

St Martin's Primary School

Hollybush Walk, Hereford, HR2 6AF

Inspection dates

13-14 February 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' achievement is not yet consistently good in English and mathematics.
- Many pupils lack confidence in reading and have a limited range of reading interests and experience.
- Writing standards are improving, but spelling is weak and some pupils' writing is hampered by incorrect letter formation.
- Pupils' number skills have improved but they lack confidence in applying mathematical skills in practical situations.
- More-able pupils sometimes make slower progress than they should because their work is not challenging enough.
- Some pupils with special educational needs make slow progress in some lessons where work is not pitched at the right level.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.
- Attendance has risen to average but some pupils are absent too often.
- The acting headteacher has continued to improve teaching and achievement but leadership relies on too few individuals.
- Planning for learning and personal development across the school lacks cohesion.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress has improved in Years 1 and 2 and attainment at the end of Year 2 is rising.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, which they know the school does not tolerate.
- The school deals very successfully with a number of pupils who have severe behavioural difficulties.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching.
- The close partnership between Nursery and Reception staff and parents and carers supports children's learning at home and in school.
- The acting headteacher has led the school well during the prolonged absence of the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons and saw all the teachers and most of the teaching assistants teaching. They also observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes, talked to them about their views and looked at samples of their work.
- Discussions were held with governors, the acting headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants and a representative of the local education authority.
- In addition to observing the school's work, the inspectors looked at the school self-evaluation and improvement planning, information about pupils' attainment and progress and documents relating to their safety and behaviour.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed in the 21 completed online Parent View questionnaires. They also spoke with some parents and carers at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Peter Kerr, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Martin's is a larger than average size primary school, with its own nursery, serving an urban area.
- Most pupils are of from White British backgrounds. About 10% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and about 6% speak English as an additional language.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (this provides additional funding for looked after children and pupils from families known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average. These include pupils with speech, language and communication needs, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school during each year is significantly higher than in most schools. Many of these are from service families but some transfer to and from other local schools.
- The school runs a pre-school breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Separate on-site childcare and nursery facilities are managed by a private company and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or outstanding by:
 - raising expectations for more-able pupils to think for themselves and work independently
 - making more of opportunities as they arise in lessons to explore pupils' ideas and improve their thinking and communicating skills
 - giving lower attaining pupils more practical support to accomplish tasks in class lessons
 - adjusting activities for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so that they relate more closely to the pupils' individual learning programmes.
- Raise attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 to at least average levels by:
 - giving more support to improve pupils' confidence and fluency in speaking and reading aloud
 - encouraging pupils to read longer and more demanding texts so that they learn perseverance correcting persistent errors in letter formation to aid pupils' fluency in writing.
- Improve pupils' confidence and skills in mathematics by:
 - giving them more varied and practical tasks to do
 - encouraging them to find and talk about different ways of solving problems
 - finding more ways to link mathematics to other subjects.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - maximising the impact of subject leaders on whole-school improvement
 - developing wider opportunities for pupils to apply their speaking, reading and writing and numeracy skills
 - planning more systematically for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is much lower than age-related expectations. Progress is good because children enjoy a well-structured programme of teaching and play. Despite the progress made, attainment is still very low on entry to Reception. The intake there is from number of different settings, with about half from the Nursery class.
- In Reception, children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development so that they are confident, independent learners. Children learn particularly well in the specialist music lessons because they develop language and communication skills in enjoyable practical activities. Despite this progress, attainment is still well below age-related expectations on entry to Year 1 in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is rising because of recent good progress, but remains below average.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment is closer to the national average. Overall, pupils make progress in Key Stage 2 at rates close to those of pupils nationally. Pupils who stay in the school for a number of years make at least the expected progress. Some pupils who join the school at other than normal times make less rapid progress, but this varies from year to year. Not all the more-able pupils attain the higher levels expected of them.
- Pupils with speech, language and communication needs and learning difficulties make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but more variable progress in Years 3 to 6. They often make better progress when withdrawn for support than in class. Pupils with special educational needs sometimes make slower than expected progress in lessons, either because tasks are too hard or because they do not have the right support to complete them successfully.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress and attain as well as other pupils in the school. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils because they receive appropriate support to learn English alongside help with their learning.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in Reception and Key Stage 1 because they enjoy guided reading lessons and receive good support. They also learn well in phonics sessions (learning about the sounds letters make). They use their phonic skills well when attempting to read new words. However, in the past, older pupils did not have the same systematic teaching of reading and lack the perseverance to read difficult passages and are hesitant when reading aloud.
- Despite recent good progress in English, many pupils are still not confident and fluent speakers or writers by the end of Year 6. Spelling is weak in some cases and fluency in writing held back for some by incorrect letter formation.
- Pupils' knowledge of numbers and mental arithmetic skills have improved but they lack confidence in applying mathematical skills and finding different ways to solve problems.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff strike a good balance between teaching children new things and supporting them so that they learn through play. The teaching of phonics in Reception is outstanding. It is lively and engaging and children naturally carry new learning into their daily activities.

