

# Saint Martin's School

Markland Road, Dover, CT17 9LY

**Inspection dates** 27–28 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 achieve well. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen to above the national average and is particularly strong in reading and writing. Attainment at Key Stage 2 is also significantly above average in reading.
- A recent dip in mathematics scores at the end of Key Stage 2 has been addressed. As a result, achievement in this subject has improved and is now good.
- Teaching is good because the vast majority of activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and help them to make good progress.
- Leaders, manager and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved. Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing.
- The headteacher and her leadership team know what needs to be done to further improve the school. They have set clear expectations for good teaching, and support their staff to improve their practice. Staff and governors share this vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school. They feel safe, behave well and treat adults and each other with kindness and courtesy.
- Provision in the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils are not always asked questions that help them to develop their understanding and support rapid progress to the higher attainment levels.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have too few opportunities to practise writing about topics in depth and detail in subjects such as science and humanities.
- Marking of pupils' work varies between subjects and pupils do not always follow their teachers' advice for improving their own attainment.
- The wider leadership team is not yet sufficiently well trained to support the headteacher, deputy headteacher and leader of learning in checking on and improving the quality of teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers. Additional activities included short visits to classrooms to look at mathematics sessions for different groups. In addition, there were observations during lunchtimes and a school assembly.
- One lesson was observed and another series of short visits took place jointly with the headteacher. The deputy headteacher accompanied an inspector in checking pupils' books to see how well groups of pupils are now progressing in mathematics and writing.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and subject and school leaders. Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspectors took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 91 separate responses to a recent survey of parents' and carers' views, carried out by the school. In addition, inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers. They also considered three letters from parents and carers. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and 30 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were examined, as well as records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

## Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roger Fenwick

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage currently consists of one Reception class and there are plans to add an additional class in the next academic year.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, children in public care and those from service families) is below the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small proportion of pupils with Mixed Asian and other mixed heritage backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has experienced some changes of senior staff, including of those responsible for particular areas of the school's work, since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - training all adults in the classroom to set tasks and ask questions that challenge pupils, especially the more able, to think deeply and explain their answers in more detail
  - making sure that adults in the classroom check that pupils are consistently responding to the detailed marking in their books and recording corrections and improvements to their work
  - training subject leaders to check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their subjects so that they can hold teachers to account.
- Improve achievement in writing in Key Stage 2 by increasing the extent to which pupils are enabled to meet their targets for reading and writing through their work in subjects other than English.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception with the skills that are expected of four-year-olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and join Key Stage 1 with levels of communication and language development that are above the national average.
- Adults make sure that children gain a strong grasp of phonics (the linking of sounds to letters). This is sustained during the Key Stage 1 years so that higher than average proportions of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check last year. Higher-level scores in writing were also significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2.
- Scrutiny of the progress records of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 indicate this trend is likely to continue. This is because high proportions are making expected or better progress and meeting the ambitious targets that have been set for them.
- Records for pupils currently in Key Stage 2 also show that the gap between rates of progress in mathematics and reading are closing. The most recent summaries of pupils' performance in Years 5 and 6 show a strong improvement in their attainment in mathematics.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading in Key Stage 2. However, the school has identified this difference and is consequently planning to devote more time to practising extended writing across the curriculum.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities is evident because progress, particularly in reading, is good relative to the different groups of pupils' starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly in the upper Key Stage 2 years, are making the same progress in all subjects as their classmates. This also applies to pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language. This is because the school has made sure that teachers plan effectively to support them.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. Recent school records show that increasing proportions of the most-able pupils in Year 6 are now attaining high scores in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work in their books is of a high standard and the school ensures that those who are capable of reaching the highest level receive the extra support they need in order to do so.
- Money from the pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6 last year, pupils in the target group were about four months behind their classmates in writing. However, as a result of individual support, many of these pupils currently on roll have caught up well with their classmates and closed the gap in attainment. Indeed in Years 5 and 6, pupils in the target group are attaining higher scores than their classmates.
- Pupils enjoy reading and receive good guidance to help improve their skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all adults and pupils in the classroom and pupils are consequently keen to learn. Well-planned and interesting tasks offer pupils good opportunities to make progress.
- For example, during a Year 1 lesson, the pupils' reading and writing skills were developed effectively by giving pupils the responsibility for recording their group's ideas about new words. Suggestions of new words that used the same sounds were quickly collected and, because the pupils had been well briefed about technical terms such as 'split digraphs', tricky words were spelled accurately. The pupils enjoyed responding to adults' questions by putting their new words into lively sentences. As a consequence, learning was good and all groups of pupils made good progress.
- Pupils understand the accuracy of their answers because teachers mark their work regularly. In

pupils' writing and mathematics books, teachers provide clear advice to identify how they can follow up to improve the quality of their work. However, pupils are not always helped sufficiently to improve the quality of their writing in subjects other than English, by, for example, writing extended answers for different audiences.

