

St Martin's School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 118394 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 358333 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 December 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | George Logan |

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 229 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Carey |
| Headteacher | Katie Wratten |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 July 2008 |
| School address | Markland Road Dover CT17 9LY |
| Telephone number | 01304 206620 |
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| Email address | office@stmartins.kent.sch.uk |

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 December 2010 |
| Inspection number | 358333 |

**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

Age group 4–11

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2010

Inspection number 358333

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons taught by seven different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 65 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How far advanced children are in their development when they enter the Reception class and how much progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How rapidly pupils progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and the extent to which apparently slower progress in mathematics has an impact on the overall picture.
- How well staff use assessment information to plan work which challenges pupils sufficiently and ensures that they make at least satisfactory progress.
- The effectiveness of the leadership of the school, particularly at middle management level.
- The extent to which governors have fulfilled requirements in relation to community cohesion.

Information about the school

St Martin's Primary School is of average size. This is a very stable community with low levels of mobility. The vast majority of pupils are White British, although a very small number of pupils are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning or speech and language difficulties. A small number of pupils have significant physical or emotional needs. A well below average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school provides an after-school club, managed by the governing body. The current headteacher joined the school in April 2010.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has improved steadily in recent years. It serves the needs of its area well. The school promotes pupils' personal development strongly. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Attendance is good. Monitoring by senior staff is rigorous. Staff are highly committed to the school and its pupils. They successfully ensure pupils' safety and well-being and provide exceptional pastoral support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those with profound physical or emotional needs. Pupils feel very safe and have great confidence in adults. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking exercise. Pupils' contribution to the school is good.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start and achieve well, mostly from below nationally expected starting points, across almost all areas of learning. Pupils' progress and achievement in Years 1 to 6 have improved and are now good overall, although slightly stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics. Progress in most lessons seen was at least good. Although attainment remains broadly average at the end of Year 6, it has risen at Year 2 and higher standards are now feeding through the school. Currently, progress is more variable in mathematics than in reading and writing because key literacy skills have been a successful focus in the last year. The school has credible planning in place to redress the balance in the current year.

A stable teaching team, supported by a robust tracking system and a strengthened leadership team, is ensuring greater consistency of good progress across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, and those of Gypsy/Roma heritage make at least satisfactory progress. This is because of the high-quality pastoral support and effective input from teaching assistants. Pupils who are gifted or talented make good progress because the school ensures that they receive appropriate attention in class and they also benefit from a wide range of opportunities at local secondary schools. There is some exemplary assessment practice. Pupils' work is assessed accurately and this information is used well to match work to individual needs in some lessons. However, there are inconsistencies and, particularly for the older pupils, marking does not always give pupils enough guidance as to how they can improve their work. Individual target setting is used well in some classes and has a clear impact on progress. Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their own work in writing, but less so in other subjects and this restricts some aspects of their progress.

School leaders know the school well and self-evaluation is accurate. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. A number of factors suggest that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement: the headteacher's vision for improvement; the school's inherent strength as a community; a convincing track record in improving

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teaching and progress; rising standards; an effective senior leadership team; and embedded procedures for monitoring the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the existing good progress now evident across the school, so that standards rise further, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that staff develop greater confidence in the teaching of mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in experimental mathematical activities which promote investigative and problem-solving approaches.
- Extend existing excellent practice in marking, target-setting and assessment so that all teachers have an accurate view of how well pupils are progressing and plan challenging work on the basis of that information.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

