



Martock Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123856
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281578
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Elmleigh Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Martock
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Somerset TA12 6EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01935 823486
Number on roll	287	Fax number	01935 823652
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Edwards
Date of previous inspection	19 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Michael Coyne

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. Pupils attending come mainly from the local village and have a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the numbers of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times are below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It gives satisfactory value for money and leaders accurately judge its overall effectiveness. Positive features include the effective start that children make in Reception. Provision here is good with the curriculum and teaching being adapted well to meet the needs of the children. Overall, pupils behave well and show good attitudes as a result of the example set by adults and good personal support. Pupils particularly enjoy the good range of after school activities. However, there are a few older pupils who are too easily distracted in lessons and this inhibits their learning. Parents are very supportive of the school. They rightly value the care and pastoral support provided, but have commented about the poor behaviour of a few older pupils.

Children come into school with limited skills and make good progress. They move into Year 1 with skills and understanding that are still below those expected in several areas of learning, particularly in writing and calculating. From this point on, pupils' progress is satisfactory. In Year 2, standards are average in reading, reflecting the good gains pupils have made, but below average in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, standards are broadly average and much improved since 2005. However, there is some inconsistency in the progress pupils make across Years 3 to 6. Whilst it is good in Year 6, some boys in Year 5 underachieve. Overall, more able pupils are not consistently reaching the levels of which they are capable, particularly in writing. There are limited opportunities for extended writing.

Leaders have successfully built a new team of committed staff to take the school forward. Self-evaluation has accurately identified the need to develop writing and problem-solving skills. There are clear signs that the actions taken are beginning to raise standards in some years. However, leaders need to be sharper in judging the effectiveness of teaching and evaluating the impact of changes made on a day to day basis. Whilst there is much information available to the governors and staff, there is too little about the effectiveness of work done. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the provision for writing, including more opportunities for extended writing across all subjects, so that pupils can practise and improve their skills.
- Ensure that teaching meets the needs of higher attaining pupils and consistently provides sufficiently challenging work.
- More accurately and frequently evaluate the effectiveness of action taken by the school so that progress made is more consistent and all staff and governors are fully aware of how they can contribute.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. When children enter the Reception class, they have few of the skills expected for children of their age, with particular weaknesses in writing and calculation. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and make up some ground but still enter Year 1 with skills and understanding below those expected in mathematics and writing.

In Year 2, standards in reading are broadly average and have improved markedly from 2005. In writing and mathematics, standards are below average and this is mainly because there are too few pupils who reach the higher levels. In the 2005 Year 6 tests, standards were below average and some pupils underachieved. Current standards in English and science are average and much better than in 2005. Lesson observations and school-based assessment also show improvement in mathematics. The school met challenging targets for pupils at Level 4 but missed those at the higher level.

There is some inconsistency in progress across Years 3 to 6. Whilst it is sometimes good, there are weaknesses in Year 5 where a few boys are easily distracted from their work. Overall, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and weaknesses in problem solving in mathematics. More able pupils are not always well challenged. Good support is frequently provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Most pupils show interest in lessons and tackle their work conscientiously; however, the attitudes of a small group of boys in Year 5 are not as good and they make less progress in their learning. Pupils are generally polite and friendly and show a good understanding of the necessity for school rules and behave well. Playtimes are harmonious and older pupils act as play leaders to ensure that nobody is lonely.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they are gaining a good awareness of the diversity of cultures in Britain today. The school successfully encourages a healthy lifestyle and pupils are well aware of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. Many pupils take part in the wide variety of sporting activities provided. Pupils behave sensibly and safely. They have a good awareness of their responsibilities for each other in school and in the wider community and contribute well to fundraising activities. A group of Year 6 pupils commented 'We have to set a good example to the younger ones,' and older pupils act as 'buddies' accompanying Reception children on their 'welly walks'. Pupils are gaining sound numeracy, literacy and computer skills, to prepare them for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Effective teaching through Reception gives the children a purposeful start. Teachers are aware of children's specific needs and plan well to meet them. Across the school, teachers manage pupils sensitively and promote good relationships. Lessons usually start with a clear statement about what is being learned and a reminder about previous work. Teachers often use speaking and listening to develop pupils' understanding, particularly with younger pupils. Good teaching in Year 6 is boosting achievement well. Teaching assistants frequently give good support to below average pupils and those with learning difficulties. Targets are used satisfactorily and pupils are beginning to refer to these in lessons to help them understand how to improve.

On occasions, the pace of learning is too slow for some pupils and planning is not sufficiently sharp to meet their different needs. This particularly affects the more able pupils. Sometimes, too much information is given in one go and, as a result, pupils become confused and lose concentration. Some pupils, particularly in Year 5, are easily distracted and too little is expected of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good because it is adapted well for the needs of the children. Leaders have identified weaknesses in how skills, such as problem solving, are developed and recognised the need to incorporate better opportunities to use information and communication technology. There are too few opportunities provided for extended writing. These weaknesses are being rectified. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support by teaching assistants who adapt existing materials or provide additional information.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and these are attended well. Sport and music clubs are particularly good and the school regularly enters local sporting events. A wide range of visits, including residential ones, add greatly to pupils' enjoyment. There is strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating choices.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. The pupils say they feel safe at school and have an adult in whom they can confide. There are good procedures to deal with child protection, racial harassment and bullying, and staff are conversant with these. Pupils' ideas are listened to and acted upon and the school council has performed a role in

obtaining new playground equipment. The school has good information about how pupils progress. It is used well to target additional support for lower attaining pupils. However, it is not always used sufficiently to identify how more able pupils could be challenged further. The school has begun to set targets for pupils in English and mathematics but some pupils say they do not always understand how these can be achieved. The school works well with parents and outside agencies in order to provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Recent staffing difficulties which adversely affected pupils' learning have now been resolved, with many recently appointed teachers. There is a new team of staff committed to improvement. There are good arrangements to monitor and track pupils' progress and information is used satisfactorily to focus additional support. Extra support provided in Year 6 has been particularly successful and standards have risen sharply. The action taken is now having an effect and the school is satisfactorily placed to improve further. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Leaders have accurately identified strengths and weaknesses, particularly from an analysis of results, and all staff and governors know what needs to be improved. Staff and governors are suitably involved in improvement planning which rightly reflects a focus on problem solving and writing. These areas are being improved. However, ongoing evaluation needs to be sharper. Governors are provided with much information about what has been done but too little about the effectiveness of the action taken. Similarly, the improvement plan does not always identify sufficiently clearly how actions taken are evaluated, leading to improved standards. Teachers are given appropriate feedback about their work and this has resulted in improvement. However, evaluation needs to be sharper for some staff to help them deal with the particular challenges they face from some pupils.

There are good links with parents who clearly express their views about how well the school is doing. Although most parents are very happy with the quality of education provided, a few rightly express concerns about the behaviour of older pupils and about the lack of challenge for higher attainers.

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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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	2	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	3	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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how friendly you were and ready to give your opinions about the school. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us.

What we most liked about your school:

- The good start you make in Reception.
- Your good behaviour and positive attitudes.
- Your participation in sport and music.
- The good level of care that the school provides for you.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- Helping you improve the quality of your writing.
- Making sure that all of you have sufficiently challenging work.
- Evaluating the work of the school more accurately on an ongoing basis to help you to learn better and make more consistent progress.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector