

St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Hartington Road, Brighton BN2 3LJ

Inspection dates	10–11 November 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough to ensure consistently good or outstanding progress.
- Standards in mathematics are not as good as in reading and writing.
- Most-able pupils are not always offered enough challenge, including children in the early years.
- Too many pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are not making sufficiently good progress from their different starting points.
- Leaders do not fully take into account pupils' achievement when evaluating the school's performance and are overoptimistic.
- Improvement planning lacks precision. School leaders do not routinely monitor and evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve the school.
- Governors know too little about pupils' progress. Because of this, they are not able to fully hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors promote a positive, caring vision and a strong family ethos in the school. Staff overwhelmingly support this.
- Good leadership of teaching in the early years supports children to achieve well. They experience a broad range of activities to encourage their enjoyment of learning.
- Phonics and reading are taught well and there have been improvements in writing in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils behave well in school. They feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is strong and supported by a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They like the way the school involves them closely in their child's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, make good progress from their different starting points by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of information about pupils' earlier learning to set work at the right level
 - teachers' feedback to pupils about their work provides guidance on how to improve and that pupils have the chance to respond.
- Bring about improvements in the achievement of pupils:
 - in mathematics across the school by ensuring that pupils master the range of skills, knowledge and understanding expected of pupils at their age
 - in Key Stage 1 by raising expectations and developing pupils' skills more rapidly.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - coordinated systems to check and analyse pupils' progress (including disadvantaged and most-able pupils) are developed urgently and used to inform the school's evaluation of its own performance and the identification of improvement priorities
 - plans for improvement make it clear what will happen, by when, how progress will be checked and impact evaluated
 - governors develop systems to hold leaders to account for the performance of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is good throughout the school.
- Leaders do not check pupils' progress through the school in a coordinated way. They do not investigate well enough whether all pupils make good progress from different starting points. This includes most-able and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders' plans for improvement lack precision about groups of pupils and subjects where improvement is required. Furthermore, there are no clear milestones against which leaders and governors regularly check the impact of actions taken.
- The acting headteacher, his senior team and governors share a clear vision for education at the school. They are committed to achieve improvement, within a family-orientated ethos, based on Christian values. Leaders have the full confidence of parents and staff.
- The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous. Although school leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching through performance management, they do not routinely, rigorously or systematically check that the steps they have taken to improve the school have made a positive difference to pupils' achievement.
- The school's topic-based curriculum is a strength of the school. It is enriched by visits to places of interest and activities such as the 'Maths enterprise week' which provided opportunities to work with the local community while developing numeracy skills. In addition, there are plenty of clubs offering extra-curricular learning which are well used by pupils. These include sporting, modelling and artistic activities, and there are many admirable clay models and inspirational wall displays produced by pupils around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, preparing them securely for life in modern Britain. The school's values-based culture is a strength. Pupils show kind and caring responses to each other. They are developing understanding of democracy by voting members onto the school council. Some hold positions of responsibility within the school council and others have leadership roles as sports captains. Pupils are tolerant of the views of others, listening carefully when others are talking and taking good account of their opinions or ideas. Pupils enjoy learning about a range of cultures and faiths through 'fantastic Fridays', held every Friday afternoon, and their close connections with a school in Sierra Leone.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively to close the gap in Key Stage 2, but less effectively in Key Stage 1. Leaders have introduced a range of steps to build on the success of provision in Key Stage 2 but they are not tracking the progress of pupils closely enough to accurately evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Physical education and sports funding is used effectively to provide training and specialist coaching, especially in gymnastics. Having achieved the bronze school sports award, the school is progressing towards achieving the silver award.
- The local authority's support is variable. Advisers effectively supported the school to improve provision in the early years and to monitor the development of newly qualified teachers. However, there has not been enough challenge to the school about its improvement planning which lacks sharp analysis and measurable success criteria based on improving pupils' achievement.
- The school works well with parents. They were recently invited to find out what their children are learning at a 'Maths party'. Events like these occur regularly and are enjoyed by both parents and pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Until recently, governance lacked rigour. Governors' focus has been on supporting school leaders, acknowledging the good work they do to support many children and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Because of this, school leaders were not challenged enough to produce the improvements required. Governors do not interrogate reports from leaders about pupils' achievements. Under the newly appointed chair, the governing body is starting to bring about improvements in strategic leadership.
 - Governors are developing a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are better placed to ensure that the improvements needed to make this a good school come about. There has been a change in the professional relationships between governors. The Chair of the Governing Body is beginning to hold school leaders to account.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are trained to an appropriate level and maintain high levels of vigilance with regard to the welfare of pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents who contributed to the online Parent View questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors said they feel their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent across the school and is not good enough to secure good outcomes for pupils.
- Where teaching is strong, pupils are set tasks which provide plenty of opportunities to deepen learning and they can achieve well. In these classes, activities are well matched to pupils' starting points and pupils enjoy rich conversations with their learning partners as they work out problems together.
- Progress in some classes is slower because teachers do not always provide enough challenge to make sure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and achievement are not always high enough, especially for disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Some say they find their work is too easy.
- Teachers' use of questioning to check pupils' understanding or to move pupils on to more challenging activities varies between year groups. In some classes, pupils are given too much time to complete simple tasks. This hinders their progress, especially that of most-able pupils, who are often given the same work to do as other pupils. Once this is completed, they move onto more difficult work, but this does not always happen quickly enough.
- Feedback in accordance with the school's policy is regular but not always effective in guiding pupils about how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to progress well towards meeting their targets. In addition, pupils in some classes do not always read teachers' comments written in their books and act upon the guidance given.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has improved. As a result, pupils are more confident readers and the proportion who reach the standard expected at the Year 1 phonics check has increased and is above the national average. Pupils are increasingly applying their reading skills across all aspects of their learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and productive. Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants, who know the pupils well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the care and development of pupils who need to catch up and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Regular opportunities are provided for parents to meet their child's teachers to discuss the progress they make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a happy place: the great majority of pupils enjoy learning and show pride in their school.
- Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy contributing to school life. For instance, in an assembly, pupils acted out the story of St Martin to show the importance of compassion. They sang the assembly hymn with gusto.
- A large majority of parents agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school and know whom to turn to if they have a concern. They are very clear about how to avoid danger when using the internet. There are no problems with racism, derogatory language is rarely used and, if bullying does occur, it is always dealt with promptly by staff.
- Relationships between staff and school leaders are unwaveringly positive. Many staff comment that they feel valued and well supported to improve.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of parents have positive views about behaviour in the school. Pupils respond well to the expectations set for them to be kind, courteous and respectful.

- Pupils behave well in lessons, listening to teachers carefully and showing that they want to do their best. Pupils' good behaviour in their lessons means that learning is rarely disrupted.
- The level of pupils' enthusiasm for their learning is directly linked to how well their teacher matches the work to their needs and abilities. Where teachers fail to provide enough challenge, some pupils lose their concentration and their attention wavers. In contrast, where teachers provide work which closely matches pupils' needs, they work very hard and apply themselves wholeheartedly to their task.
- Behaviour on the playground can be rather boisterous when all pupils are using the relatively confined space at the same time. During lunchtime, when many pupils are inside, the playground is calmer.
- Attendance fell a little last year but has improved since September. The school now has strong systems in place to make sure that pupils come to school on time and attend well.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress of pupils from their different starting points varies too much across year groups and within subjects for outcomes to be good overall.
- Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing. It was well below average in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Progress in reading and writing improved and matches or exceeds national levels. However, progress in mathematics declined and is low, compared with national levels.
- The school's information shows that last year pupils in Years 3 and 4 made better progress in mathematics than in Years 5 and 6, and are catching up with the standards achieved in reading and writing.
- This year the school has brought the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year from well below to in line with the 2014 national average. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Reception Year are also making better progress, and gaps between their achievement and that of others have begun to close.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved year on year and are now in line with the national average for pupils achieving the required standard.
- Generally, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are mixed. While in Key Stage 2 achievement has improved and gaps are closing in reading and writing, progress in mathematics is slow, with too few making expected progress and none at all achieving more than expected progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils within the school and nationally.
- Progress in reading and writing has improved in Key Stage 2 where results of national tests are better than in the previous year. This is reflected in the school's own progress information across different year groups and in the quality of work in pupils' books. However, too few pupils achieve at higher levels in reading and writing at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Achievement by most-able pupils in the national tests at the end of Year 6 was lower than similar pupils nationally. Activities and work provided do not always stretch current pupils sufficiently to enable them to reach the expected attainment for their age. Most-able pupils are not always presented with tasks that allow them to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. In English and mathematics, some of the most-able pupils are provided with work that is similar to that of other pupils; this does not extend or challenge them sufficiently.
- A wide range of support and intervention is provided for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who need to catch up. Adults are deployed well and this is helping pupils in these groups to make good progress.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join Reception with skills below those typical for their age. They make good progress and by the end of Reception most children leave well prepared to read, write and work with numbers successfully in Year 1. Children achieve broadly in line with expectation for their age.
- The early years provision is led well. Because of this, the school has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in early years. Leaders took effective steps to significantly improve the quality of teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes during the last year.

- Provision for children from disadvantaged backgrounds has improved, with a higher proportion being better prepared for learning in Year 1. Outcomes for disadvantaged children are still lower than for other children, although the gap is closing.
- Strong relationships and an attractive and stimulating environment help most children settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Staff cater for the needs of individual children well and ongoing assessment and recording of progress is a strong feature of the provision.
- Children's health and safety is promoted well. Good levels of adult supervision and support keep children safe. Healthy eating is actively encouraged.
- Parents are very positive about the early years and the care and support their children receive.
- In the Nursery, children listened attentively to a reading of 'The three baby owls', which followed up a visit to see some owls. The teacher's focus on sounds was helping many children acquire speaking and listening skills well. The lack of visual prompts limited the learning for some children.
- In Reception, children were fully engaged in using a range of materials to make nests. They used language imaginatively to describe different shapes. Children are well supported to develop their writing skills, but expectations of most-able children are not always high enough.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is good. They feel safe and are prepared to play and learn with a spirit of adventure as they develop their social and physical skills. Staff manage this well.

School details

Unique reference number	114539
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10005691

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Wilde
Headteacher	Alex Wingham
Telephone number	01273 707114
Website	www.stmartins.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stmartins.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2012

Information about this school

- St Martin's is an average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The school runs a Nursery class where children attend on a part-time basis.
- Children in the school's Reception classes attend full time.
- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons, across all classes, seven jointly with school leaders. The lead inspector also visited all classes with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and inclusion coordinator, middle leaders, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read, observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school and at break times, and talked informally with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 14 responses on the online parent questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also considered the nine freetext question responses submitted by parents. Responses to the 31 questionnaires returned by staff were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits by the local authority, information about pupils' outcomes supplied by the school, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's improvement plans.

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