



St Martin's Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116685
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279872
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Clive Kempton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holly Bush Walk
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		HR2 6AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 273633
Number on roll	504	Fax number	01432 277162
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Chris Chappell
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Euan Mcgilp

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Martin's is one of the largest primary schools in Herefordshire, situated in the South Wye area of Hereford. The school is part of an Excellence Cluster and serves a diverse community with a large percentage of low income housing which has benefited from significant regeneration funding in recent years. Recent local development changes have impacted on falling rolls, although there is a large new local housing development. The recently closed Special Education Centre on site has resulted in the school continuing to support a significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities within the mainstream classes. A broadly average proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, although take up is low due to recent changes in external provision. The headteacher took up post at the beginning of September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation that this is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education. Children get off to a good start in the nursery. Proficient teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, although there is more work to do on assessment strategies, improving attendance and behaviour, and motivating pupils. The school works well with outside agencies such as the Excellence Cluster, community services, and other local schools to promote pupils' well being.

The school is well led and managed by the new headteacher and senior management team who already have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. More importantly, they have a determination to succeed following a period of decline since the last inspection, and judged by recent successes, have a good capacity to further improve standards throughout the school. Parents have also noted and appreciated improvements. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They enjoy coming to school and all are well cared for. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- use assessment more to challenge pupils and inform them about how well they are doing
- develop teaching strategies to engage pupils more in their learning
- improve the attendance and behaviour of a few pupils and make sure that parents are aware of their impact on standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the nursery class with skills that are lower than normally expected. They are well provided for and although not all reach expected levels of attainment by the end of the Reception Year, they make good progress. Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory but there is variation from year to year, largely due to inconsistencies in the use of assessment information to set individual targets and checking that pupils achieve them. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, standards in Year 6 are also average in English, mathematics and science. Recent test results show improvement and the school got close to meeting its challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress and the school recognises that more needs to be done to help them make better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and most enjoy coming to school. Attendance is unsatisfactory though, and this means that some pupils miss essential learning. Children settle well into the nursery and follow the clear guidelines expected of them. At first, many struggle to relate to others and staff work hard to develop children's personal skills. Pupils throughout the school feel safe and well looked after because relationships with adults are good. They are generally happy at school but a significant number feel that the behaviour of a few pupils in lessons and in the playground could be better. Youngsters contribute well to the community. The school council takes an active role in finding ways to improve breaktimes and make them more interesting. For example, they have been involved in designing playground markings, which are to be painted shortly. Pupils know how to look after themselves well and understand the value of healthy eating and exercise. They have satisfactory opportunities to work with others and enjoy singing at the church and raising funds for charities. Through such events they develop a good understanding of moral issues and the need to respect differences. Their awareness of the cultures beyond their immediate locality is limited as is their understanding of people's faiths and beliefs. Pupils socialise with others well and really enjoy taking part in the residential visit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully, although teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in lessons to help all pupils learn. The school has recognised this and has put a programme in place to provide teaching assistants with additional training. Teachers spend too long in explanations at the start of lessons, leaving too few opportunities for pupils to investigate or discuss. The school has only just begun to assess pupils' work regularly against targets to ensure that the work is matched to individual needs. Frequent marking celebrates success but does not give pupils enough advice on how to improve their work. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and given good opportunities to think, and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are closely monitored and supported. Teachers manage the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils well, but learning for the majority is sometimes disrupted. A good range of resources, especially in information communication technology (ICT), supports learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and a good amount of time is spent on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Subject co-ordinators check the quality of teacher planning, but there is still a lack of exciting and motivating experiences to engage pupils' interests

and extend the learning. There is a good range of well attended after-school clubs which, coupled with educational visits for all years, contribute well to the pupils' personal development. Pupils learn citizenship and health and safety within personal social and health education. They contribute well to the community through charity events such as a Macmillan coffee morning. The school gives parents opportunities to learn basic skills so that they too can support their children's education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that there are good features of care, guidance and support but there are also aspects that need addressing.

There is good care for pupils with emotional difficulties, and all pupils feel confident to talk to their class teachers about problems. Parents and pupils comment favourably on the new procedures for dealing with poor behaviour, which they believe have already improved the atmosphere for learning. Procedures for checking absence have been reviewed this term, resulting in some improvement. Safety has high priority and the new perimeter fence and gates have greatly improved the security of the site. This is welcomed by parents. Regular site checks and recognised procedures for moving around the school also keep pupils safe. Pupils are supervised at breaks and lunchtimes, although they are not always prevented from behaving in ways that could cause hurt to themselves or others. The school has, as a consequence, arranged training for playground assistants. Child protection procedures are fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and improving at a swift pace. The school is well led by the new headteacher who has quickly established a conscientious senior leadership team, committed to raising standards. The school has a good capacity to improve. The senior management team has produced an accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows that its principal focus is on raising standards across the school.

Rapid progress has already been made in the first few weeks of term in establishing a different atmosphere around the school. Staff now feel much more supported by the headteacher in dealing with challenging pupil behaviour. Reported incidents of poor behaviour are reducing. Parents are unanimous in agreement that the headteacher has made a significant impact in the school and local community.

Subject co-ordinators feel they have been empowered to take more responsibility for their curriculum area and have enthusiastically risen to the management challenge. Careful subject audits have enabled them to produce an agenda for future action, although there are insufficient opportunities for them to monitor their subject across the school and disseminate good practice.

The school development plan is embryonic and contains too many action points. It is not sufficiently focused to help the senior leadership team and the governing body measure how well they are meeting targets.

The governors are enthusiastic in their support for the school but provide insufficient challenge to the management to be more accountable for pupil progress. Other professionals involved with the school, such as the home school liaison worker and the community policeman, feel that the school has improved quickly and that this is having a positive impact in the local area. Parents are now much more confident to approach the school with concerns. They feel they are listened to and consulted and that swift action is taken when needed.

Teaching resources are deployed efficiently. The budget is in surplus and there are sensible plans to employ additional teaching assistants to support pupil learning and to further develop the site to create a new entrance to the school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for letting us visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you, your teachers and your parents and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know what we liked about your school and how we thought it could get even better.

What we liked about your school

you made us all feel very welcome in your school and greeted us with a friendly smile

you are all very proud of your school

you all looked very smart in your school uniform

you all speak very politely to your teachers and visitors

your teachers work very hard and want you to do well

your new headteacher runs the school well

your parents and carers are right in thinking that you go to a school that is getting better and better..What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better:

tell you how well you are getting on with your work and make you work even harder

make some of your lessons a bit more exciting

a few of you could be kinder to each other and behave more sensibly

a few of you are away from school too much and get behind with your work.