

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARTIN-IN-MENEAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Helston

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111823

Headteacher: Ms H R Sandle-Baker

Reporting inspector: Mr W Agnew
19956

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 3rd October 2000

Inspection number: 224039

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Martin
Helston
Cornwall

Postcode: TR12 6BT

Telephone number: 01326 231447

Fax number: 01326 231041

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Carter

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils	39.5	(well below average)
Pupils with English as a second language	0%	
Pupils entitled to free school meals	5%	(below average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	10%	(above average for Cornwall)
Average class size	20	(below average)

St Martin's is a small primary school serving a rural area. The attainment of four-year-olds when they start school is broadly average but the range is wide in some year groups. The number of pupils in each year group is small. Significant changes have occurred since the last inspection. Prior to the recent appointment of the headteacher, the school was led by two acting headteachers. The governing body decided sensibly to require the acting headteachers to concentrate on their heavy teaching commitment and their management role. The Ofsted action plan and the school development plan were placed in abeyance until the permanent headteacher took up post.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Martin's continues to provide pupils with a good education. Standards are above average overall and some are well above average. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is led and managed very effectively and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in over half of the lessons seen exceeds the national expectation and is consistently above average in English and mathematics.
- The teaching is good overall and fifty per cent is very good, particularly the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Support staff are very effectively deployed and they make a significant contribution to the learning of individual and small groups of pupils.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is supported well in managing and developing the school by the governors and staff.
- Personal development and the care the school provides for its pupils are very good.
- The parents are very supportive of the school.
- The pupils' attitudes to school, the quality of their behaviour and their response during lessons are mostly good and often very good.

What could be improved

- The consistency of the quality of some of the teaching for some non-core subjects at Key Stage 2.
- Lesson planning through the inclusion of clear and precise learning objectives that identify what the pupils are expected to learn and the skills to be developed. These should be communicated to the pupils at the beginnings of lessons so that they are aware of what is expected of them.
- Further opportunities for the pupils to apply their information and communications technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.
- The balance and range of homework activities

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. In spite of changes in the leadership of the school, standards have been maintained and a number of improvements have been achieved.

- Attention has been given to the development of pupils' knowledge of ICT and the skills they need.
- Resources for geography have been improved and their use is beginning to improve standards.
- All resources have been audited and many improvements have been achieved.
- Some whole school policies have been revised to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and others are in the process of being reviewed.
- Effective use is being made of the policies provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to provide a backbone for curriculum development.
- Behaviour and discipline aims are being met by a large majority of the pupils for all of the time and by all of the pupils for most of the time.
- Information for parents meets statutory requirements and annual reports to parents include attendance figures.
- Significant improvements in the accommodation make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

STANDARDS

The 1999 Key Stage 2 pupils' test results are well above the national average for English and mathematics and the science results places the school in the highest five per cent nationally. In mathematics the test results are consistently above average or better. Standards in English and science are more prone to vary and this occurs when the number of pupils in a year group is small. Overall, the trend indicates improvements in all subjects over the last four years. The test results are reflected in the standards achieved during the inspection. Overall, the pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are better than their literacy and language skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils have positive attitudes to school and a large majority of them work hard in all lessons and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and often very good. Relationships between pupils are very positive. Behaviour outside the classroom is good. A few Key Stage 2 pupils are mildly disruptive in some lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Staff know the pupils very well and provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop initiative, independence and to take responsibility.
Attendance	The attendance rate is high in comparison with other schools.

Pupils' attitudes have a positive influence on their progress. Classrooms have a purposeful atmosphere and teachers concentrate on teaching and learning in most lessons without concerning themselves with monitoring behaviour. Pupils respect and care for each other. The school is a happy community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Insufficient information	Very good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Quality of teaching

Very good	50%
Good	25%
Satisfactory	17%
Unsatisfactory	8%

The teaching of English and mathematics is consistently very good. Teachers' have high expectations and the teaching of basic skills is highly focused and matched to pupils' abilities. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace at Key Stage 2 and are very well organised and managed at Key Stage 1. Where the teaching is less satisfactory, the tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' levels of attainment, the exposition at the start of the lesson is overlong and insufficient use is made of available resources. As a result, the pace of the lesson drops, and an undercurrent of noise develops and the rate of progress diminishes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant and makes very good provision for the wide range of pupils' abilities. Specific priorities are given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. An adequate range of extra-curricular activities makes provision for pupils' interests and these are being increased to extend the pupils' understanding of the wider world.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The needs of the pupils with special educational needs are met well in the classroom through tasks that are carefully matched to ability and through the deployment of good calibre support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Staff provide good role models. Social and moral developments are particularly strong. Good opportunities are provided in lessons and collective worship for pupils to reflect on issues and on their own thoughts and feelings.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils.

