

# St Martin de Porres Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109639
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	363755
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Canham

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	460
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ursula Madine
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Carroll
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Pastures Way Luton LU4 0PF
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<b>Email address</b>	st.martin.de.porres.primary.admin@luton.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 22 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, as well as talking with pupils in lessons. The inspectors also held discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, action planning, minutes of governing body meetings and pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised the 180 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from staff.

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

- The extent to which the revised curriculum and strengthened assessment procedures are helping to increase the degree of challenge and lift achievement levels for all pupils, especially in writing.
- The degree to which the school is providing opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of different cultures and faiths represented within this country and further afield.
- The level to which collective leadership, including that of subject leaders, is increasing the school's effectiveness and ensuring continued improvement.

## Information about the school

St Martin de Porres Primary School is considerably larger than most other primary schools. A third of the pupils are from families of White British heritage and the majority of the others come from Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British-African heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is well above that found in most schools. A significant proportion of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also average.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into one of two nursery classes.

The school has won a number of awards, reflecting its commitment to healthy living and the use of information and communication technology to support learning, and the way it develops its staff.

The school runs an activity club for pupils before and after school. This is managed by the governing body and was included in the 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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Martin de Porres is a good school. It has several outstanding features, including the care and support it provides within a community underpinned by strong values. The impact of these positive elements is mirrored in pupils' personal qualities, including their keen interest in what they do, enjoyment of learning and high attendance. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables pupils to celebrate cultural diversity and improve their knowledge and understanding of different faiths. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Outstanding links have been established with parents and carers, and all are in agreement that they are happy with their children's experience at school. One, expressing a typical view, commented that: 'The school is like a close-knit community where children feel valued, safe, secure, and part of a family.'

The importance the school places on the professional development of its staff is evident in the way it has developed leadership skills and increased the range of management responsibilities. These have helped to drive recent improvements in pupils' achievement levels and lift attainment. The persistence of the headteacher and strengths in collective leadership are key factors steering improvement. The school leaders' awareness and vision are well informed by effective self-evaluation procedures. The governing body and leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities that need to be addressed to maintain recent improvements. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The determination to raise achievement levels has been underpinned by a review of the curriculum and systematic monitoring of classroom practice. Accurate and reliable assessment procedures support successful teaching, which motivates pupils and entices pupils with interesting activities that link different subjects. Pupils are progressing well in lessons that grab their interest and involve them in interesting activities from the start. However, on occasion, teachers talk for too long and pupils are not given activities that engage or challenge them early enough. Achievement is good and pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach higher attainment levels than those reached last year, especially in English. Intervention work, including tailored support for individual pupils, is successfully supporting pupils who are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school is highly effective in its communication with parents and carers. This success is reflected in the high attendance at meetings where parents and carers have an opportunity to find out about their children's learning experiences. Staff have introduced a number of successful initiatives that have brought families together, enhancing the effectiveness of the school as a family community.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by making full use of information from improved assessment procedures to give all pupils challenging activities from the start of lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils' positive approach to learning is reflected in their willingness to become involved in well-paced and stimulating activities in English, mathematics and during topic work. Having watched and listened to a recording of a spooky thriller story during English, pupils in Year 6 could not wait to start work on their script. In several cases, pupils came up with a number of unusual descriptive words, having made effective use of the thesaurus. In mathematics, pupils worked purposefully in small groups while trying to solve a murder mystery. Pupils linked data that represented changes to the heart rate of the suspects to their knowledge of how the body reacts to stressful situations and physical exercise. In music, pupils responded well to high expectations while playing different brass instruments. Pupils eagerly answered questions and demonstrated their knowledge of the school's values, selected by parents and carers, during assembly. However, pupils make less progress in lessons and during activities when teaching is not so stimulating and less engaging. Pupils whose first language is not English are well integrated in lessons and contribute positively in groups and during whole-class sessions.

Children join the school with attainment that is well below expected levels across the areas of learning, especially in aspects of communication, language and literacy, and personal development. Progress is good and pupils' attainment is average by the end of Key Stage 2. School data show that levels of attainment and the rate of progress are continuing to improve rapidly and securely, especially in writing where a considerably larger proportion of pupils are on course to reach the higher Level 5. Pupils of all heritages achieve well.

Pupils are proud of their school. They say they like coming to school because they enjoy making friends and getting involved in the many interesting activities. Pupils value the supportive learning environment and show respect towards each other and adults. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others and made decisions regarding the introduction of a staggered lunch break to ease congestion in the playground, for example. Pupils in Year 6 are given opportunities to create a business venture and present their ideas to a panel. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep safe and live healthily is evident in the way they talk confidently about how they would cope with hazardous situations and the importance of eating different kinds of food and drinking fluids. This is recognised in the school's national award. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their own and other people's experiences, celebrate their own heritage through clubs, strengthen their understanding of different cultures and faiths in this country and abroad, and develop a clear set of personal values.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</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?

Good relationships underpin teaching and learning, and a wide range of teaching methods are used to grab pupils' attention and hold their interest. Questioning often reveals the level of pupils' understanding and this information is used well to adjust the pace of learning. Topics, such as those that link different subjects and encourage creativity, successfully stimulate pupils' interests. However, on occasion, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the activities early enough in the lesson and too much time is spent in whole-class sessions. Improvements to assessment procedures and planning have led to pupils making more rapid gains in learning than before, especially in writing. Marking is supportive and is usually tied to pupils' targets. Information and communication technology is used well to increase the range of learning experiences and provide opportunities for independent research.

