

Martin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135226
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	381847
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	515
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catrin Dillon
Headteacher	Helen Morrison
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 February 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty three lessons were observed and 16 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work and data about pupils' progress in all classes. They looked at school records, reports from outside agencies, curriculum plans and the school improvement plan, and analysed 133 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- How effectively teachers are providing pupils with clear guidance on improving their work through marking and target setting.
- How effectively intervention strategies are improving the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils.
- How well the monitoring and evaluation at all levels of leadership and management are providing clear information on the strengths and areas for improvement.
- How effectively the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are improving attainment and progress.

Information about the school

The school is significantly larger than the average-sized primary school. One third of the pupils are of White British heritage. Of the remainder, the largest groups are those of Black African or Other White heritage. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is comparable to the national average. The majority of these have speech, language and communication difficulties, with a smaller number having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are several pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school provides a breakfast club for the pupils and an after-school club is run by a private provider. The school has achieved several awards, including Healthy School status and the International School 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Martin Primary School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Pupils' progress and all main aspects of their personal development are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, ably supported by a very strong leadership team and an excellent governing body. Every parent and carer who returned a questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed. One parent described the leadership as 'transformational' and another wrote that 'the school keeps growing from strength to strength'.

The focus since the last inspection has rightly been on raising standards and this has been successfully achieved through a rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Expectations set by the school's leaders are high. Consequently, in the significant majority of lessons observed teaching was outstanding. Pupils learn very well because the teachers plan work that is interesting and fun. The pupils are motivated and this is reflected in the quality of their research outside lessons, such as in their homework. The school has recently introduced a new approach to setting individual targets for pupils. This has not yet had sufficient time to become embedded and, as a result, there are some inconsistencies across classes in the way that they are being used. In the majority of lessons pupils are given good-quality feedback on their progress through the marking in their books which they find very helpful. However, this approach is not consistently applied in all classes. Older pupils are successfully assessing their own work and that of their peers against the learning objective for the lesson.

As a consequence of the much-improved teaching and learning and the high expectations of the exceptionally strong leaders, standards have improved over the last three years from just below average to above average. Pupils now make consistently outstanding progress across the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances deem them vulnerable. The promotion of equal opportunities is first rate.

In discussions with pupils, and through their questionnaire responses, it is clear that they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the rapidly improving attendance figures. The school's leaders, supported by the governing body, have set high expectations and introduced rigorous procedures that have proved highly effective. The previously low attendance figures are now above average. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary and pupils say that they feel very safe in school. As one pupil said, 'Our school is the safest place on earth. The doors are locked and we all

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feel safe and happy.’ Parents, carers and pupils all agree that behaviour within lessons and around school is excellent. The school’s leaders have created a harmonious community where pupils get on extremely well with each other and with adults. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and can work independently and also cooperatively. Their outstanding attitudes to learning, improved attendance and their outstanding outcomes mean that they are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education. The school provides excellent care for pupils. The induction programmes for new parents, carers and pupils are very successful and much appreciated by the many parents and carers who commented. Consequently, pupils settle quickly into school life and are made very welcome by their peers and by the staff.

The accurate self-evaluation undertaken by the school and the consistently successful actions taken to address the key areas for improvement demonstrate the school’s outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2012:
 - ensure the consistent use of good quality feedback in marking throughout the school
 - make sure individual targets are more clearly set consistently so pupils can understand better the next steps in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Children start school with levels of skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age, and well below in basic language and literacy skills and in social skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in those weaker aspects, which provides a strong platform on which to accelerate progress throughout the rest of the school. Attainment is above average when pupils leave the school. Overall progress is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who join the school other than at the usual times also make outstanding progress. This was particularly evident in a very successful Year 6 lesson where the pupils applied their literacy skills in writing in a creative and expressive way about stormy weather. The pace was brisk, expectations were high and the pupils were actively involved in evaluating their own work and that of their peers. One pupil wrote, ‘The trees waltzed in the withering wind.’

The pupils make a valuable contribution to the school community through their roles as school councillors and eco councillors. They are keen to take on responsibilities, such as librarians and buddy readers. The school is an integral part of the local community and pupils participate in a range of events, often undertaking enterprise activities, such as cake baking, to raise money for local charities. They are aware of

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the different factors that could affect their health both adversely and positively. As a result, the school has gained the Healthy School status. The take-up of extra-curricular sporting activities arranged by the school is excellent. The pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Celebrations of other cultures, through visits and visitors, the annual World in our School week, and assemblies in school, provide excellent opportunities to develop respect for others from contrasting backgrounds. As one parent wrote, ‘The school has a wonderful community focus and the children are encouraged to learn about different cultures.’ Pupils have a good knowledge of right and wrong and help pupils who are new to the school feel at ease quickly.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The comprehensive monitoring files of the schools leaders indicate clearly that the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly and inspectors agree. Expectations are high for staff and pupils, and all respond well to the challenge. The pace in lessons is brisk and teachers show excellent subject knowledge. The match of work to pupils’ abilities is consistently good and is based on ongoing assessments. High-quality teaching assistants provide valuable support to individuals and groups of pupils. Planning is detailed and identifies succinctly what pupils will learn in the lesson and what that will look like in outcomes. This allows pupils to evaluate their own work and assess their own progress. Pupils’ awareness of the next steps in their learning is consequently improving but good practice is not fully in place in all classes.