The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the provision for literacy, numeracy, science and art is particularly strong. Academic and personal records are good and pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The ethos created by the headteacher and the whole staff very effectively encourages the pupils to have a positive attitude to school and to try and work hard. The monitoring of lessons is making a contribution to improvements in teaching and pupils' attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are actively supportive of the school. Governors are well informed and have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Detailed analyses are undertaken of performance, particularly teaching and attainment. Effective use is being made of the information to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Staff and support staff are very effectively deployed to make best use of their strengths. Effective use is made of learning resources to support pupils' learning. Stringent care is taken to ensure that best value principles for money is used. The school provides good value for money.

The recently appointed headteacher, fully supported by the governors, has established clear educational priorities for the school and appropriate strategies for achieving these. Teaching and learning have been monitored and resources audited. As a result, the headteacher is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The curriculum is undergoing revision to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The school development plan is comprehensive and is supported by prudent financial planning. Effective procedures ensure that the school gets best value from its available resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school • Good progress is made • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • The school is approachable • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best • School helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance of homework activities • Further extra-curricular activities

The inspection endorses the parents' positive views. There is no evidence of bullying and relationships among the pupils are very good. Some homework has been challenging, especially for parents who have more than one child at the school. The school provides an adequate range of extra-curricular activities for a small school. Plans are afoot to extend the provision through educational visits and visitors to the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Attainment in over half of the lessons seen exceeds the national expectation and is consistently above average in English and mathematics.

1. The pupils achieve above average standards overall in the National Curriculum Tests at Key Stage 1 in reading comprehension and mathematics. All pupils attain the nationally expected level for writing and spelling and a third achieve a level higher than this. At Key Stage 2, nearly all the pupils achieve the nationally expected level or higher in English and mathematics. In science all the pupils achieve the nationally expected level and two-thirds of them exceed this.
2. Year R pupils, who are part-time, show independence and confidence in selecting and carrying out activities. Their speaking and listening skills are well developed and they ask simple questions often beginning with “what” or “where”. They join in repeated phrases in songs and stories. They have settled promptly and confidently into school routines and mix well with older pupils.
3. The pupils enjoy stories, poems and plays and most quickly develop good reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils read expressively and with understanding. They confidently tackle unfamiliar words making effective use of their knowledge of phonics. The older pupils read for pleasure and to glean information to extend their own interests. Older and abler pupils in particular make very effective use of reading skills to support their learning across the curriculum.
4. Younger pupils reorganise scrambled sentences to make sense and form letters correctly when writing. Older Key Stage 1 pupils, write independently and spell simple words accurately. Their writing communicates meaning clearly and full stops and commas are used correctly. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils write competently in different forms such as continuous prose and playscript. By the end of the key stage, the pupils write for a wide range of purposes, communicate ideas logically and in detail. Punctuation and grammar are mostly accurate and some make effective use of a wide vocabulary. Handwriting is good throughout the school and older pupils are encouraged to develop an individual style.
5. Attainment in mathematics is above average overall. Year 1 pupils, for example, very competently order numbers up to 20 and count in tens to 100. Year 2 pupils halve and double numbers, partition sets into thirds, quarters and sixths, measure accurately in centimetres and know some of the multiplication tables. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are very adept at identifying the mathematical operations and processes necessary to solve problems presented in written form. They make effective use of their computational skills to calculate answers.
6. Pupils ICT skills have improved since the last inspection and attainment now matches the national expectation. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils control the mouse efficiently to sort objects into sets. Older pupils locate and open files. Keyboarding skills are at an early stage of development and most pupils enter information using one finger. Key Stage 2 pupils make good use of the computer to edit writing.
7. Attainment in geography is average. Pupils sketching and colouring skills are above average. Pupils sing tunefully and their diction is clear. Younger pupils treat musical instruments with respect and play them to maintain a steady beat and to create an

effect. A few older Key Stage 2 pupils know a wide range of guitar chords, which they strum accurately to the pulse of songs that they sing.

The teaching is good overall and fifty per cent is very good, particularly the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Support staff are very effectively deployed and they make a significant contribution to the learning of individual and small groups of pupils.

