

Folkestone, St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Horn Street, Folkestone, CT20 3JJ

Inspection dates 17–18 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils are not achieving as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. Sometimes, the few more-able pupils are not given hard enough work.
- In some observed lessons, teachers spend too much time talking and not engaging pupils, and as a result progress slows.
- Recently appointed middle leaders are yet to be fully actively involved in the checking or reporting of pupils' performance. As a result they are not having a strong enough impact on raising standards of progress and attainment.
- The headteacher together with other senior staff, checks the quality of teaching, but this work has not been effective enough to ensure teaching helps pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Senior leaders do not always use information about how well pupils are performing effectively. Consequently, they do not always take prompt, effective action to raise standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make consistently good progress in reading throughout the school. This subject is well taught; pupils enjoy reading and develop good skills in deducing the meaning of the text. Younger pupils are able to decode unfamiliar words through the application of their phonic skills (linking sounds and letters).
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe, behave well and are courteous. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and are built on firm foundations of respect.
- The opportunities pupils are given to take responsibility and develop socially, morally, culturally and spiritually are strengths of the school.
- The headteacher and governing body understand the improvements needed and have started to take firm and effective action. As a result achievement and the quality of teaching have already improved. This shows that the school is better placed to improve.
- Governors hold the school to account well.

- Staff work together with a clear sense of direction and purpose; morale is high.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including a small-group session for pupils who required additional support in mathematics. Five lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or senior members of staff.
- Two groups of children were heard read and one guided reading session was observed.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, the Headteacher and deputy headteacher and a representative of the local authority to discuss the nature and impact of support provided for the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the two letters received and one meeting between the lead inspector and the parents or carers of one child.
- The inspection team looked at a range of school documents, including the information on pupils' progress for the current year and for the previous three years.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including information about how well pupils progressed, self-evaluation, school development and improvement documentation, documentation regarding the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, and school policies and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. They looked at the school website and visited the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Jill Thewlis, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Peter Hare

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Martin's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils are taught in single-age classes. Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A higher-than-average number of pupils join or leave the school part-way through their education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from service families.
- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced a number of changes in staffing, including the restructuring of the leadership team to include middle leaders. Maternity leave in Year 1 is currently being covered by a temporary member of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring lessons run at the right pace with fully effective use of time
 - setting more challenging learning tasks for those pupils who are capable of doing harder work
 - sharing the stronger practice evident in some classes as a model for others.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in mathematics and in writing by making sure:
 - pupils have more opportunities in lessons to practise and extend their knowledge and understanding of mathematics so that they can apply and extend their skills in problem-solving and investigations
 - more occasions are provided for pupils to develop writing skills across all subjects
 - teachers model the genre of writing they are teaching so that pupils are clear about the expectations when they write.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders:
 - check teaching regularly and systematically to see that all pupils are making good progress
 - develop more effective skills, knowledge and understanding of checking how well pupils are performing
 - provide opportunities for middle leaders to be more actively involved in the checking and reporting of pupils' performance
 - encourage teachers to reflect better on how well they are helping their pupils learn.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Recently, too few pupils have made rapid enough progress, particularly in mathematics. Progress in reading is stronger because it is taught systematically. School records show that some pupils have made limited progress in mathematics and writing because of previous inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school has made mathematics a key focus for improvement but the impact of this work has yet to be reflected in pupils' accelerated progress or a significant rise in end of key stage attainment.
- Most Year 6 pupils make broadly expected progress in both English and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. School records indicate that for a number of pupils who are currently at the top end of Key Stage 2, learning dipped when they were in Year 3. These pupils are benefiting from the strength of teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 and are making up lost ground.
- A significant dip in pupils' mathematics attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2012 was linked to the high proportion of pupils who joined the school part-way through their education. Gaps in learning were not addressed quickly enough because checks on pupils' progress were not sufficiently well developed and this slowed progress. Current levels, confirmed in pupils' books, are broadly in line with expected progress in mathematics.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age group and make expected progress. Current pupil progress information indicates that pupils in Key Stage 1 are also on track to meet age-related expectations.
- Pupils are able to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read simple words. In the phonics screening check in Year 1 last year an expected proportion of pupils reached the national levels and currently many pupils are reading above expectations for the time of year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected and, in some cases, better than expected progress compared to other pupils. This is due to well-targeted support and the school's involvement in the Achievement for All programme which provides a wide range of tailored support for those whose specific needs make them vulnerable to underachievement. This demonstrates the school's effective focus on promoting equality of opportunity.
- The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure the pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are effectively supported in their academic and personal needs. Pupils in Year 2 who are in receipt of pupil premium funding are making better progress than their peers; those in Year 6 achieved approximately half a level below their peers. As part of the Achievement for All programme the school is using pupil premium increasingly effectively to narrow the gap for older pupils in their English and mathematics attainment relative to similar pupils in other schools and the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, over time, teaching has not been consistently good enough. In the past the teaching of mathematics has been less effective than the teaching of reading in meeting the needs of some pupils. As a result the pace of pupils' progress is not sufficient to secure above average attainment. Effective steps have been taken to improve problem solving skills in mathematics and this was evident in the lessons seen. As a result, pupils are increasingly able to apply methods appropriately.
- The teaching of writing is not securing consistently good progress across the school because explanations in some observed lessons were often too long and teachers do not always model the style of writing they are teaching or provide opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects.

