

Folkestone, St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118675
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358420
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Potts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Prater
Headteacher	Kate Love
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by eight teachers, looked at pupils' books, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including improvement plans, safeguarding policies and procedures, school data about pupils' progress, monitoring reports and curriculum plans. In addition, inspectors considered 82 parental questionnaires as well as questionnaires from 12 staff and 100 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many areas of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which assessment is used effectively to match the challenge of work to pupils' learning needs.
- The extent to which teaching reflects high expectations and encourages all pupils, particularly the higher attainers, to become successful independent learners.
- The appropriateness of the curriculum in engaging and motivating all groups of pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language.
- How well pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly the girls, are taught to read.

Information about the school

Folkestone St Martin's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage for Reception-age children. The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school is above average, largely because of the mobility of Army personnel garrisoned at the nearby barracks. Around one quarter of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language. These are mostly from Nepali-speaking Gurkha families. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, although it is increasing..The school operates a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of its work are good and the effectiveness of its safeguarding practice is exemplary. The school's procedures to evaluate its effectiveness are thorough and accurately pinpoint its strengths and areas for development. In the last two years, school leaders and governors have rightly focused on improving pupils' attainment. The school's own data confirms rising attainment across the school and this, together with the continuing high attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, indicates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Despite the higher than average proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school part-way through their primary education, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics has remained broadly average in recent years. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress from the point at which they join the school. Some, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some teaching is good, but there is variation between year groups and key stages because teachers do not use assessment consistently well to build on pupils' prior learning. Lessons where pupils are actively involved in their learning enable them to develop a sense of independence, and this increases the rate at which they make progress. However, this is not consistent in all lessons and not all pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.

Pupils enjoy coming to this caring school and the large majority of parents and carers value its welcoming and supportive approach. One parent said, 'St Martin's has a wonderful ethos and lovely community spirit. My children feel part of a family here.' Attendance is above average and most pupils feel safe, because of the good quality of care, guidance and support provided by adults. Behaviour is good throughout the school and there is a purposeful learning atmosphere in most classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the rate at which all pupils make progress, so that achievement is at least good, by:
 - ensuring that continuous assessment information is used more effectively in matching the challenge of work to pupils' learning needs
 - increasing pupils' involvement in their own learning by ensuring that they know their next steps and how to achieve them
 - extending the range of teaching styles to encourage pupils' independence as thinkers and learners.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is broadly average by the time pupils reach Year 6, and there is no significant variation in the attainment of different groups. All pupils are making at least satisfactory progress during their time in school, and some, particularly those who stay at the school for the majority of their primary years, make good progress. The school has introduced improved systems for tracking pupils' learning and these indicate acceleration of the rate at which pupils are making progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils develop satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills and are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils are motivated and try hard in most lessons because of the interesting activities that teachers prepare for them. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils enjoyed using persuasive language when designing advertisements linked to their 'garden bird' project. Activities are not always well matched to pupils' differing learning needs. When tasks are either too challenging or too easy, pupils lose concentration and, as a result, do not learn quickly enough.

Positive, respectful and caring relationships between staff and pupils result in above-average attendance and a readiness to learn. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is good. They are tolerant and understanding of each others' views and value the enrichment that those from different cultures bring to the school. The 'Pupil Voice' group is involved in many aspects of the school's work. It is particularly proud that its initiative to regulate traffic in front of the school has been adopted by the local authority.

Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and many are involved extensively in charitable work. They have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy, as shown by the high uptake of sporting activities. Initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles have successfully won the minds, if not the hearts, of most pupils. As one said, 'This healthy lifestyle business has gone way over the top. I can't see that the odd chip is going to kill me, so I've stopped having school lunches because they're much too healthy.'

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Most teachers make clear what each lesson is about and use their secure subject knowledge to provide a range of interesting activities. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being and make a valuable contribution to their progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well used to support teaching and allows pupils to extend their learning.

Pupil assessment and tracking systems are accurate and detailed, but the information generated is not used consistently well to plan next steps or to adapt the curriculum to pupils' different learning needs. As a result, pupils' misunderstanding or lack of confidence in aspects of their work are not always systematically addressed and tasks are occasionally too easy or too difficult for some. Following the previous inspection, the quality of marking has improved so that mistakes are identified and rectified, but pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning and what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers use questioning to check what pupils have learned, but too often they accept brief answers that do not indicate the depth of pupils' understanding or encourage them to develop deeper thinking.