8. The teaching is good overall at Key Stage 1 and the foundation stage and a substantial amount is very good. The quality of teaching varies from unsatisfactory to very good at Key Stage 2 and is good overall.
9. Some of the key features of the very good teaching are high expectations and a lively and brisk pace to the lessons. Effective use is made of resources and the accommodation to support the pupils' learning. Tasks and activities are carefully matched to the range of pupils' abilities and this, together with effective teaching strategies, ensure that pupils make good progress in relation to their prior achievement. Support staff are deployed very effectively and they make a significant contribution to the learning of individual and small groups of pupils through sensitive encouragement and patient reinforcement of basic skills.
10. In the lessons where the teachers' expectations are high, the pupils are expected to recall previous learning clearly and in detail and to apply their knowledge to the tasks in hand. Year 1 pupils were expected to recall the definition of a noun and to learn how to turn a singular noun into a plural. Similarly, Key Stage 2 pupils were expected to recall the definitions for common and proper nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives and to apply their knowledge to identify words that can be either nouns or verbs for example, place and comb.
11. Lesson plans identify a complex range of interrelated activities that are carefully matched to the range of pupils' abilities and are sufficiently challenging to extend their learning. Specific teaching points are made clearly and in a lively manner that maintains the pupils' interest. Often they are reinforced with other examples. The well-matched tasks enable the pupils to work at a smooth and brisk pace. As they work, the teachers ask pertinent questions to consolidate, develop and monitor the pupils' learning.
12. The organisation of lessons is complex and very effective at Key Stage 1. Tasks are matched very carefully to the range of age groups and abilities in the class. Activities are thoughtfully ordered so that the teacher can work with one group, the classroom assistant supervises the work of a second group and the remaining two groups work gainfully in self maintaining activities. The groups are moved around in turn so that the teacher at some point teaches them all in the lesson. For example, one group discussed a story with the teacher, a second group, supervised and encouraged by a classroom assistant, used their phonic knowledge effectively to spell words. A third group, not directly supervised, used the computers to edit writing that contained overlong sentences. All groups worked at an appropriate level and pace and all made suitable progress during the lesson.
13. A similar form of organisation is used at Key Stage 2. Lessons are based on a theme and tasks are planned at different levels to match the pupils' abilities. In a literacy lesson, non-fictional writing about the Romans was provided at three different levels of difficulty and the pupils required to identify some parts of speech. The younger and less able pupils searched for nouns and verbs and abler and older pupils looked for nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. The pupils' work was closely monitored to

ensure that they understood the requirements of the task and, at the same time, the lesson was moved along at a brisk but unhurried pace. As a consequence, the pupils made good progress. Where the teaching is less satisfactory, the tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' levels of attainment, the exposition at the start of the lesson is overlong and insufficient use is made of available resources. As a result, the pace of the lesson drops, and undercurrent of noise develops and the rate of progress diminishes.

14. Support staff are very effectively deployed to help small groups of pupils and individuals with learning difficulties. At Key Stage 2 for example, the assistant supported the lower attaining pupils as they identified nouns, verbs and adverbs to use to construct sentences. At Key Stage 1, pupils were supervised sensitively and effectively as they controlled a mouse to move objects around a monitor screen to create sets of fruit. On a different occasion a member of the support staff encouraged the pupils to break words into phonic sounds to help with spelling and this activity helped to consolidate their knowledge of phonics that had been extended earlier in the lesson by the teacher and to improve their spelling.

The head teacher provides effective leadership and is supported well in managing and developing the school by the governors and staff.

15. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly developed a clear educational vision for the school's development and has established some effective strategies to achieve this. The governors actively support the school and have reorganised their committees and clarified responsibilities to meet the requirements of statutory legislation and to fulfil their responsibilities. The two full-time staff, in particular, work very closely together to ensure that the aims of the school are reflected through the teaching, organisation and deployment of staff. Effective systems for monitoring planning, teaching and learning have been developed and implemented and used to set targets and to improve teaching. The monitoring of teaching plans for geography, for example, has ensured that National Curriculum requirements are given appropriate coverage.
16. The school development plan includes a comprehensive but realistic number of initiatives that are planned in detail and include appropriate monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure that they are fully implemented and are effective. Prudent financial planning supports these educational priorities for example, the number of computer stations and their use has been increased to meet a key issue identified in the previous report. Very effective use is made of the specific grant for small schools to increase the staffing to include specialist teaching for physical education.
17. The governors have provided sensible guidance and advice. Until recently, successive acting headteachers managed the school for short periods of time. The governors required the acting headteachers to concentrate on their teaching and management responsibilities and to give less attention to leadership and development. The implementation of the Ofsted action plan and the associated school development plan were postponed until a permanent headteacher was appointed. As a result, the pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of teaching were maintained during a difficult period for the school.
18. The headteacher deploys the staff carefully and sensitively to make best use of their knowledge and skills. Lower attaining pupils receive support at critical times such as when new learning takes place in basic skills in literacy and numeracy lessons, in particular, and the support is removed when they need to apply these basic skills

across the curriculum. This is a sensible and efficient use of the time available. Overall, the support staff make a valuable and valued contribution to the learning of individual and small groups of pupils.