- In the best lessons, pace was brisk; pupils were enthused and engaged because the teaching was imaginative. Teachers matched the work to the pupils' abilities and used skilful questioning and assessment to challenge and check understanding. However, in some other lessons, teachers spent too much time talking or did not stretch the most able sufficiently well, resulting in slower progress and pupils' disengagement.
- All teachers have attended the Outstanding Teacher Programme As a result, practice has been sharpened, with teachers having a clearer vision about securing outstanding practice. However they have not yet had the opportunity to share best practice and so learn from each other.
- The revision of the marking and feedback policy has had a positive impact on most pupils' involvement in their learning and their understanding of how to improve. Pupils say, 'When my work is marked I always have questions to answer. Marking helps me to understand where I have gone wrong.' However, not all teachers apply this policy consistently well. As a result a few pupils are not always clear about their next steps.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are generally well supported in lessons and in small groups by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils enjoy reading and there is evidence to show that even the youngest pupils are developing comprehension skills effectively.
- Systems to assess how well pupils are progressing have strengthened since the previous inspection. Teachers are beginning to use tracking systems more effectively to analyse the progress of groups of pupil, however, this is not yet used consistently well to ensure that progress is rapid and sustained.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and want to learn. Pupils get on well, show respect and courtesy both to each other and to all the adults within the school and breakfast club. They spontaneously undertake acts of kindness, for example holding doors open or asking visitors if they are enjoying their visit to the school.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and perform their duties as buddies or Pupil Voice Leaders conscientiously. They are proud of their school.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good and only when teaching is less strong do a small number of pupils become disengaged. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils, staff, parents and carers are all very positive about behaviour in school. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe. They are well aware of the different forms of bullying such as name-calling and internet bullying. They say that bullying is not tolerated by the school and any incident is always dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.
- There is a strong sense of caring for others in the school which pervades all activities and exists between all members of the school community.
- Attendance is monitored rigorously. Attendance this year is average because it has been affected by a severe sickness bug.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet secured good teaching and rapid enough progress. Leaders have yet to be rigorous enough in the checks they carry out on teaching and learning, how they use the information they gather and measure the impact of their actions. Similarly, recently appointed middle leaders have yet to develop a sharper focus or be fully involved in the checking and reporting of pupils' performance. Consequently, leaders at all levels have not yet secured rapid progress and improved attainment.
- The headteacher has taken effective steps to address previous inconsistencies in teaching. New staff have been appointed since the last inspection and this, together with targeted professional

development, has ensured that the teaching team is now well placed to secure the progress needed.

- The local authority has provided proportionate support in assisting the headteacher in taking effective actions to improve the school's performance.
- The headteacher is well supported by a determined team which is committed to the school's continuing improvement. There is increasing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The new strengthened performance management arrangements are bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes, although they have not yet secured rapid improvements in achievement and progress. Teachers are given targets which reflect the progress of pupils and are monitored and linked to salary progression.
- The promotion of pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual education is very strong. The motto, Faith and Endeavour, underpins strategies which are consistently applied throughout the school. Activities which involve pupils' learning about others' beliefs promote tolerance and understanding of ethnicity and diversity. All pupils are treated equally, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who make similar progress to their peers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is effective. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, examine pupils' progress information, and know how it compares with schools nationally. Training and a process of self-review have resulted in increased capacity to challenge and hold the school to account through a sharpened view of performance. Governors receive information on the quality of teaching and have taken appropriate steps to challenge where teaching has been previously weak. They have managed financial resources wisely to restructure the leadership team and make strong teaching appointments. They understand how the pupil premium funding is spent and its impact. They understand the link between performance and teachers' salary progression. Safeguarding has successfully been given priority and complies with statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118675
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405808

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Prater
Headteacher	Kate Love
Date of previous school inspection	31 January – 1 February 2011
Telephone number	01303 238888
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