

St Martin's Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109220
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	309932
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	8–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	514
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Maleham
Headteacher	Stephen Miller
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2003
School address	Spring Hill Worle Weston-super-Mare BS22 9BQ
Telephone number	01934 628651
Fax number	01934 417522

Age group	8-11
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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 a very large junior school with a hearing-impaired unit. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but more pupils than average have a statement of special educational needs. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has gained Activemark, the International Schools award and the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Martin's is a satisfactory school that has the support of the majority of parents. Recent appointments to the senior leadership team and other posts of responsibility have strengthened leadership of the school's work. It has enabled the introduction of a number of initiatives that are starting to show a positive impact on improving provision for pupils. For example, changes are apparent in the quality of teaching, the use of assessment and procedures to track pupils' progress over time. However, systems are not consistently implemented across the school. The pace of change has not been urgent enough to make an impact on raising achievement and standards. This means that leadership is satisfactory and the school's capacity to improve is no better than satisfactory. Parents are starting to recognise and appreciate the recent changes, with one saying 'I have seen a huge difference this year in the approach...I feel my children's strengths have been encouraged.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school and standards are average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Teaching is good and in classes where critical skills have been introduced, pupils are starting to make quicker progress and engage more with their learning. The school has good plans to increase their use across the school from the beginning of the autumn term. The curriculum covers all necessary requirements and strong links are emerging between subjects.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress and the setting of targets are secure, although these are not embedded and used consistently to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can. This applies particularly to the higher attaining pupils who sometimes say work is too easy. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those in the hearing-impaired unit, receive good support, so that they make slightly better progress than their classmates.

Pupils clearly enjoy school and their personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour by the vast majority of pupils is consistently good, especially in classes, although a minority say they have been bullied outside the classroom, including racist remarks. A minority of parents also expressed concerns about inappropriate behaviour and language in the playground. Procedures to follow up these incidents have not been robust enough to bring about changes swiftly.

Staff work effectively with external agencies to support pupils, although a small minority of parents said they would like more involvement, including communication between them and the school particularly regarding their child's progress. Senior leaders and governors have already identified this and are seeking ways to include parents more in the life of the school and their child's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistency in the use of assessment and setting of targets to raise standards and enable pupils, especially the higher attainers, to reach their full potential.
- Take robust action to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils outside the classroom.
- Inject more urgency into the pace of change to raise achievement and standards more quickly.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. By the end of Year 6, standards remain close to the national average, representing satisfactory achievement overall. In recent years, pupils have made better progress and gained higher standards in science than in English and mathematics. Because pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well, they achieve slightly better than other pupils in the school. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged consistently enough and are capable of achieving more than at present.

Standards have been close to the national average for the last five years. More pupils gain the higher Level 5 in English and science than in mathematics and girls tend to attain better standards overall than boys. The school's leadership team has already identified these issues and has put in place a number of strategies to tackle these issues. They include, for example, intervention programmes and booster work for pupils identified as underachieving, and creating more classes for mathematics so pupils are taught in smaller groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The vast majority of pupils enjoy their education, some of them a great deal. They develop a good understanding of living a healthy lifestyle, reflecting the school's commitment to this aspect. Pupils are given good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school community through cooperation and collaborative working in lessons and the effective school council. As one parent said, 'My daughter has responsibilities in the school council and I have really seen her mature.' Pupils identify the charities they want to support and make effective links with their local community, particularly through musical performances. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is sound, with appropriate attention given to developing their understanding of cultures from around the world. However, insufficient attention is paid to extending pupils' understanding of diversity and living in multicultural Britain.

