

# St Martin's Primary School

Holly Bush Walk, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 6AF

## Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The new leadership team is moving the school in the right direction. However, more time is needed to have a sustained impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- A legacy of underachievement has contributed to pupils leaving the school with standards below those found nationally. Although progress is now improving, outcomes are still not consistently good throughout the school.
- Historically, staff have not been fully held to account for pupils' progress in the school. Since the last inspection, there has not been enough rigour in how leaders check the quality of teaching and learning to help improve teachers' skills and confidence, particularly in meeting the needs of a new curriculum.
- Pupils do not consistently apply their knowledge and understanding across all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is uneven across the school. On occasions, teachers do not set work with the right level of challenge, or plan to extend pupils' thinking effectively.
- Pupils sometimes fail to show sufficient pride in their work. Teachers do not insist consistently on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Pupils are not consistently using the feedback they receive from teachers to improve their work.
- Children in the early years do not make rapid progress because the activities that children choose for themselves lack purpose and focus. They do not consistently develop their skills and understanding across all the areas of learning in the outdoor area.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership, assisted by governors and the local authority, has rapidly and significantly improved many aspects of the school.
- Behaviour is good. The effective relationships between staff and pupils and strong pastoral care ensure pupils feel safe and want to learn.
- The teaching, tracking and monitoring of pupils' phonics skills have resulted in improved outcomes for current pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
  - the best teaching in the school is shared more widely so that there is greater consistency of practice
  - pupils are consistently challenged to deepen their knowledge and understanding and to achieve the best they can
  - pupils use teachers' feedback to improve their work and understanding over time
  - all pupils use neat handwriting and good presentation consistently across the curriculum
  - teachers consistently develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills so that they are able to apply their knowledge and understanding across all subjects.
- Improve early years provision by ensuring that:
  - pupils, especially boys, have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in order to be fully prepared for Year 1
  - adults maximise children's learning during child-initiated activities
  - the teacher-led and child-initiated activities when taking place in the outdoor environment fully promote children's learning and development across all areas of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The appointment of the executive headteacher in September 2016 and the partnership with Marlbrook Primary Teaching School have been the turning point for the school. The drive for improvement is already under way and much has been achieved in a short space of time.
- Representatives of the local authority have worked effectively with the governing body to tackle historical issues and to support governors in bringing about the changes needed.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. They are aware that results in recent years have not been good enough. They have correctly identified the main priorities to improve teaching, learning and assessment. The partnership with the local teaching school is already having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. For example, the link has already increased teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders analyse pupils' progress with rigour and this informs changes in practice. They provide staff with a clear focus for monitoring activities which link to the school's priorities. Such activities support staff, rather than overwhelm them. The precision of leaders' monitoring and assessment helps teachers to understand what they need to do better and celebrate what they do well.
- There is still work to do to ensure consistency and school leaders acknowledge this. They have correctly identified where teaching is weak and have been proactive in addressing this. There has not been time, however, for these measures to take full effect in ensuring that teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- The new leadership team has brought stability to the school community. Morale has improved. Comments from the staff indicate that they have confidence in the leadership of the school. One member of staff commented, 'The school has rapidly improved since September and the new leadership team has been strong in bringing about change.' This is a view held by many.
- Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are now stringent and align closely with the teachers' standards and current school improvement priorities. Staff value effective professional development and it has led to some improvements in teaching. For example, the teaching of phonics is now more effective.
- The curriculum has been developed since the change in leadership in September 2016. It has some aspects that pupils particularly enjoy, notably the increasing number of educational visits that add depth and breadth to pupils' learning. The appointment of specialist teachers has also helped to enrich the curriculum, motivate pupils and improve their progress. However, more needs to be done to develop pupils' ability to make decisions about their own learning.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors, and those who responded to Ofsted's online

questionnaire (Parent View) commented positively on the improvements in the school since the appointment of the executive headteacher. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'I'm very happy with the changes put in to turning this school around and making it a great place for all children to be schooled.'

