

# St Martin's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103987
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	355501
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Fiona Arnison

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Bott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lower Church Lane Tipton DY4 7PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 557 1543
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 520 9071
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-martins.sandwell.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine members of the teaching staff. They held meetings with the headteacher, representatives from the governing body, staff and pupils, and spoke to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at various documents, including: a range of self-evaluation documentation; the school's development plan; progress reports; minutes of governing body meetings; pupils' books; and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 131 parents and carers and also took account of pupil and staff questionnaires.

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

- The standards reached by different groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Whether or not the quality of teaching is good enough to secure consistent progress, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact and effectiveness of the recently established middle leadership team.
- The effectiveness of improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision since the last inspection.

## Information about the school

This school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Indian. Approximately two fifths of the pupils are of White British heritage. About half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average, and no pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Nursery, which is managed by the governing body, and the Reception class. The school operates a breakfast club each morning, which is also managed by the governing body. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and an Eco-schools award.

**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. It is a safe, caring and cohesive community where pupils of different backgrounds get on extremely well with one another. A particular strength of the school is the care, guidance and support provided for its pupils. Parents and carers agree that the school keeps its pupils safe and looks after them well. The pupils themselves are articulate, responsible young people. They take their roles as school councillors and Eco-buddies seriously and are proud of their contribution to the smooth running of the school, for example as 'helpers at lunchtime' (HALs). They work and learn collaboratively in class and speak with pride about how their school is welcoming to pupils of all cultures.

Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress from low starting points and start Year 1 with standards slightly below those found nationally. However, this good rate of progress is not sustained consistently through the rest of the school. Although some groups of pupils make good progress, overall learning and progress are satisfactory. This is because teaching is variable in quality and challenge: the pace of learning is too slow in some lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress over time but they do not make rapid enough progress to close the gap with their classmates. Teaching assistants diligently help these pupils, but staff do not have precise enough information about pupils' needs and difficulties and what they can do more specifically to support their learning. In addition, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not assessed and monitored rigorously enough to ensure that it is consistent.

Recent initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are helping to accelerate progress, for example through focused assessment and feedback to pupils. However, these are not well-established or consistent enough to improve attainment, which remains stubbornly low. National test results have remained below average in mathematics, reading and writing, although work in the current Year 6 pupils' books indicates that standards are rising. Expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough and too few pupils attain the highest levels in national tests.

The school's leaders and the governing body have been well supported by the local authority and recent improvements are beginning to have an impact on raising standards. These include the appointment of a learning mentor who has been instrumental in improving attendance to above average levels and in working to support hard to reach families. There have also been significant improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. These demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate: plans for ongoing school improvement identify pertinent targets and actions.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment techniques consistently well
  - matching tasks to pupils' starting points and interests
  - ensuring that all lessons proceed at a good pace.
- Improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be consistently good by ensuring that:
  - leaders and managers assess and track their progress assiduously, intervening swiftly whenever progress slows
  - teachers and teaching assistants have access to precise and accurate diagnostic assessments and guidance in order to provide support that is sharply focused on the individuals' learning needs.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly when they take an active part in their lessons. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils were constantly challenged to develop their calculation skills in division. The pace was fast and all pupils contributed, readily sharing ideas with their partners and rapidly working out calculations on their whiteboards and in their heads. The most-able pupils were challenged to use and apply their calculation skills to everyday problems: as a result, they made good progress. However, not all lessons proceed swiftly and sometimes pupils sit passively and listen to their teachers for too long.

On occasions, some pupils with special educational needs are given tasks that are not well matched to their learning needs. This is because diagnostic assessments have not been well used to identify precisely what is needed to accelerate their learning. However, pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress, often ahead of their classmates, as a result of the good quality support that they receive. Recent improvements to the school's tracking system now enable leaders and managers to identify and maximise progress for different groups of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils' well-being are good. Pupils feel safe in school, and inspectors observed good behaviour both in lessons and on the playground. The Eco-buddies take their role in developing sustainable systems to heart by, for example, monitoring and reporting on the waste from packed lunches and recycling glass bottles. Pupils understand the need for exercise and a good diet in order to keep healthy. Year 6 pupils are proud of their fluorescent jackets, which readily identify them as helpers to younger pupils and midday supervisors.

Pupils develop satisfactory workplace skills. Although attendance and punctuality are good, and pupils work collaboratively and with good social skills, the academic standards that they achieve are currently not high enough. Pupils have a very well-developed moral understanding, for instance engaging spontaneously and maturely in discussions with inspectors about racism and discrimination. Good opportunities are provided for pupils'

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spiritual development, for example during assembly or in the outdoor 'quiet area'. Pupils show respect for, and understanding of, the different faiths evident in school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Although teaching overall is satisfactory, some good lessons were observed. In these, pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning because the activities chosen by their teachers are exciting and motivating. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in their reading, speaking and listening skills because they enjoyed working collaboratively to perform the playscripts that they had written. In some lessons, the activities are less well-matched to pupils' interests and starting points, resulting in slower progress. Positive relationships in the classroom make a strong contribution to teaching and learning. Marking and feedback to pupils has been a focus for teachers' professional development. Inspectors saw some excellent examples of written dialogue between teachers and their pupils which enabled pupils to improve their work independently. However, this good practice is inconsistent across the school. Although marking is invariably conscientiously completed, it is not always in language that is accessible to pupils.

