how they solve problems so that their developing ability to calculate accurately can be seen and evaluated
 - embedding a more consistent approach to marking pupils' recorded work, especially in Years 5 and 6, so that pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Develop the role of teaching assistants, so that they support a wider range of pupils in lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's skills on entry vary considerably from year to year because year groups are so small. Some year groups arrive with skills broadly at the expected level, whilst others have lower than expected communication skills. Observations of pupils' learning in lessons, and when receiving one-to-one additional adult support, show that the pupils' broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6 represents good achievement. The pupils' good progress is especially apparent in their much improved, good speaking, listening and vocabulary skills, and increasingly in their well-presented, expressive writing.

In Reception, the good use of well-prepared resources by caring, very knowledgeable staff means children quickly settle into school routines and enjoy learning. On entry to Year 1, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Lesson observations and school assessments show that pupils continue to progress well through the school. Pupils offer their opinions confidently, and by willingly sharing ideas. All pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well. In English, pupils develop particularly good skills in speaking and listening because there is a consistent approach to questioning pupils and extending vocabulary. A stimulating curriculum, which often links subjects together, includes interesting visits so that pupils have rich experiences to stimulate their writing. For example, pupils visited a museum as part of a topic on Ancient Egypt. These strategies have strengthened pupils' writing skills since the previous inspection. Most pupils also make good progress in mathematics. However, a small number of less-able pupils find it hard to apply their basic mathematics skills in a step-by-step way when performing calculations.

Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 learn to blend letter sounds to make words.

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They benefit from the systematic teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) and through close adult support when using a well-sequenced computer-generated program. By these means, pupils who find learning difficult are narrowing the achievement gap with other pupils. As with other subjects, pupils' attainment in reading varies from year to year across the very small year groups. Currently, at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is above average; in Year 6 it is broadly average. For both groups this represents good progress, given their different starting points. Parents', carers' and pupils' views of good progress in reading are well founded.

Pupils are challenged effectively across the school to explore the meanings of words. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils extended their understanding of adjectives by enthusing about, and writing, 'silly sentences'. Pupils regularly reflect on real-life problems and, in addition, use computers independently and very competently as aids to learning. These aspects were clearly seen in Years 5 and 6 when pupils perceptively expressed their ideas about the area and perimeter of shapes. By these means pupils also advance their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.

Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and pupils expressed the view that teaching is good and this is borne out by inspection findings. Strengths in the lessons observed typically included teaching pupils in small groups so that adults get to know the pupils very well as individuals, encouraging pupils and giving them sufficient time for them to express their views and ideas and managing pupils' behaviour extremely well. Well-considered questioning and oral guidance, closely matched to pupils' ability, further promote good learning. For example, in an English lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used a flickering candle to stimulate reflection about descriptive words. Similarly, the teacher in Years 3 and 4 extended pupils' writing skills effectively through role play and sequencing ideas as pictures. Pupils' vocabulary is developed well in all classes by a consistent focus on speaking and listening. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils responded knowledgeably and showed deep interest as the teacher challenged them to think about why ancient civilisations worshipped a sun god. Such topics and a well-planned curriculum that includes work in religious education, which encompasses a range of world religions, also promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their enjoyment of school very effectively. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), especially in the form of laptop computers to develop the pupils' research, reading and spelling skills and to enhance the presentation of their topic work. When marking pupils' written work, teachers provide supportive guidance on how pupils can improve it. However, this is not always the case when marking pupils' recorded work in mathematics and, as a result, some pupils lack information about how to improve. Teachers deploy teaching assistants well to support children in Reception and to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. At times though, opportunities to make even more effective use of these colleagues to support and/or assess the learning of other pupils, especially during whole-class

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discussions or independent work, are not always taken.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons throughout the school is outstanding, with pupils striving hard to sustain concentration and to learn as best they can. Pupils say that they love coming to school and this is evident in their above-average attendance. Pupils also say that they greatly appreciate the wide range of activities, trips and visits available to them, such as French, gardening, learning to play musical instruments and enjoying physical education and performances with pupils from their partner school. Their cooperative use of large wheeled toys and ball skills when playing 'Scoops', or as they say, 'Doofers', at break times was a joy to see. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils also behave extremely well out of the classroom, at play and lunch times and during assembly. School records, which show no exclusions or recorded racist or other serious incidents, also indicate that high standards of behaviour have been maintained over time. When questioned, pupils talk knowledgeably about the different forms of bullying which could occur, including, for example, racial and homophobic bullying. They report confidently that bullying no longer occurs, and are very confident that if, in the unlikely event that it should re-occur, it would be tackled effectively by the teachers. All parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire think that their children feel safe at school and all the pupils questioned stated that they feel very safe at school. Inspection confirms these views, as also portrayed by one parent who wrote, typically reflecting parental opinions, 'Our children have a happy time at St Martin's'.

Leadership and management

The experienced executive headteacher leads an effective drive and ambition for continued improvement. She is well supported by senior colleagues and the governing body. Together, they implement agreed procedures consistently well and have successfully dealt with the issues for improvement identified by the previous inspection, particularly by improving pupils' writing, and communicating more effectively with parents and carers. This demonstrates good capacity for improvement in the future. Over the past three years, the partnership with Garras School has played a key role in establishing a good curriculum. As a result, the curriculum, pupils' learning experiences and skills have been enhanced through exciting activities, such as 'Wheely Fun' and 'Pirate' days, which have also promoted the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. In addition, by sharing staff expertise and professional staff training across the two schools, the quality of teaching and leadership skills at St Martin have also been improved. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well, including by making sure that pupils' welfare is fully safeguarded by effective staff recruitment, child protection and fire safety checks, and that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully supported. In this very small school, pupils are known well and valued as individuals. Their needs and progress are monitored closely and effectively. Collectively these factors illustrate the diligence with which leaders at all levels promote equality and tackle discrimination.

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.



23 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin-in-Meneage Community Primary School, Helston, TR12 6BT

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed talking with you in the classrooms and on the playground, and during my meetings with the school council and a group of other pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. I was particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and the kindly way you treat each other. I agree with you and the views of almost all parents and carers that St Martin is a good school.

- You get a good start to school in Reception and continue to achieve well through the school because the teaching is good and is particularly successful in developing your speaking and listening skills, confidence and interest in learning.
- Your excellent relationships and wide range of interesting activities make the school a very enjoyable place in which to learn.
- You feel very safe because the staff look after you in an exemplary way.
- Your executive headteacher, staff and governors work well together and provide good leadership and management. They make sure that your school is a very well-equipped place to learn.

To help the school get even better I have asked the teachers to help you improve the way you record your mathematics work in books and to give you more guidance on what to do next to improve when they mark your work, especially for those of you who find mathematics difficult. I have also asked some teachers to help teaching assistants support more of you in class.

Your school is already working to make these improvements and you can help by always trying your very best in all lessons. Thank you again for making me so welcome.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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