- The additional funding that the school receives to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively and is carefully targeted on those individuals. In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not progressed as well as others nationally. However, this difference in performance is reducing for current pupils. In some year groups, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is higher than that of their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. The process for monitoring the funding for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is evaluated with greater rigour. Evidence seen on inspection shows that progress for this group of pupils is improving.
- The government's funding for physical education (PE) and sport is spent well. For example, specialist coaches support teachers in delivering weekly PE lessons and pupils have access to a wider range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities. Swimming galas, athletics events, and football and netball matches take place within the Hereford City Schools Sports Association and the school organises its own house sporting events.
- Leaders are determined that pupils' academic success be matched by their social and emotional development. They have overhauled the systems to support pupils' wider needs. The pastoral support group is a strong example in supporting pupils' emotional needs. The team charged with ensuring that pupils are safe, secure and well behaved is working closely with parents to encourage improved attendance.
- Pupils are gaining the skills, values and attributes to make a positive contribution to modern society. Pupils have respect for other cultures and different faiths.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, its priorities for improvement and the issues that have impaired improvement. They understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting and challenging school leaders and they are passionate about providing a high-quality primary education for the community.
- The governing body keeps a close eye on the school's expenditure. Governors are aware that resources need to be reviewed. They ensure that the money available for disadvantaged pupils is appropriately spent. They have improved the way that teachers' performance management is conducted. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are beginning to make faster progress.
- The governing body has helped to shape the school's culture and ethos, and has not been afraid to take difficult decisions when tackling weaknesses in teaching or leadership. Governors regularly come into school to talk to staff and pupils and see for themselves the progress being made.
- Governors understand their statutory responsibilities, such as keeping the website up to date and their role in safeguarding and the monitoring of attendance.
- Governors are now much better placed than before to understand the school, support

leaders in the continued drive for improvement and to hold them to account.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems to protect pupils are secure. This is because relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils' welfare and care are at the heart of what the school does very well. Leaders rigorously check staff's suitability to work with children. Staff training on safeguarding is very good. Even the newest of staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the procedures they should follow. All staff know what to look for and how to react to ensure that pupils are safe. Supervision of all activities, including at lunchtime and playtime, is good.
- The pastoral support officer provides very good support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils know that they can talk to someone if they have worries or concerns.
- The school has good relationships with other agencies. It also works to help pupils understand safety issues, for example those surrounding the internet. Staff enhance pupils' awareness of safety through taught lessons and assemblies.
- The parents that spoke to inspectors were positive about the school and are pleased with the way that leaders and staff are committed to pupils' well-being and safety. One parent told the inspectors, 'My child always feels safe in school and the teachers are easy to talk to if you have any problems.' The vast majority of parents share this view.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across the school.
  - Teachers sometimes fail to use information about pupils' progress to make sure that they regularly plan and deliver challenging work that stretches and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. The setting of work at an appropriate level is now improving as there is more systematic tracking of pupils' progress.
  - Too many teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to take sufficient pride in their presentation or to address untidy work. As a result, pupils' presentation skills are underdeveloped.
  - Some pupils are not effectively using teachers' informative and helpful feedback to improve their work. This means that some pupils are not in the habit of identifying and correcting their mistakes and learning from them in order to make more rapid progress.
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- Leaders encourage all pupils to have high aspirations and a positive attitude to their learning. Where teaching is strongest, the staff are highly skilled in fostering pupils'

positive attitudes. Classrooms are warm and friendly. Questioning is highly effective and pupils are willing to answer questions and attempt their work because they feel well supported by adults. Teachers also use a range of resources and approaches to spark pupils' creativity and independent thinking skills. However, such practice is not embedded in the school.

