

St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Wallace Road, Bradley, Bilston, WV14 8BS

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress at each key stage and leave with standards that are above average in writing and mathematics.
- Standards are improving much faster than the national average.
- Teachers have high expectations of how much pupils will learn in lessons.
- Teachers provide very clear explanations of concepts, so pupils pick up new ideas very quickly.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour around school is often exemplary.
- Pupils are exceptionally well-informed about how to keep themselves safe.
- Senior managers, including governors, have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas to improve.
- The links with other settings in the federation have been used well to improve teaching, raise achievement and reduce costs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not spend enough time deepening pupils' skills of comprehension, so relatively few make better than expected progress in reading at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not read widely outside of school.
- Parents are not given enough encouragement to help their children read at home.
- Attendance is below average because a small group of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium are persistently absent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, including seven that were jointly observed with the school's leaders. In addition, they listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met parents informally and analysed the results of the school's own questionnaire for parents. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to provide information on parents' views.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Ann Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are from a White British background, with others coming from a wide range of different ethnic groups. Almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is high. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils, such as children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been part of a federation with Field View Primary School and St Martin's Children's Centre since September 2010. There is an executive headteacher who, with the governing body, leads and manages all three settings. There is a head of school for each of the schools.
- Field View Primary School and St Martin's Children's Centre are subject to separate inspections.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in reading at Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their skills of comprehension
 - encouraging pupils to read more widely outside of school
 - encouraging parents to enjoy reading with their children and record their successes so that teachers know what, and how much, pupils are reading at home.
- Use the pupil premium funding to provide staff with more time to work with parents of pupils who are eligible for such support in order to encourage better attendance for those who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the nursery with knowledge and skills that are lower than would be typical for their age. Effective links with the federated children's centre have raised standards on entry, which were previously much lower. Children settle very quickly into well-established routines and make good progress in the basics of reading, writing and number work, so that they catch up with their peers nationally and start Year 1 with standards that are average.
- Good progress continues across Key Stage 1, where there is a strong emphasis on ensuring all pupils quickly build upon what they have learnt in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 1 almost all have passed the early reading check.
- By the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading and mathematics were in the top 20% of schools nationally in 2012. Standards in writing, although average, had been lagging behind but in 2013 improved to above average as a result of successful actions to improve teaching.
- All groups of pupils make good progress across Key Stage 2. Standards have improved remarkably quickly, from a very low level in 2010 to above average in 2013. The proportions making at least expected progress have improved from 81% in mathematics in 2011 to 100% in 2013; writing has improved from 75% to 100% and reading from 88% to 94% over the same period.
- High proportions made more than expected progress in writing and mathematics in 2013, but the proportion was below average in reading.
- The progress made by pupils in 2012 was in the top 20% of schools in writing and the top 40% in mathematics. However, a dip in reading lowered overall results in English. There was only a relatively small number of pupils in the class in 2012, almost half of whom were disabled or had special educational needs that impacted specifically on their reading. They included a group, almost all of whom were eligible for support through the pupil premium, who arrived part way through Year 6 and/or had significant issues at home which meant they did not achieve as well as others in reading.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium were around 2 terms behind others in mathematics in 2012 and 3 terms in writing. The gap was smaller than that in 2011 in mathematics, but wider in English. In 2013 all made at least expected progress in writing and mathematics, and almost all in reading.
- The school's tracking shows that pupils' progress in reading is now approaching that in writing and mathematics, and this is confirmed by inspectors' observations. Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are now making better progress than others in writing to close the gap evident in 2012, and their progress in mathematics is outstanding. This is a result of the effective use of the extra funding to target extra support for individuals in specific subjects where they are struggling.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make equally as good progress as others. Teaching assistants are particularly effective at boosting these pupils' self-confidence and encouraging them to 'have a go'. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, the teaching assistant spotted two such pupils who were not putting their hands up. He quickly moved to talk to them

and within minutes both were the first to respond to questions.