Recent work to make the curriculum more innovative is becoming established. During the inspection, classes enjoyed a Victorian Day in readiness for the school's 150th birthday celebrations. Their curiosity was stimulated by their experience of a Victorian schoolroom

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and 'old-fashioned' teaching styles. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended.

The school looks after its pupils well. Adults take careful account of potentially vulnerable pupils and apply pertinent targeted support. The school works very closely with a range of agencies to help those families who benefit from additional support for their child's well-being, for example through encouraging good attendance. Transfer arrangements both into the Nursery and Reception classes and for older pupils going on to secondary school are good. The school's breakfast club provides further evidence of the good care, guidance and support that the school provides.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The School Improvement Partner has provided senior leaders with a good level of challenge and, as a result, there is a clear and shared ambition to improve outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are effectively involved in monitoring teaching and learning, and in supporting and coaching their colleagues to improve their classroom practice. However, improvements are not yet consistently embedded, as evidenced by the pockets of satisfactory teaching. Leaders recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is maximised by the more rigorous gathering and use of assessment information, and better monitoring of provision and outcomes.

The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well and is supportive of the school. Governors are kept well informed, for example through reports from the headteacher and presentations from middle leaders, and they visit the school regularly. Health and safety and child protection issues are carefully monitored by named governors. The school is tenacious in ensuring good safeguarding arrangements, especially for vulnerable pupils, and regularly provides good-quality staff training over and above the minimum requirements. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, given that all groups of pupils make satisfactory or better progress over time. The school fulfils its duty to promote community cohesion extremely effectively at a local level but the impact of national and international links on pupils' understanding is limited.

The school has effective systems to inform parents and carers of their children's progress and issues regular newsletters. Texting has helped to improve communications, especially regarding absences from school. Leaders recognise that there is more to be done to engage with parents and carers who would like to support their children with their schoolwork.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to school. This is because the children are safe and well cared for, and are able to choose interesting things that they would like to learn about. For instance, children in the reception class identified an interest in finding out more about minibeasts. The teacher had arranged for a visitor to bring his pet tarantulas into class for the children to observe safely. This stimulated many questions about spiders and other 'creepy crawlies', and the children were well motivated to find out more. Despite the limitations of the building, Reception children have safe access to a stimulating outdoor area which is used very effectively to develop their learning. Children in the Nursery class were observed confidently negotiating the challenges provided by the safe climbing equipment in their new enclosed outdoor area.

Over the two years that most children attend the setting, they develop confidence and are keen to communicate. Behaviour is good and children cooperate well with adults and each other. From low starting points, they make consistently good progress across all areas of development. This is because rigorous assessment ensures that adults know and plan for precisely which skills children need to learn next. Adults ensure that all children are cared for and nurtured as individuals. Parents and carers spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about the provision and the care that their children receive. In order to continue the setting's success, leaders recognise the need to consolidate and embed the recent rapid and effective improvements that have taken place.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

About half of the parents and carers responded to the survey, which is slightly more than the average. Most of those who responded were extremely positive about the school. The few who wrote comments generally had concerns about the progress of more-able pupils, and the ways in which parents and carers can support their children's learning at home. Inspectors looked into both of these issues and their findings are included within the report. Other individual written comments were discussed with the headteacher in general terms without breaking confidentiality.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Martin's CofE 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 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 259 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	63	42	32	4	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	84	64	46	35	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	40	66	50	9	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	35	73	56	8	6	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	58	44	61	47	6	5	5	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	35	73	56	6	5	5	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	49	62	47	3	2	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)	44	34	72	55	9	7	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	32	71	54	8	6	5	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	33	74	56	6	5	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	25	86	66	6	5	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	48	37	71	54	4	3	6	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	45	64	49	3	2	5	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Martin's CofE Primary School, Tipton, DY4 7PG**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who filled in questionnaires for us. We enjoyed meeting you all and hearing about the lessons and activities that you do. I am writing to tell you what we think about your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which looks after you well. You told us how you all get on well together, in lessons and on the playground. You told us that behaviour is usually good in your school and that any bullying or teasing is dealt with straight away by your teachers. We agree. We were very interested to hear about the Eco-buddies' work, collecting bottles and recycling waste, which is clearly helping you to become responsible citizens. We were also interested to hear all about your school's 150th birthday.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make some improvements to your school so that you achieve higher standards before you go on to secondary school. Sometimes we think that you have to sit and listen to your teachers for too long. We have asked your teachers to make their explanations as short as possible and the tasks interesting and exciting. All of you can help by listening very carefully so that your teachers do not need to explain things several times. We have asked your teachers to think carefully about the extra help given to those of you who find schoolwork difficult to make sure you learn as quickly as you can. We have also asked your teachers to challenge those of you who find school work easy by making you think and work even harder.

With very best wishes to all of you at St Martin's.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Arnison  
Lead inspector

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