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection but is not consistently good across the school. Lessons are at the right level for the majority of pupils but do not always provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils to think for themselves and work independently.
- When disabled pupils and those with special needs are withdrawn from class, the teaching they receive is mostly good. In whole-class sessions, they are usually provided with activities that have been modified to help them succeed, but sometimes not at the right level for each pupil. For example, on some occasions pupils with special educational needs do not have the apparatus or visual aids to successfully tackle the tasks they are set even if they are at the appropriate level.
- The teaching of phonics from Reception onwards is good, and teachers and teaching assistants show skill and sensitivity in encouraging pupils to enjoy books and improve their skills during guided reading lessons. However, the school has only been partially successful in plugging the gaps in the reading skills of older pupils who did not benefit from the same systematic approach to reading during their earlier years in school.
- The most effective lessons strike a good balance between instruction by the teacher and discussion with pupils as they work to provide either extra support when needed or extra challenge as opportunities arise. When such opportunities are missed, for example to help pupils to evaluate and improve the way they express themselves, learning is not as rapid.
- Basic number skills are taught well in mathematics lessons. Teachers are less confident and skilled at enabling pupils to find different ways of solving problems and linking mathematics to other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good behaviour in lessons contributes to a good climate for learning. Pupils say lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Some parents and carers disagree that behaviour is good but no specific concerns were raised; the inspection found that behaviour is good and that bullying is not tolerated.
- Activities organised during playtimes encourage pupils to play cooperatively and relationships are very good. As one pupil put it 'we always play nicely'.
- The school deals very successfully with pupils who have significant behaviour, emotional and social needs. It works in close partnership with behaviour support team and the pupils' families to provide a consistent approach. As a result, behaviour improves markedly for most of these pupils.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after in school. They are very aware of different kinds of bullying. For example they explain that some pupils can be picked on because they have behavioural difficulties. They discuss such issues in a very mature way and explain how any incidents are dealt with by staff getting pupils to talk about and reflect on what they do.
- Pupils know that racism is wrong but say there is sometimes name-calling by pupils who do not realise that they give offence. In line with school policy, all such incidents are taken seriously as the school strives to eliminate all racism and intimidation.

- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and effective. Every effort is made to ensure that the pupils are safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe elsewhere.
- Strenuous efforts are made to reduce absences by pupils whose parents and carers need support and encouragement to send them to school. As a result, attendance has increased steadily over the past three years and is now very near the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- During the long-term absence of the headteacher, the school has remained focused on improving teaching and raising standards. The acting headteacher and senior leaders work well as a team in planning school improvement. The main impact of their work has been to secure a trend of rising standards in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- The acting headteacher has improved methods for checking the quality of teaching and ensured that, for all staff, salary progression, promotion and professional development are closely linked to improving outcomes for pupils.
- The school is strongly committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination. It is particularly successful in accommodating pupils with a range of disabilities and special educational needs and enabling them to succeed as well as other pupils in the school.
- Leadership of the curriculum is less effective, partly because the role of subject leader is not fully developed. The school provides a broad range of learning experiences for all its pupils, but curriculum planning lacks cohesion, particularly in providing structured opportunities for pupils to use and apply literacy and mathematics skills in different subjects. The school provides a good range of experiences outside lessons, including off-site visits and after-school football, rugby and music clubs.
- Some good provision is made for improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example by reflecting on the evils of slavery in assemblies. However, this provision is not structured or routinely included in curriculum planning.
- An excellent partnership has been established with parents and carers of children in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result they are increasingly engaged in their children's learning and development.
- The partnership with parents and carers in the rest of the school is not as strong. The parents or carers spoken to during the inspection had positive views of the school, but only a few completed the parent view online questionnaire. The views expressed there were less positive than in the school's own survey in July which had many more returns.
- The local authority has supported the school in sustaining temporary leadership and management arrangements during the headteacher's absence and is now advising the governing body as they prepare to appoint a new permanent headteacher.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they have sound information about pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching. They help the acting headteacher to ensure that staff remuneration is linked to pupils' achievements and that any required training is provided. They note how pupil premium funds have been spent and expect the school to account for its effectiveness. This is particularly creditable as the governing body is under-strength. Currently there are three vacancies for parent governors which are proving hard to fill, despite the governors' best efforts.

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	116685
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	401615

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	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Hardwicke
Headteacher	Hilary Thomas (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
Telephone number	01432 273633
Fax number	01432 277172
Email address	admin@st-martins.herford.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