The school has an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Pupils enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities, for which there is a high level of take-up. The school has recently invested in new learning resources for

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ICT and has introduced 'Big Write' to improve pupils' attitudes to, and engagement in, learning, although it is still too early to evaluate their impact on pupil achievement.

This is a caring school that has developed strong and effective pastoral support for all its pupils. Provision to help those moving in and out of the school part-way through the year enables them to settle quickly into the school routines. The effects of transition on pupils' progress are kept to a minimum because of the high quality guidance and support they receive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Accurate self-evaluation underpins a shared and realistic understanding of the priorities facing the school. Improvement plans are logical, detailed and comprehensive, although the criteria by which their success is judged are not always sharply focused on better outcomes for pupils. Under the determined direction of the headteacher, the leadership team has acted successfully to improve aspects of teaching, so that the rate at which pupils learn, especially in Key Stage 1, is accelerating.

Although a significant number of governors are new to the role, they have a satisfactory understanding of the challenges the school faces and of their role in holding it to account. They have made good arrangements to ensure the safety and welfare of staff and pupils, and demonstrate commitment and dedication in challenging and supporting the school to make appropriate improvements. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were found to be exemplary, with highly detailed risk assessments, rigorous application of well-considered systems and procedures, and excellent arrangements for fire safety and site security.

Partnerships with other schools and external agencies are good. Careful attention is given to keeping parents and carers informed and involved in the work of the school. As a result, the school has a positive relationship with most groups of parents and carers and the great majority of those responding to the questionnaire were highly appreciative of the school's work.

The school is mindful of the different cultural and ethnic groups it serves. Good procedures ensure that there is no discrimination or inequality and, indeed, minority groups achieve at least as well as, if not better than, the majority. While the school works effectively to ensure cohesion within the community it serves, action to promote cohesion within the broader community, both nationally and internationally, and to gauge its impact, is less well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the school working at the levels expected for their age group. They work together happily and sensibly and are good at taking the initiative in their learning. Behaviour is good and they respond well to the high expectations of adults. Children enjoy the interesting and stimulating activities that are planned for them and engage fully in them. By the time they leave the Reception year, most children have made good progress in all aspects of their work and those who have special educational needs, including those for whom English is an additional language, receive well-targeted support so that they progress as well as their peers.

High quality teaching ensures that children make good progress. They have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening and they learn to spell through the rigorous teaching of phonics. A broad curriculum provides a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to be creative and independent in their learning. Links with home are strong and relationships with both peers and adults are highly positive.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has good leadership and management, which is strongly committed to the care of the children and ensures that they are able to learn in a safe and healthy environment. Through effective self-evaluation, leaders know the setting well and effectively work to identify and address any areas of weaknesses.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very pleased with every aspect of their child's experience at the school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about how effectively the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour. By visiting classrooms, joining pupils during break times and observing how they related to each other, the inspection team found that, during the inspection, pupils' behaviour was good and that positive and mutually respectful relationships characterised the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Folkestone St Martin's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	73	21	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	66	26	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	49	40	49	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	51	34	41	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	62	31	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	51	32	39	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	52	34	41	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	49	34	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	48	38	46	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	50	32	39	1	1	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	49	37	45	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	60	32	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	74	20	24	0	0	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



1 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Folkestone St Martin's Church of England Primary School, Horn Street, Folkestone CT20 3JJ

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly during our visit. We can understand why most of you enjoy coming to school, because it is a safe, welcoming and caring place where you are well looked after. We found that your school gives you a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the best things about your school.

- You learn a lot in lessons.
- Adults are kind to you and explain how you can improve your work.
- You do really well in the Reception class and are getting better in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The school is careful to keep you safe and healthy

These are the things we have asked your school to do next.

- Help you all to make more progress, by making sure that the work is neither too hard nor too easy for you.
- Ensure you know how to improve your work, and have the chance to do so.
- Give you more opportunities to learn and think for yourselves.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and showing us your work. You can help your teachers by making sure you always listen carefully to their advice.

Yours sincerely

Richard Potts

Lead Inspector

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