

# St Martin's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103987
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308474
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew McDowall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Game
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Bott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lower Church Lane Tipton DY4 7PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 571543
<b>Fax number</b>	01215

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school that serves an area where levels of social disadvantage are above average. The proportion of the pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average and increasing. The headteacher had been in post for less than a term at the time of the inspection.

## 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 quality of education. It is a happy and friendly place where pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and develop good personal and social skills. Because the pastoral care of the pupils is good, they feel safe in school. Parents say their children are happy at school. For example, one commented, 'My children look forward to going to school and have good relationships with all staff there'. Good links with local schools, the community and the performing arts make a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development.

When they start, children have skills and abilities that are below the levels expected for their age. They are particularly low in aspects of language and communication. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Some of the work in the Nursery is too formal and fails to provide enough opportunities for the youngest children to make choices for themselves.

Standards are below average at the end of both key stages. However, taking into account their starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. The school has been working to raise standards in writing and there are signs of improvement. Some pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels do not always do so because they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. The school ensures pupils are soundly prepared for their next school and later life.

Teaching is satisfactory. Inaccurate teacher assessment of where pupils are in their learning is the main reason why achievement and standards in the school are satisfactory and not good. On taking up her appointment the headteacher moved quickly to address this and improvements can already be seen. Lessons are often practical and the staff use interactive white boards well to bring excitement into learning. Teaching assistants provide good pastoral and sound academic support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. This helps these pupils to make good progress in their personal development and satisfactory gains in their learning.

A good range of clubs, visitors and visits enrich the curriculum. These make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school recognises that at present the curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to make links between subjects or to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.

The new headteacher is setting increasingly challenging targets for the school that are raising expectations. She has established key priorities for improvement and has ensured other leaders and managers have received the training they need to improve their effectiveness. The curriculum leaders are beginning to support the headteacher in monitoring the work of the school, but their roles are not fully developed. The headteacher's leadership is developing a shared commitment amongst the staff to improve. The way in which the school evaluates its effectiveness is satisfactory. Consequently, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, some of the plans for improvement are unclear regarding exactly what needs to happen to bring about improvement, or how the school will measure its own success. Although governance is satisfactory overall, long term financial planning is weak. The school has a substantial carry forward budget with no clear plans for how it is to be spent.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The good links with parents and effective care they receive from the staff helps the children to make friends and settle quickly in the Nursery. Some of the activities in the Nursery are too formal. This results in children sitting for too long and having few opportunities to make choices

for themselves. Teaching is good in the Reception Class where the children make good progress in their social development and early reading. The school has recognised that the way in which children are assessed is weak. Assessment information is not consistently used to plan activities that help children to improve. There is a suitable outside play area for the nursery children, but the reception children have limited opportunities to use the outside environment to play and learn.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in literacy and numeracy across the school by improving the way teachers use assessment information to plan work that stretches all pupils, particularly those capable of reaching the higher levels.
- Improve the effectiveness of curriculum leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and sharpen up the plans for improvement, so the school can clearly measure the impact of its actions.
- Improve assessment in the Foundation Stage and provide a more play and discovery based curriculum in the Nursery.
- Produce a plan indicating how the financial reserves will be reduced.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Standards at the start of Year 1 are below average. Although still below average, work in Year 2 pupils' books reflect a better picture than the well below average levels shown by the test results. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. However, their progress in writing is slow and some of the higher attaining pupils are not reaching their full potential in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Although still below average, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen since the last inspection. Few pupils reach the higher level 5 in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. This is illustrated by their keenness to participate in the wide range of musical and dance activities provided by the school. Pupils behave well, they follow the well-publicised codes of conduct and develop positive attitudes towards their learning. Everyone at the school gets along really well together. Attendance is satisfactory. The older pupils are rightly proud of the work they do as Hall Activity Leaders ('HALs') and Playground Activity Leaders ('PALs') to help the younger ones at break and lunchtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through activities such as the 'Celebration Week' the pupils develop an outstanding appreciation of the cultural diversity of the school community within the Christian values and traditions of the school. The school council is becoming involved in decision making and good links with the local and wider community are

fostered through charity and musical events. The pupils are enthusiastic and eager participants in the range of physical activities the school provides. However, some do not make healthy choices in the food they bring to school for their snacks and lunches. The good links with the high school and the satisfactory achievement means the pupils are soundly prepared for their next school and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers provide a calm and positive atmosphere in classrooms. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy the practical activities their teachers plan for them. Teaching is not good overall because teachers are not always using assessment well to ensure work is planned to stretch all pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils who say they enjoy doing harder work. However, the new assessment system is beginning to help teachers to improve their lesson planning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum covers all subjects in sufficient depth, but is not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. The provision for literacy and numeracy across the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of clubs and other activities that make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. The pupils have good opportunities to learn about the range of local cultures and history through visits and events, such as 'Celebration Week' and good opportunities to be involved in the community, especially through the performing arts. The older pupils have the opportunity to learn Spanish.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a good level of pastoral care and is successful in supporting the social needs of the pupils. Parents are pleased with this aspect of the school's work. The school is vigilant in following procedures to ensure pupils' safety. Arrangements for ensuring the pupils' health and safety are satisfactory. Teachers mark the children's work regularly and new ways of helping pupils know what they need to do next have been introduced. However, these are not yet used consistently in all classes. The pupils have a good knowledge of their literacy targets, but are less sure of those for numeracy.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. This is illustrated by the way she quickly identified the weaknesses in the way pupils are assessed. She acted decisively to introduce systems that are enabling the teachers to have a clearer understanding of where each pupil is in their learning, and what it is they need to do next to improve. The curriculum leaders have a clear overview of the curriculum. Consequently, they

are beginning to help teachers to plan exciting activities that match the needs of all learners. This increased focus on teaching, learning and staff development, gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve. The governors have a good understanding of the day-to-day workings of the school. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and share her drive to raise standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Can I start by saying a big thank you to you all for the way you made us welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and how much you enjoy school. Like you, we think the 'HALs' and 'PALs' are a good idea and this helps everyone to feel safe in school and get along really well together. Your school is a very friendly place.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. It is good at helping you all to develop positive attitudes towards school and each other. Your school is teaching you how to be healthy and we were pleased to see some of you bringing fruit to school for snacks and lunches. However, some of you are not doing this. It would really help if you could. Your school has a good range of clubs that keep you fit and give you the chance to try new things.

All the teachers are working very hard to help you to improve your reading, writing and numeracy work. You can help by remembering your targets in literacy and numeracy and trying hard to achieve them. You told us you liked the practical activities you do in school and how the teachers use the interactive white boards to make your lessons exciting.

We have made some suggestions to help the school to get better. The first is to help you all to improve your work in literacy and numeracy by making sure the work you are set is not too easy. We have also asked the teachers to improve the way they check how you are all doing in your work, and whether any changes they make to the school are helping you all to improve. The school governors have some money in reserve and we have asked them to spend some of this to help your education. Finally, we think the children in the Nursery need to spend more time playing and less time sitting .

Thanks again for all your help in the inspection and good luck for the future.



7 December 2007.

Dear Children

**Inspection of St Martin's C of E Primary School, Tipton DY4 7PG.**

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Thanks again for all your help in the inspection and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall

Lead inspector