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

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The curriculum has been reviewed and is now more creative and allows pupils more opportunities to apply literacy and mathematical skills in other subject areas. The learning environment is attractive and informative and supports learning well. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and the take-up of places is very high. All pupils have the opportunity to play a musical instrument, and in a clarinet lesson, Year 4 pupils were highly motivated as they practised for a concert the following week. The school has gained the International School award for its curriculum, and links with contrasting schools abroad are developing well.

Staff provide outstanding pastoral care throughout the school and the breakfast club. Many pupils enter school speaking little or no English and others have a range of speech and language difficulties and consequently face initial barriers to their learning. The learning mentors and senior staff are proactive in working with outside support agencies and specialist advisers to provide the best possible opportunities for these pupils to flourish and prosper. As a result, they make exceptional progress. The school is an exemplar of good practice in child protection and is a model for other schools and organisations.

Transition arrangements into the school and from Martin Primary School to secondary education have been planned thoughtfully and are extremely effective, as echoed by the parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The excellent headteacher is ably supported by the equally effective senior leaders and governing body in providing a strong and clear direction for the school. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in improvements across the school and this has significantly enhanced pupils' progress. Information on individual pupils' progress is used effectively to support their learning needs. The outstanding governing body is excellently led by a committed and well-informed chair, ably supported by well-trained governors who have a professional approach to school leadership. They provide high levels of challenge and have high expectations for the school. The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. Behaviour is exemplary and incidents of racist behaviour or bullying are extremely rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively.

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The school’s leaders have established close links with parents and carers through regular newsletters and coffee mornings, and this is recognised and well received by parents and carers, who say that they feel well informed. A range of partnerships provides valued support to the school, particularly those provided by speech therapists and the educational psychology service. Strong links with other local schools to share good practice provides mutual support. Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and fully meet statutory requirements. Risk assessments are very comprehensive. All the staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures and relevant staff and members of the governing body have been trained in safer recruitment. The harmonious nature of the school community reflects the work undertaken by the school to promote community cohesion. This work has been extended to improve pupils’ awareness of the wider communities within the United Kingdom and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to children’s education in school. Effective relationships are established early with parents and carers through home visits and regular opportunities to visit and talk to staff. Many parents and carers commented on the pleasing start their children had made in the first few weeks of their schooling. The Reception classes are well resourced both inside the classrooms and in the outside learning environment. The classrooms are colourful and stimulating. Language development has a high profile. Teachers and other adults provide a caring setting for the children and their welfare is a high priority. As a result, the children show good self-esteem and are confident in making independent decisions. They are active learners who work well cooperatively and share the equipment amicably. The quality of teaching is good overall. Activities are sometimes

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over-directed by the teacher and there are occasions when this limits the opportunities provided for the child’s own choice of learning activity. Teachers do not always provide the children with enough opportunities for incidental writing to raise their standards in this aspect of their work.

Assessment procedures are thorough and leaders have a good knowledge of the children’s attainment and progress and of areas for development. Provision for children with special educational needs is outstanding because they are identified early through very good observational practices by staff and then supported effectively, including, where appropriate, support from outside agencies.

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 number of responses to the questionnaire was about average for this size of school. The members of the inspection team also met with many parents and carers at the weekly coffee morning. The inspectors’ views echoed those in the questionnaires. The parents and carers are incredibly supportive of the school and the community focus that has been created. They feel well informed and are delighted that their views are sought by the school and acted upon. Every parent and carer who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their child was happy at school and the significant majority agreed that their child was making good progress. A very few parents and carers made comments about their child feeling safe because they were concerned about levels of supervision at break times. The inspection team found that levels of supervision were very high and that the adults were actively involved in making break times both enjoyable and safe for pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers recognise that the behaviour of pupils is exemplary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Martin 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 515 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	78	28	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	104	78	25	19	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	77	58	48	36	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	59	47	35	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	99	74	28	21	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	91	68	37	28	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	65	41	31	2	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)	83	62	37	28	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	86	65	42	32	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	65	42	32	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	81	61	43	32	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	107	80	26	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	113	85	17	13	2	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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"> ■ 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.



3 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Martin Primary School, Barnet, N2 9JP

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. We enjoyed talking to many of you in lessons, in our meetings with you and at break times.

We have judged your school to be an outstanding school. You clearly enjoy school, get on well with each other and behave extremely well in lessons and around school. You have excellent attitudes to your learning and want to succeed, even when the work is very challenging. Teachers plan your work carefully so that you are interested in the things that you are learning. The headteacher, supported by the leadership team and the governing body, has made significant improvements to the school recently and the inspection team is confident this will continue.

Even though the school is so good there are things that we think can improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you know your targets, or the 'next steps' in your learning. We have also asked them to make sure that the marking in your books gives you guidance on how to improve your work.

Having met you, we are all very confident that you will want to help too. You can do this by trying your best at all times and checking that your work in lessons is as good as expected. We would like to wish you all the very best in the future at Martin Primary School and also when you move on to your next school.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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