The school is determined to find a balance between basic skills in English and mathematics, and the development of pupils' creative and performance skills. Changes to the curriculum include a greater focus on writing and closer links between subjects. Revised planning is having a positive influence on progress, although it is uneven. Skills such as the ability to work collaboratively and those that relate to independent study are developed well. An effective programme for personal, social and health education underpins pupils' learning. The teaching of French and German, along with themes that include multifaith and culture weeks, add further positive dimensions. Links within a local

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partnership of schools have led to increased learning opportunities for those pupils deemed to be gifted and/or talented. Pupils' learning experiences are further enriched by a wide range of clubs, sports activities, and visits to places of interest.

All pupils are valued and the pastoral care they receive permeates the school community. The outstanding support is recognised and valued by parents and carers.

One comment sums up the views of many: 'I love the ethos of the school and especially the warm and friendly feeling you get when speaking to a member of staff or a child.' Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected in the number of opportunities for physical activity and healthy school meals. Several strategies have been implemented and proven to be highly effective in refining individualised programmes of support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement. Key members of staff have been engaged to nurture links with families and outside agencies. As a result, a family learning programme has been established. During these sessions, which take place during the school day, parents and carers and their children work collaboratively on activities such as finger painting. The pre- and after-school club provides additional support for parents and carers while working. Pupils with the greatest needs, including those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, gain confidence, develop their self-esteem and make good, and sometimes better, progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers are progressively embedding ambition and driving improvement. Following personnel changes, staff have increasingly taken wider responsibility for different aspects of the school's work such as subject leadership and curriculum development. With close support from loyal staff, the leadership team has developed a school that is committed to strengthening each pupil's self-esteem and lifting achievement. Regular monitoring has led to a greater consistency in teaching. The promotion of equality and approaches to tackling any form of discrimination are good. Better analysis of data is helping staff to identify the needs of individual pupils at an early stage. As a result, all groups of pupils make similar progress.

The governing body is closely involved in the school's work and in its development. It has instigated a systematic approach to monitoring, although a few elements are not sufficiently rigorous. The school has a good awareness of what it needs to do next to sustain the progress it has already made. Safeguarding meets current requirements well. Comprehensive quality assurance and risk assessment systems have been established and clear procedures ensure that safeguarding arrangements are followed. The school has

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clear management responsibilities to ensure pupils are safe and the governing body evaluates the impact of its policies and procedures. Local services and school partnerships are used extremely well to promote the well-being of pupils experiencing difficult circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school demonstrates a deep understanding of the community and the challenges faced by the families it serves. It provides numerous opportunities for pupils to gain a good understanding of people's backgrounds within the local, national and international communities, although leaders have yet to fully evaluate the impact of this work. The school is continually seeking the views of parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive and play a very active part in school events, family workshops and performances. Consultation meetings and workshops strengthen parents' and carers' links with the school and help them to understand their children's learning experiences.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The provision is well managed and procedures ensure that staff, working cohesively as a team, have accurate and reliable information about children's progress. Children benefit from a welcoming and stimulating environment in which they are closely supported from the start. Close links have been established with parents and carers. Children settle quickly, enjoy learning, and begin to work independently at an early stage. Well-planned topics take good account of children's starting points and interests, including those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. However, information and communication technology does not feature enough in children's learning. Children listen well and are encouraged to talk about their work. As a result they make good progress, especially in aspects of communication, language and literacy, and personal development, where attainment is considerably weaker than other areas of learning.



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Adults move seamlessly in and out of activities, giving closely targeted support to activities directed by the teacher as well as those which children choose for themselves.

Children also readily move from one activity to another, making effective use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. These provide a well-organised learning environment, which includes a wild life area with habitats for children to study insects. These experiences develop a good understanding of the school's immediate environment and how to keep safe. They also enhance children's confidence and promote independent learning.

*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

Almost all of the responses from parents and carers expressed positive views about the school's work. A small number of parents and carers made written comments and the large majority of these expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. They included complimentary remarks about the friendly and supportive community, the involvement of parents and carers, and the range of learning experiences. A very few questionnaires recorded reservations over a very small number of issues. These included behaviour. The inspection team looked at this during the course of the inspection and judged behaviour to be good. A few pupils occasionally become a little unsettled during lessons, but staff manage this well and soon get them working productively again.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Martin de Porres 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 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 460 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	114	63	63	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	64	64	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	95	53	80	44	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	51	88	49	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	94	52	86	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	99	55	80	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	85	47	94	52	1	1	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)	89	49	83	46	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	82	46	94	52	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	76	42	96	53	6	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	36	110	61	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	109	61	71	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	110	61	69	38	0	0	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	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.**



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Martin de Porres Primary School, Luton, LU4 0PF**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. Thanks also to those of you who completed questionnaires to say what you thought of your school.

It was clear from our discussions that you feel the school is good, and we agree. You are proud of your school, really enjoy being part of its community, and feel extremely safe. You also told us that it is a place where you want to be, so you attend regularly, make friends, and are keen to take part in the many interesting clubs and activities. All but a very few of your parents and carers expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. A number wrote very complimentary comments about the school.

Here are some other important things about your school.

You make good progress in lessons.

The quality of your work is similar to that found in most other schools, despite most of you beginning from lower starting points.

You behave well and show respect for each other's different backgrounds.

You respond enthusiastically to school activities and interesting lessons.

You make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.

You have an excellent understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

To make things even better for you, we have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that you are given challenging activities right from the start of lessons.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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