- Pupils are not consistently following their teachers' guidance in their writing and mathematics books. This is because insufficient time and attention are given to making sure that corrections and improvements have been made.
- Adults reshape tasks quickly if pupils are not succeeding, to make sure that the work is neither too hard nor too easy. Skilled teaching assistants give extended support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks. As a result pupils make good progress.
- Pupils, particularly those capable of making faster progress, are regularly given challenging additional tasks. However, the most-able pupils are not always helped sufficiently to reflect in depth and detail about their work, so that they can consistently achieve their full potential.
- As a result of disappointing mathematics results in Year 6, there has been focused staff training for all year groups. Following this, the introduction of problem-solving sessions across the school has helped to improve pupils' progress.
- Secondary teachers have also been enlisted to teach small groups capable of making faster progress to higher levels. Pupils say that they enjoy and gain confidence from these activities. Current records of pupils' attainment and progress show that more are now making good progress in mathematics than was the case last year.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage skilfully blends the activities led by adults and those chosen by the children. This supports confident self-expression while the children are happily engaged in physical or creative tasks.
- Phonics (letters associated with the sounds they make) is well taught. Consequently, pupils enjoy applying their reading skills, and select books from the school library for pleasure as well as using reference books accurately in a range of subjects.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work very cooperatively with each other, share resources and concentrate hard to complete tasks. The behaviour of pupils is good rather than outstanding because pupils do not always demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons, moving sensibly between classrooms and interacting politely with adults in the playground. There is a calm atmosphere around the school and pupils act responsibly. The school is effective in promoting good relationships. Pupils share the playground areas sensibly and older pupils take on 'buddy' and supervisory roles. Pupils make sure that their surroundings are kept free of litter and they take pride in their smart uniforms.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils believe that they are kept safe in school and that they are well looked after by the adults around them. Assemblies and events about road safety and cyber bullying have made a strong impact on the pupils, who can consequently explain how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying and they say that bullying is rare. They trust adults to help them, and to deal effectively with any problems that might arise. The school's policy of restorative justice is understood and the system of 'worry boxes' is appreciated by the pupils. Younger pupils are keen to take on more of the playground supervision roles, currently undertaken by Year 6 pupils, in order to manage their own behaviour better.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get on well with one another in a secure environment, supervised by staff who are well trained to cope with minor mishaps.
- Attendance is now above average because effective strategies have been used to encourage good attendance, and punctuality is good.
- The majority of parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe and caring

environment. Adults working in the school all believe that behaviour is well managed.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school because they look forward to varied activities and interesting lessons.

## The leadership and management are good

- The highly dedicated headteacher and deputy have developed an effective system for sharing lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books. As a consequence, teachers' classroom practice has improved. Leadership and management are not outstanding because middle leaders do not yet take a full part in checking on standards of teaching and achievement.
- Leaders have developed systems that ensure that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not shirk from difficult conversations about teaching performance when these are necessary.
- Leaders have secured the overwhelming support of staff for their vision of school improvement. 'This school is a pleasure to work in [because] the staff, pupils, parents and wider community all work together to support the children' is a typical comment.
- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because procedures to monitor children's progress are followed consistently. Activities are planned well to meet children's needs and interests, both indoors and in the safe and well-resourced outdoor classroom. Sensitively handled arrangements for transition from home and nurseries help the children to settle in quickly.
- Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in daily assemblies and in their contributions to the classroom 'reflection' display boards. Themes such as keeping chicks or the preservation of the rainforest are well developed in both social education and literacy lessons. Pupils raise money for charities such as a local food bank and a campaign to fight polio in Uganda. The older pupils, as 'buddies', help to maintain positive relationships in the playground and around the school. Opportunities to experience 'sign to sing' and violin lessons are well received, as are residential team building activities and visits to museums and places of historic interest. Activities such as hosting a Chinese family to celebrate the Chinese New Year extend pupils' cultural understanding.
- The extra primary school sports funding is being well used to arrange new activities such as dance, yoga and aerobics that have stimulated pupils' participation in area dance festivals. It has also increased pupils' enrolment in local clubs. Pupils' enjoyment of physical education and participation outside school hours have increased as a consequence of this initiative.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are consistently applied, with governors taking an active role in checking this. Leaders promote equal opportunities well and are assiduous in tackling any potential discrimination that may arise.
- Leaders work effectively with other schools. The school collaborates well with local schools to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments. It also arranges training with other schools which has helped to improve teachers' skills in planning effective mathematics lessons. The school also works with local secondary schools to develop projects for the most-able pupils.
- The local authority has provided good support to this school by helping with governor reorganisation and training. In addition, local authority consultants visit the school frequently to check the pupils' progress towards the targets set by the school leaders.
- The improvements that school leaders have made, together with their success in tackling the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, demonstrate their capacity for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because the headteacher's summary reports provide clear information and governors ask challenging questions about any changes in pupils' outcomes. The governors have improved their effectiveness by commissioning an external review and by subsequently

working with the local authority to reorganise their operations. Governors now have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use published data to compare pupils' performance with national figures. They also make systematic visits to the school to make sure that reported improvements have indeed taken place. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress because they have revised the pay policy and receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. They are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made to ensure that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups, and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The impact of the spending of the sports grant is monitored carefully. The governing body makes sure that the budget is very carefully managed and supports strategic planning by rigorously reviewing the school improvement plan.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118394
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	441036

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tricia Sherling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katie Wratten
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 206620
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