- Pupils' good attitudes to learning are a key factor in their good and improving progress. These attitudes are forged in Nursery and Reception and built on across the school. Pupils are keen to learn, settle quickly to their work and enjoy getting to grips with difficult problems.
- Pupils read widely and with good accuracy in school. They understand the story and can explain the facts in what they have read. Few pupils have sufficient skills in understanding the deeper meaning of texts to make better than expected progress in reading. Relatively few pupils read widely outside of school. Few visit the library, for example, and their reading at home is limited to books provided by the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching across the school is good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of how much work will be produced in a lesson. They make these expectations very clear by telling pupils exactly what they should achieve and giving them time limits in which to achieve it. Pupils respond by working hard so they do not run out of time.
- No time is wasted at the start of topics because teachers explain new concepts very clearly. They demonstrate using straight forward examples and check that all understand what they are to do. Those who are still unsure are quickly targeted by teaching assistants, allowing others to get straight down to work.
- In all year groups, teachers and teaching assistants are quick to assess pupils' understanding and give them different work when appropriate. A pupil with special educational needs, for example, did better than expected in a brief mental arithmetic test at the start of a lesson and was immediately moved up an ability group.
- Teachers maintain good standards of behaviour. There is very rarely any need for overt discipline as pupils want to do their best and so concentrate on their work. A quick word is all that is needed to get an individual back on task on the occasions when one starts to day dream.
- Teachers in the Nursery and Reception provide a wide range of activities that are strongly based on establishing the basics of reading, writing, number work and good behaviour. Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to talk about what they are doing and extend their understanding through questions, such as 'how many are there' and 'can you draw that letter in the sand'?
- Pupils are given many opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. Teachers routinely ask pupils to read aloud in lessons and make them write in different styles.
- Progress in reading at Key Stage 2 is not as good as that in writing and mathematics because teachers do not give pupils enough tasks that make them think about the deeper meaning in texts, such as why the author has used specific vocabulary and what the meaning is they are trying to convey.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in a wide range of circumstances. The youngest children, for example, are taught exactly what a stranger is and how to tell a 'safe' stranger, such as a police officer, from an unsafe one. Older pupils have an extensive knowledge of how to stay safe on the internet and the dangers of drug misuse.
- Behaviour is usually at least good in lessons; it is often exemplary around school. Pupils are quick to respond to instructions and try their best. Even when working quickly they still pay close attention to the quality of their presentation. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils worked against the clock on a series of calculations, but still presented them neatly so they could track down where they had made errors.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and respectful towards one another. They, and their parents, say there is no bullying or bad language. There have been no exclusions since 2010.
- Attendance is below average. It is improving, but at a slower rate than that seen nationally. The reason lies with a small group of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium who are persistently absent. That is, their attendance falls below 85%.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is improving rapidly as a result of good leadership and management. Senior leaders form a strong team whose skills complement one another. They, together with governors, pay close attention to detail and take quick actions to address any weaknesses when they arise. They demonstrate the skills and capacity to further improve the school.
- Key roles, such as the management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs, are carried out by senior members of staff. Several other managers, such as those responsible for literacy and numeracy, are new to their roles. They are well-informed about standards and accurately evaluate teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books. They are currently being trained to observe lessons.
- There is a great deal of consistency of approach across the school. Leaders have high expectations that policies will be implemented consistently. As a result teachers consistently make pupils aware of how they must behave both in and out of lessons. Pupils know that they are in school to learn, and act accordingly. Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and that there is no discrimination.
- Leaders check teaching frequently to ensure that it is improving and meeting pupils' needs equally. All teachers have clear areas for improvement, even when their teaching is judged to be outstanding. These are then used successfully to set demanding targets to improve the performance of teachers across the school.
- The links with the federated school have been used well to share expertise, raise achievement and save money by sharing roles, such as that of business manager. The make-up of the senior leadership team changes in order to address specific areas for improvement in each school. St Martin's currently has an assistant headteacher from the federated school whose expertise lies with improving reading, for example, while a specialist mathematics leader has swapped places and moved to the federated school.

- The local authority has provided good support to help the school train teachers when specific areas for improvement have been identified.
- The school has employed specialist sports coaches to teach physical education for the past 6 years. Plans are in place to use the additional primary school sport funding available to extend the already wide range of after school sports clubs and to provide summer camps in order to enhance the school's work on tackling obesity, the rates of which will be used to check how effective the approach is being.
- The topics that pupils study encourage them to respect others and behave well in public. The topics provide good opportunities for trips and also for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. However, there is too little emphasis on deepening pupils' skills of comprehension.
- Parents are full of praise for the school. However, some do not support the school by making sure that their children attend well. The school has plans to use part of its pupil premium funding to employ a member of staff to tackle this issue.
- Parents are pleased with the progress their children make, but the school does not do enough to encourage parents to read with their children at home.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed about how well pupils are doing and where improvements still need to be made. They question any decline in performance that they identify and make sure that effective changes are made to rectify them. Governors saw the decline in reading in 2012, for example, from the data dashboard and quickly sought the reasons, checking that the trend was reversed in 2013.
 - Governors keep a close eye on the quality of teaching through frequent and detailed reports from the senior leadership team that ensure they know how well teachers' performance is managed. They are well aware of which staff are producing the best results and ensure that they are appropriately rewarded. They ensure that safeguarding meets 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	104369
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	427114

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daniel Lee
Headteacher	Lynne Law
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2011
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