

St Martin's CofE Primary School

Hartington Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 3LJ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Good-quality teaching ensures that pupils of all ages achieve well in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- The school's positive, friendly and upbeat atmosphere contributes well to pupils' learning and to their enjoyment of school.
- Leaders and governors know the school well. They are understandably proud of the considerable improvements they have made to the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders have played a valuable role in securing improvements in teaching. However, their evaluation does not focus well enough on whether pupils' outcomes are improving as a result.
- Children make strong progress during early years. Caring staff, strong relationships and effective teaching ensure that children settle into school quickly and learn well.
- Parents know that the headteacher and his team will take good care of their children. Pupils of all ages feel secure and respected.
- Pupils behave well and attend school regularly. They are friendly, polite and keen to learn.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide skilful support for those pupils who need extra help with their learning. This ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress.
- Pupils make slower progress in reading than they do in writing and mathematics. Teaching does not deepen pupils' understanding of their reading fully enough.
- Teachers have much higher expectations of pupils' learning than at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, pupils make increasingly strong progress. However, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teaching challenges and extends learning sufficiently for the most able pupils, particularly in reading.
- Strengthen subject leaders' roles by ensuring that they:
 - are clear about how planned developments will improve the quality of pupils' learning
 - check that their actions are making a positive difference to pupils' progress and outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have secured substantial improvements to teaching and learning since the previous inspection, encouraging the best quality teaching. They have accurately identified the priorities for the next stage of the school's development.
- Leaders' effective coaching and training have helped teachers to develop their practice. For example, during the past two years the headteacher and his team have increased opportunities for teachers to learn from each other by visiting each other's classrooms and discussing pupils' progress. Teachers routinely discuss their own practice and consider whether pupils' learning is progressing well.
- The results of Ofsted's staff survey reflect the headteacher's success in maintaining a positive atmosphere and high morale since the previous inspection. Staff feel that the school has improved since the previous inspection and say that they are proud to work in the school.
- The headteacher has strengthened senior leaders' roles in school improvement. Leaders have developed effective partnerships, working closely and constructively with colleagues in a local primary school, sharing ideas and expertise.
- Subject leaders are clear about the school's priorities for development and plan appropriately to improve aspects of teaching and learning. However, at this stage they do not have a sufficiently clear view of the extent to which developments in teaching have improved pupils' outcomes across the school.
- Leaders have strengthened communication with families during the past two years. They and the school's family support worker provide valuable support and advice for parents to ensure that vulnerable pupils learn well. Parents are clearly very pleased with improvements in the school's work and the school has grown in popularity.
- The inclusion coordinator has successfully reviewed the use of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities since his appointment. Pupils now benefit from high-quality support which targets their needs closely. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make dramatic progress.
- Leaders have worked hard to make learning more interesting and engaging for pupils. Their efforts have secured pupils who are interested in learning, teachers who are enthused about teaching and rising attendance rates.
- The curriculum is planned well to broaden pupils' horizons and to develop their understanding of the world. Teachers make good use of trips, events and visitors to make learning meaningful and relevant. A wide range of clubs provides something of interest for everyone, with a high proportion of pupils taking part regularly.
- The school's religious ethos underpins its values and its work. Pupils understand that people have different views and beliefs and they listen to each other respectfully. They learn about British values through a wide range of lessons and activities, such as learning about the Second World War and voting for members of the school council.
- Leaders use sports premium funding effectively to develop teachers' expertise in

teaching physical education and to encourage pupils to participate in exercise. As a result, teachers are more confident about teaching sports skills during lessons and increasing numbers of pupils participate in sports clubs and events.

- Leaders' use of the pupil premium to support vulnerable pupils' individual needs, combined with better teaching, has improved disadvantaged pupils' learning and progress substantially.

Governance of the school

- Governors are clear about improvements made in the school since the previous inspection and future priorities for development. The chair of the governing body summed up governors' ambition for the school's future when she commented, 'The school's in a good place but there's more to do.'
- Governors use their regular visits to the school to evaluate improvement priorities. They make good use of these visits to raise and ask searching questions about the school's work and to check for themselves that developments are on track.
- Governors are clear about their responsibilities for ensuring pupils' safety. For example, the vice-chair frequently reviews safeguarding records to make sure that all required recruitment and suitability checks have been completed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school provides a well organised, tidy and attractive environment for staff and pupils.
- The school's welcoming environment contributes well to pupils' safety. Parents say that they are happy to speak to the school about any concerns because the headteacher and his staff are approachable and responsive. They feel that staff know the pupils very well and keep them very safe. Pupils are equally confident about speaking to members of staff about any worries and so feel safe and secure.
- Leaders follow up any concerns about pupils' safety promptly and seriously. They work closely and effectively with agencies, including social services, and other schools to support pupils and their families.
- The school's safeguarding leaders are highly knowledgeable. They make good use of training to ensure that their colleagues are alert to pupils' needs and confident about safeguarding procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Considerable improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection ensure that pupils learn well in all year groups.
- In English, teachers use a wide range of interesting ideas and resources during lessons which inspire pupils to write for different purposes and audiences. The quality of pupils' work and their use of vocabulary illustrates their enthusiasm for the topics covered.
- Mathematics teaching builds effectively on pupils' learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are clear about how to help pupils of all abilities to develop a secure

mathematical understanding.