More rigorous teaching and higher staff expectations have supported increasingly rapid gains in learning, and attainment is now rising. Pupils' learning is good in most lessons. In a stimulating science lesson in Year 4, pupils were set a challenge of dealing with the complaints of a class pet, disturbed by excessive noise and light in the room. This provided pupils with the opportunity to test fabrics, examine light sources and to set up their own fair tests to resolve the problem. This led to some imaginative investigative activities which extended pupils' skills and knowledge. The enthusiasm of the teacher and the pace of the lesson motivated pupils well and encouraged their creativity. As a result, learning was good. This approach has not been so marked in mathematics where learning has more often been satisfactory rather than good because staff are said to have had less confidence in that area. In an outstanding Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were collating their ideas towards writing a poem on the 'Unknown Soldier', using evocative verbal images. The teacher made excellent use of pupils' individual targets for writing, reminding them of key points for improvement in their writing. Other writing was considered to demonstrate key writing styles and the lesson as a whole had an exceptionally brisk pace, with constant encouragement from the teacher. This proved highly motivational for the pupils, who checked their own efforts against their poetry 'marking ladder', to ensure that they had covered all the points they should.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and respond well to challenges. Most work well in pairs or small groups, although some are happy to get on independently. Good levels of staffing ensure that additional support is available in most lessons. The school has been keen to develop the 'pupil voice'. The school council meets regularly, discussing issues like the playground and the proposed new school entrance, and organising fundraising activities. Older pupils willingly undertake community jobs, such as playground 'buddies'. Overall pupils' contribution to the school and the local community is satisfactory. Spiritual, social and moral development is good, although opportunities for pupils to engage with diverse ethnic and cultural groups, other than their link school in France, are not extensive. Pupils show great respect for each other and for staff and have good interpersonal skills, so that, with steadily improving basic skills, they are satisfactorily prepared for future study and later life.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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?

Teaching and learning are seldom less than good. Pupils' learning and progress are improving steadily, as the benefits of stable staffing and more consistent teaching have come through. In four fifths of lessons, expectations are high, rigorous assessment ensures that activities are well matched to pupils' needs and relationships are very good, leading to effective learning. Thorough analysis of progress data and greater accountability of staff also contribute to improved progress. Where, occasionally, progress is less secure, this is often because tasks set provide too little challenge or expectations of written work are not high enough. Although there is some exemplary assessment practice, particularly in Years 1 and 2, with rigorous marking, thorough levelling of pupils' work and detailed individual targets, these strategies are still being embedded across the school and are not fully in place in Years 3 to 6. Their impact on pupils' learning is, therefore, inconsistent. Teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, does not always provide sufficient guidance for pupils on the next steps in learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work.

The curriculum supports the development of pupils' basic skills well, particularly in reading and writing. Recent changes to the curriculum, offering a more creative experience, are well established in Years 1 and 2 and are being implemented in Years 3 to 6. The school offers many enrichment activities and a wide range of well-supported extended school

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activities which successfully enhance pupils' learning. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is carefully planned and contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. Pupils make increasingly good use of their writing skills in other subjects. For example, some poignant writing was displayed, based on the school's Second World War memorial, which explored the experiences of a former teacher who died in that conflict. External partnership activities contribute well to extending pupils' learning, particularly to the good provision for gifted and talented pupils.

The way that staff care for pupils is outstanding. They are highly responsive to their needs. There is excellent practice in supporting the health, social, behavioural and transition needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The provision for pupils with long-term illness and for those with emotional needs through the Rainbow programme is excellent. The success of the school's work on selective mutism has become widely recognised. Transition arrangements are very thorough. The school works closely with support agencies, particularly for pupils with specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support. The after-school club takes good care of pupils and makes satisfactory provision for a relatively low number of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Much has been put in place to drive improvement and support better learning and progress. In a relatively short time, the headteacher has identified accurately those aspects of provision which need to be strengthened further, in order to sustain the school's trajectory of improvement. While supporting those successful aspects, particularly around care and safeguarding, which underpin pupils' good personal development, she recognises the need to raise attainment further, particularly in mathematics. The leadership team has a clear understanding of the immediate priorities, so that this can be achieved. The school is proactive in trying to engage parents. There is a rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress. The middle-management team has been strengthened and is contributing to more rigorous monitoring and greater staff accountability. School self-evaluation is accurate and realistic.

Historically, governors have not actively challenged school leaders, particularly in relation to achievement. However, the governing body has been in transition, following the appointment of the headteacher, with several new members, a new structure and a commitment to a more strategic involvement in monitoring the direction of the school. Governors now have an accurate view of the main issues and are increasingly ready to

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hold the school to account. Statutory responsibilities are met. By visiting and carrying out checks, governors ensure that there is good, effective practice in safeguarding arrangements. Discrimination is tackled rigorously and the promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The school is a very cohesive community. Governors ensure that community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted and that there are opportunities to learn about other faiths and communities through the curriculum and through links with other schools, locally and internationally. However, the national dimension is not so strong.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception from a wide range of pre-school settings. Although entry levels vary from year to year, children's skills and knowledge on entry are usually less secure in communication, language and literacy, particularly speech and language, than in other areas of learning. Good induction arrangements, including home visits, ensure that children feel safe. The high ratio of adults means that children are well cared for and establish good relationships. Children are happy, polite, play safely and behave well. Daily events, like the structured snack time, used during the inspection to extend children's understanding of mathematics, support their social development well. Children begin to develop independence in their learning.

Overall, children make good progress in their learning, particularly in speaking and listening, communication and fine motor skills, so that by the time they enter Year 1, their skills and knowledge are around the levels expected. However, outcomes in reading were not as high as the others in 2010, partly because children's language skills on entry had been particularly weak. Children's skills in reading and writing are already well supported by a systematic programme for teaching sounds and letters. However, the school has increased its emphasis on the recognition of letters and sounds so that reading skills are

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more securely embedded. Very focused, sometimes outstanding, teaching ensures that children extend and develop their skills successfully. Sessions of direct teaching are well planned and provide good challenge, successfully meeting children's needs across the ability range. There is a good balance of activities chosen by children and those led by adults, which ensures that learning sustains a good pace. Children have good opportunities to make choices, both indoors and outside.

The Reception classroom offers a generally stimulating learning environment, although the overall décor is 'tired' and due to be refurbished. Resources, both here and in the outdoor area, meet children's learning needs well. All areas of learning are planned for appropriately. Regular assessments provide good information on children's progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a very good oversight of the strengths of the provision. The analysis of entry data is challenging, given the diverse experiences of children prior to entry, but provides staff with basic information on children's prior learning. The school actively seeks to meet the needs of children who are younger or less far advanced than others, by extending the Early Years Foundation Stage philosophy across Years 1 and 2, where appropriate.

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

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the school and the way in which it provides for their children. One said, 'a warm, safe, caring environment within which both my children have been able to flourish'. A few parents and carers had concerns, relating mainly to the school's response to unacceptable behaviour or to aspects of communication with parents. The school has clear and effective procedures, which have regard to local authority requirements, for the management of pupils' behaviour. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was consistently good. Although parents have easy access to the school and to staff, the school recognises that aspects of communication with parents could be improved. Recent initiatives, such as text-messaging, have been implemented with that intention.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Martin's 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 39 | 60 | 23 | 35 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 47 | 72 | 16 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 31 | 48 | 33 | 51 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 35 | 54 | 26 | 40 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 33 | 51 | 30 | 46 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 28 | 43 | 34 | 52 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 32 | 39 | 60 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 21 | 32 | 34 | 52 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 25 | 38 | 33 | 51 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 23 | 35 | 27 | 42 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 21 | 32 | 35 | 54 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 34 | 52 | 26 | 40 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 36 | 55 | 27 | 42 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



4 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's Primary School, Dover, CT17 9LY

Thank you for making us welcome during our visit. We were glad to have the opportunity to talk to you and hear your views. We found that yours is a good school, which has shown steady improvement. These are our main findings.

- You work hard, enjoy lessons and behave well.
- You make good progress overall, particularly in English. Attainment has begun to improve.
- You undertake many jobs in school. Although you make a good contribution to the school, links with the local community are more limited.
- Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding lessons.
- Most of you feel very safe and have a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- The curriculum is good. The school has been working hard to make the curriculum more interesting; extra-curricular provision is satisfactory.
- School leaders set a very clear direction, know how well the school is doing and ensure that you are well looked after.

We are asking the school to make some changes to help you do even better. It should:

- raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that staff feel confident in the subject and by ensuring that you experience mathematical activities which interest you and engage your interest
- draw upon the excellent existing practice in marking and target-setting so that you get really good advice in all classes about what you need to do next to move your learning on.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

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