- Teachers have started to benefit from appropriate opportunities to watch each other teach and to visit local schools to share expertise. As staffing settles, this is beginning to have a positive influence, particularly in the teaching of writing. Teachers who are new to the school are supported well to make a positive start to their career.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in different year groups read confidently and with great expression. They showed excellent comprehension of the books they were reading. A wider scrutiny of reading records showed that the vast majority of pupils read regularly and are now making much better progress in reading.
- The teaching of phonics is improving in key stage 1. Pupils use their knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. The school's own assessment information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that pupils' early reading is increasingly secure.
- The teaching of mathematics is similarly improving. This is particularly evident when teachers give pupils appropriate opportunities to reason about numbers and solve problems.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively to support learning, especially where pupils require extra help or guidance. Precisely targeted teaching helps pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Regular meetings keep parents well informed about pupils' progress. The vast majority of parents agreed that they receive valuable information about their child's progress. For example, parents were grateful for the opportunity to attend a phonics workshop explaining how they could support their children's grasp of letters and sounds.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils speak confidently about improvements in school since the new executive headteacher arrived. Any concerns or issues are dealt with quickly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of most types of bullying and can explain the difference between bullying and one-off incidents of misbehaviour. They are proud of their STOP ('Several Times On Purpose') boxes, where pupils are able to write a note if they feel they have a concern.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet. They also have a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils who had been at the school for some time were able to comment on improvement. Comments shared with inspectors included, 'Teaching is definitely better now,' 'We are doing much harder work,' 'Teachers listen to us more,' and 'They are

stricter but behaviour is much better.’ In reflecting on their learning, pupils commented that they feel they are getting better at reading, writing and ‘doing hard fractions’. They are positive about the help and support they get from the teaching staff.

- Pupils are given opportunities to take on leadership roles, including as members of the school council, play leaders, nursery helpers, head boy and head girl, on the e-safety committee and feeding the school’s chickens. They enjoy such roles and perform them responsibly.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. They told inspectors how much they enjoy their lessons and the educational and residential visits they attend. They also greatly enjoy the clubs, including the sporting ones, which have a good rate of participation.
- Care for those pupils who need additional support is thorough and well documented. Strong relationships with staff and a range of extended services ensure that pupils’ emotional well-being and wider personal development are catered for well.
- Pupils talk with a degree of confidence about British values and are able to make clear links with equality. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision enables pupils to be reflective and responsible.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know and understand the school’s rules and routines. They adhere well to these.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils behave well, socialise suitably and engage in lively, friendly games. Activities such as the tyre park, trim trail, football, basketball, climbing apparatus and an assortment of playground small equipment encourages active lifestyles. Pupils move around the school in an exemplary fashion.
- Attendance in the school was below average in 2016. It has improved for the great majority of pupils, and the school is now working much more closely with parents to encourage regular attendance. Attendance awards are now in place and pupils have the chance to win prizes including tablet computers in the half-termly raffle draw for pupils with full attendance.
- All parents who spoke to inspectors commented positively on the improvements in behaviour since the appointment of the executive headteacher.
- Pupils conduct themselves well and their behaviour is typically good throughout the day. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration. Some do not work as hard as they should when they do not find lessons interesting or engaging. Nevertheless, they seldom distract others.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, pupils’ achievement has consistently been below the national

average. The progress of most groups of pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged, has been adversely affected by weak teaching over an extended period. Too few pupils have been well prepared for secondary school.

- This poor performance has left gaps in current pupils' learning. However, leaders' work to stabilise the staffing has now had a positive effect on pupils' progress. Indeed, there is an improving picture in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Current progress and attainment information and the learning observed during the inspection show that things are improving, but there is more to be done to ensure that pupils' outcomes are good across the school.
- Pupils' progress and attainment are tracked each half term, leading to the provision of extra support to groups of pupils where necessary. Assessment information, supported by work seen in English and mathematics books, shows that there has been recent rapid improvement for many groups of pupils.
- There are no wide variations in achievement for the different groups of children.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making progress from their starting points that is similar to or better than that of other pupils nationally. Work in pupils' books and observations in lessons show that these differences are diminishing over time.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with well-targeted support that is matched to their needs. Their progress is checked carefully and necessary changes are made quickly to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- The number of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016 was below the national average. Currently, pupils in Year 1 are making better progress in phonics and more are working at the level expected for their age. Pupils who read with the inspectors made good use of their phonics skills in their reading and in the written work they produced.
- Older pupils also read confidently and capably, with a clear understanding of their reading. They enjoy the greater levels of challenge they are presented with across a wide range of literature.
- Achievement in writing floundered last year, but since September 2016 there has been strong progress in the quality of pupils' writing. The range and quality of writing topics in English have improved and pupils enjoy lots of opportunities for writing in depth. However, the quality of presentation and handwriting is still too variable and this slows progress.
- Pupils are making better progress in mathematics and gaining the skills to tackle calculations with confidence. This is most evident when pupils have opportunities to put these skills to good use and solve a range of mathematical problems.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age. In



particular, children have low communication and literacy skills. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year is below the national average. During their time in early years, children, including disadvantaged children, make expected progress but few make better progress. Children do not make enough progress during their time in Reception, and a minority, mainly boys, leave Reception without the necessary skills to succeed in Year 1.

- Children benefit most from the small-group sessions led by adults. Good use of interesting resources and effective questioning helps children to make gains in their learning. This is proving particularly helpful in ensuring that children gain a good grounding in phonics.
- However, this quality is not matched when children choose their own learning, particularly in the outdoor area. Provision for child-led activities often lacks purpose and challenge. As a result, children's learning is inhibited.
- Some areas of the outdoor environment are underdeveloped and as a result, children have limited opportunity to explore their own interests in this area.
- There are warm relationships within the early years. Children are well behaved and work happily alongside each other. For example, a group of children were observed making stick houses together, while outside two girls pretended to make biscuits and a larger group enjoyed activities in play sand.
- Children's personal development is promoted continually and well. They learn how to share, take turns and to consider the needs and feelings of others.
- Teacher assessments are accurate and used to identify clearly the children's next steps. There is a range of evidence drawn from all the areas of learning, with examples of writing and photographs that clearly show the progress that the children are making in their learning journeys.
- Both Nursery and Reception staff work effectively together to ensure that transition for the large majority of the youngest children in the school into Year 1 is effective. As a result, a higher proportion of children are now well prepared for Year 1 than in recent years.
- There are strong relationships with parents, who are encouraged to comment on their child's development observed at home. This results in a strong, supportive partnership between home and school.
- Staff ensure children's welfare through careful checks on their safety. They are well trained and have a clear understanding of policies and agreed practices.

## School details

Unique reference number	116685
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10025168

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Goode
Headteacher	Tracey Kneale
Telephone number	01432 273633
Website	<a href="http://www.st-martins-hereford.com">www.st-martins-hereford.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-martins.hereford.sch.uk">admin@st-martins.hereford.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Martin's Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school other than at normal points of transfer is high.

- The early years provision consists of a Nursery class and two Reception classes.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a number of lessons, several of which were jointly observed with leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons as part of learning walks throughout the school.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school day, including small-group sessions, lesson changeovers, breaktimes, lunchtimes, after-school clubs and the start and the end of the school day. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Various discussions were held with senior leaders, newly qualified teachers, pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: information about the performance management of teachers; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance; reports on the school's progress from external consultants; minutes of governing body meetings; training records and certificates; and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, looked at pupils' books and scrutinised the school's information showing pupils' current progress and attainment for all groups in all year groups. Inspectors also scrutinised books belonging to specific groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The views of pupils and children were gathered by inspectors who spoke to them in lessons, at breaktimes and in small-group meetings.
- The views of parents were gathered from 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to 21 parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed responses to survey questionnaires from members of staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Alan Prince, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Potter	Ofsted Inspector
Amarjit Cheema	Ofsted Inspector

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