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide high-quality specialist support, such as speech and language work, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils engage confidently and successfully alongside their classmates during lessons and learn exceptionally well.
- Teachers' use of assessment to check pupils' understanding helps them to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately and provide good-quality support to ensure that pupils catch up quickly. The work in pupils' books illustrates the positive impact this has had in boosting pupils' learning and in giving them the confidence to tackle activities in the classroom more confidently and successfully.
- Consistently good-quality teaching ensures that pupils make strong progress in reading during key stage 1. Pupils are well equipped with key reading skills by the end of Year 2 and enjoy reading as a result of the improvements that have been made to phonics teaching. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to explore a deeper level of meaning in texts they read. This limits pupils' achievement as they move up through the year groups, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. They provide challenging and thought-provoking activities which capture pupils' interest and inspire them to find out more. For example, pupils in Year 5 discussed the outbreak of the Second World War enthusiastically, making sensible contributions based on their secure understanding of the historical context. However, some teachers set work which is insufficiently demanding, particularly for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Many parents commented on the strength of care and support in the school, with one saying, 'This is the friendliest school I've ever been to!'
- Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe in a range of everyday situations, including when using the internet. They have no concerns about bullying, with the general feeling among pupils being, 'It doesn't happen here.' Parents and pupils said that teachers and leaders sort out any concerns quickly.
- Those pupils who attend the 'early morning drop off club' enjoy playing games and catching up with friends in a calm, relaxed atmosphere and are ready for the start of the school day.
- Many pupils concentrate and persevere very well when working in lessons. However, some are less resilient and find it difficult to sustain their efforts when they find activities more challenging. When this is the case, they lose concentration and complete less work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils behave well during lessons, playtimes and when moving around the school.
- Leaders have successfully established a warm, family atmosphere in the dining hall. Pupils behave sensibly while eating their lunch. The older pupils set a good example for the younger children and pupils of different ages get on well together. For example, during the inspection children in early years happily joined in with other pupils by helping to clear away their plates when they had finished.
- Pupils say that they are kind to each other and that they are very happy with behaviour in the school. One pupil said, 'Apart from a few little arguments, nothing bad happens.' The school's records of behaviour, inspectors' observations during the inspection and parental comments confirm this positive view.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection, including disadvantaged pupils' attendance. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased dramatically.
- Most pupils work hard during lessons and want to do their best. However, sometimes a small number of pupils make slower progress because they fuss and fidget.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Effective teaching ensures that most pupils make strong progress in their learning as they move up through the school. The school's own information about pupils' progress indicates that pupils learn well in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- In 2016, standards at the end of key stage 1 matched national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Results at the end of key stage 2 were equally positive, where pupils' attainment was in line with national averages in reading and above average in writing and mathematics.
- The work in pupils' books shows that improvements in pupils' learning during the past two years have been sustained, with standards across the school continuing to rise in English and mathematics. Higher standards across the school mean that pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils who have gaps in their learning due to historical weaknesses in teaching are catching up rapidly. High-quality support for pupils who find learning difficult, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that these pupils learn exceptionally well.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has improved substantially since the previous inspection. They now make similar progress to their classmates and to pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils are equipped with confident phonics skills by the end of key stage 1. In 2016, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check matched the national average, with a similarly positive picture in 2017. Effective support for those pupils who find learning more difficult enables almost all pupils to have secure phonics skills by the end of key stage 1.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving expected levels in the Year 1 phonics screening check increased dramatically in 2017, reflecting the school's successful focus

on ensuring that all groups of pupils acquire key reading skills during early years and Year 1.

- Pupils have made better progress in reading during the past year and achieved well by the end of key stage 2. However, teaching does not give pupils the skills needed to read and to consider aspects of books, such as plot, theme and character, in sufficient depth for pupils to fully reach their potential.
- While the most able pupils make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection, they do not yet achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics, given their higher starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children's outcomes at the end of Reception Year have steadily improved during the past three years. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was closer to the national average than in previous years, with a further increase in 2017. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Children settle quickly into school life when they join early years and behave extremely well. They are excited about learning and thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities available. Parents are very pleased with the way their children have settled into school. One commented that her child comes out of school every day 'with a smile on his face'.
- Additional adults are knowledgeable about how to support the next steps in children's development. They work skilfully and effectively alongside teachers to support and extend learning.
- Adults are caring and attentive. They listen closely to children's comments and views so that children feel happy, secure and valued. One parent commented, 'My child feels safe and loved.'
- The early years leader and her team have strengthened support for individual children. As a result, disadvantaged children make increasingly good progress and more secure a good level of development.
- Adults use questioning well to explore children's understanding. For example, children in Nursery were encouraged to think about the characters in 'Rosie's walk' and predict what might happen next in the story. As a result, children were excited about the book and keen to find out more. However, as in other year groups, the most able children are not always provided with opportunities to extend their thinking.

School details

Unique reference number	114539
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10036934

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Wilde
Headteacher	Alex Wingham
Telephone number	01273 707114
Website	www.stmartins.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Email address	head@stmartins.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is higher than that found in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school runs an 'early morning drop off club' before the start of the school day.

- The school works closely with St Andrew's CofE Primary School, sharing expertise and professional development opportunities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils learning in 12 lessons or part-lessons, including four observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and a local authority representative. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body.
- The inspection team took account of 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as considering the views expressed by parents informally during the school day. Inspectors also considered 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including safeguarding policies, the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- The inspection team looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. Inspectors listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Debra Anderson

Ofsted Inspector

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