Personal development and the care the school provides for its pupils are very good.

19. The pupils' academic progress and performance is closely monitored and recorded. A new reading log, for example, has been introduced that records pupils' progress and includes pupils' evaluations of the books they have read. All pupils receive good support and guidance and this is particularly evident for those pupils with special educational needs. Moral and social development is particularly strong. The pupils are polite and friendly and they happily share their work with others. Consequently, the atmosphere in classrooms is purposeful, calm and productive. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and significant attention has been paid to health and safety issues relating to alterations to the buildings. Teachers know their pupils well and provide diligent supervision at all times.

The parents are very supportive of the school.

20. The responses to the parents' questionnaire and the comments made at the parents' meeting indicate that the parents are very satisfied with the provision made by the school and the progress their children make. Some parents and other volunteers help with craft activities and with group reading. These inputs are valuable and valued by the staff and pupils. All parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning through helping them with homework. At times, the parents find this challenging and sometimes too time consuming.

The pupils' attitudes to school, the quality of their behaviour and their response during lessons is mostly good and often very good.

21. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are enthusiastic, interested and involved in activities where the rate of application is often high. Relationships between pupils are very co-operative and they collaborate purposefully, when appropriate. Many use their initiative and exercise responsibility for example, two girls, unknown to the teacher, prepared prayers about friendship for an assembly which they read in a clear voice and appropriate tone for the occasion. In a few Key Stage 2 lessons, a small number of pupils, particularly boys, exhibit poor listening skills and low levels of interest and application. These pupils have little understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others and that the rate of progress is reduced for all.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The consistency of the quality of some of the teaching for some non-core subjects at Key Stage 2

22. The headteacher and governors are to receive training for the implementation of Performance Management as required by legislation. Part of this initiative is the setting of targets for individual teachers. To improve the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2, targets need to be set for lesson planning, classroom management and organisation supported by appropriate professional development.

Lesson planning through the inclusion of clear and precise learning objectives that identify what the pupils are expected to learn and the skills to be developed. These should be communicated to the pupils at the beginnings of lessons so that they are

aware of what is expected of them.

23. Pupils need to be told the learning objectives for lessons so that they have an understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Plenary sessions should examine how far these objectives have been achieved.

Further opportunities for the pupils to apply their Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

24. Improvements have been achieved in the provision and teaching of ICT. Pupils' knowledge and skills meet the national expectation for their age. Lesson plans indicate that computers are used regularly. During the inspection, the use of ICT was mainly confined to word processing although older pupils have some knowledge of data handling and using CD-ROMS for research. Pupils with access to a computer at home generally have greater knowledge and skills for example, their keyboarding skills are more proficient. These pupils often act as consultants for other pupils when they run into problems.
25. Further consideration now needs to be given to maximising opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills, particularly those pupils whose only access to a computer is at school. Thought also needs to be given to ways of using the computer to enhance learning in other subjects for example, redrafting writing and data-handling tasks that enable pupils to compare and contrast different sets of information to perceive relationships.

The balance and range of homework activities.

26. The homework policy is comprehensive and the tasks that are set are often challenging. Reading is a major task and parents have received good advice for hearing their children read. Spellings and multiplication tables are also consolidated as homework tasks. Some of the tasks of an investigative nature have sometimes been time consuming and resources difficult to obtain.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. The school should now:
- (1) Devise targets for improving teaching and arrange appropriate professional development to support their achievement.
 - (2) Identify clear and precise learning objectives in lesson plans and share these with the pupils at the beginning of lessons.
 - (3) Extend the pupils' opportunities to apply their ICT skills to fully meet the National Curriculum requirements and to enhance learning in other subjects, where appropriate.
 - (4) Review the policy for homework taking into account the views of the parents, the government's recommendations for homework and the homework requirements set by the secondary school to which pupils transfer.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	50	25	17	8	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	2.7	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	37
Any other minority ethnic group	-

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	-	-
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31.75

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	118,989
Total expenditure	117,344
Expenditure per pupil	2,729
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,371
Balance carried forward to next year	21,016

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	42
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	40	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	43	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	33	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	43	3	0	3
The teaching is good.	73	20	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	27	7	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	7	0	0	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	17	7	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	43	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	37	17	0	3