Behaviour by the vast majority of pupils is consistently good, especially in classes. However, pupils report behaviour difficulties amongst a minority outside the classroom, including racist name-calling. This was echoed by a minority of parents who expressed concerns about bullying incidents of their own child. Procedures to follow up these incidents have not brought about changes in behaviour swiftly enough.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It has improved, particularly over the last year, because of a successful programme of professional development to identify and share good practice more widely throughout the school. This has yet to have an impact on improving standards. However, in half the lessons observed the rate of progress was faster than in other classes because pupils were helped to use their critical skills well. In the most effective lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, their questioning skills challenge pupils' thinking and the pace of learning is brisk. In all lessons, good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), such as the interactive whiteboards, to share what pupils are expected to learn, remind them of tasks and record the feedback from class discussions.

In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support individuals or groups of pupils, particularly those who are hearing-impaired or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between classes and year groups. Where marking is good, comments include why work is good and useful advice on how to improve it in the future. Displays in classrooms and around the school are highly effective as a stimulus for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Strong links are starting to be made between subjects in a few classes, although this is not fully exploited across the school. Where the critical skills approach is used, pupils are beginning to transfer learning skills between activities well. For example, when they use problem solving, reasoning and communication skills, they understand and are excited by their work. This also helps to prepare them well for their future economic well-being. However, these effective practices are not fully in place across the school and are yet to show an impact on improving standards. The school has good plans to extend this approach to learning following training for staff in the autumn. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but pupils' targets derived from these subjects are not consistently extended through other subjects. The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding of racial and cultural harmony. A good range of enrichment activities is available and these are enjoyed by those who participate, particularly in sport and music. The Forest School programme is good, enjoyed by pupils and enhances their opportunities to learn in an outdoor environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Most aspects of pastoral care for the pupils are secure. Relationships between pupils and staff in lessons are never less than good. Pupils are confident in whom to approach if they have a problem. The work of the learning mentors and parent support adviser is having a positive impact, and they are emerging as strengths in the school's work. As result, more pupils are engaging with learning and starting to make better progress. Procedures for following up incidents of inappropriate behaviour are not robust enough to reduce anxiety and bring about changes in behaviour quickly enough.

Secure procedures are in place for the assessment of learning, setting targets and for pupils to assess their own progress, although these are not fully embedded or used consistently throughout the school. Where they are used effectively, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what steps they need to take to improve further. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a hearing impairment, are supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The more recently appointed senior and middle leaders have introduced a number of measures that have improved provision. For example, the introduction of an effective assessment and tracking system to measure pupils' progress, the use of strategies to assess learning and critical skills in lessons increase the rate

of progress. However, as the tracking system is relatively new, it is not being fully exploited to measure the impact of intervention programmes and to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress.

Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory and take into account the views of staff, pupils and governors, although newly appointed subject leaders do not yet play a full part in monitoring and evaluating their subjects. The governors know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, and have good understanding of their statutory responsibilities. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the school. Although the school reports racist incidents to parents and the local authority, they have not been reported to governors. The school leadership team and governors make sound judgements in managing their resources and the school provides satisfactory value for money overall.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's Church of England Junior School, Weston-super-Mare, BS22 9BQ

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us when we came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what we found out about your school.

We think that the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good at the school and you make quicker progress in lessons where you are able to use your critical skills. The school is planning to use these more from September so look out for this and try to use them well to help you learn. We have seen some of you using self-assessment really well and some of you know what you have to do to get better. We think these approaches should be used in all classes. If you remember to use them as well, this will help you get even better in your work. We also think some of you are capable of doing a bit more than at present, but you also need to challenge yourselves to try harder tasks.

Most of you say how much you enjoy school and the extra-curricular activities. You have good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the life of the school through the school council and working cooperatively in lessons.

You can really help improve the school in one particular area. Although your behaviour in lessons is good, a minority of pupils said they had been bullied outside the classroom. We hope that you will all make an effort to be kind and thoughtful to each other so that everyone can enjoy all aspects of their time in school. The staff will also be improving the way they follow up any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or racist comments.

Thank you once again for telling us so much about your school. We hope you continue to work hard in lessons and enjoy school, but remember to work also towards everyone being respectful to each other.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle Her Majesty's Inspector

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Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector