

St Martin de Porres Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109639
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	310050
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ursula Madine
Headteacher	Mr John Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Pastures Way Luton Bedfordshire LU4 0PF
Telephone number	01582 617600
Fax number	01582 617601

Age group	3–11
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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 de Porres is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School situated in a housing estate just outside the centre of Luton. It is much larger than most primary schools and has well above the average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, FA Charter Mark, ICT Mark 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: 2

St Martin de Porres is a good and improving school with some outstanding features in pupils' personal development and well-being. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that good progress has been made since the last inspection. Following the last inspection, the school went for a year without a substantive headteacher and this led to a decline in the quality of leadership and management. The current headteacher has successfully reversed this trend by ensuring that every member of staff takes an active part in leadership through the curriculum teams who monitor provision. His clear vision and relentless focus on raising achievement and standards has led to improvements in teaching and learning. There are now good monitoring systems in place, which are beginning to have an impact on school improvement and the school's self-evaluation is good. Leadership and management are now good. Teaching is mainly good or better however further work needs to be done to ensure that good or better teaching is consistent across the school. Teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 is improving; however, this is not always accurate.

Pupils enter the Nursery with standards below those expected nationally and make good progress during the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2 last year, pupils were doing better than most pupils nationally in English. In mathematics, they were in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was above the national average whilst in mathematics and science results were a little below average. The school has addressed this and current monitoring of pupil progress and attainment shows that pupils' are now achieving better than their peers nationally. The curriculum is good and pastoral care and support are outstanding. However, the guidance pupils receive about how to improve their work is not consistently good through the school because pupils do not always know their learning targets or exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

There is an outstanding emphasis on partnership with parents and this is a strength of the school. Both pupils and parents speak very highly of the outstanding quality of personal development and well-being. In the words of one parent, 'I was immensely encouraged at the proactive way in which the school is helping and supporting my child.' The school's community of pupils whose first language is not English has grown considerably over the last three years. The school has managed this change extremely well and community cohesion is a strength of the school. The excellent teamwork and support for pupils and families where their first language is not English and where pupils have additional learning needs is exemplary. St Martin de Porres's mission statement is 'Working together in the light of the Lord' and this is evident in everything the school does for its community. The school has a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage. There is a good range of well-planned learning opportunities which meet all the children's needs and keep them actively engaged. The good organisation ensures children are safe. A healthy snack is available at any time during the morning session encouraging children to eat healthily. Children are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for themselves and their learning. They have positive attitudes to learning because of the stimulating well-organised environment. A new covered

area has meant that some curriculum activities are planned for outside. The school has recognised the need to develop this further through extending opportunities for active learning.

There are excellent links with parents and carers and families are well supported by the Foundation Stage staff team, the Learning Mentor and the Family Worker. For example, parents have the opportunity to attend 'play and stay' sessions before their child starts nursery or reception class. These sessions provide excellent support for families whose first language is not English.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of teacher assessment at Key Stage 2
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all lessons
- Improve marking and target setting so that all pupils are clear about how to improve standards in their work

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with standards below those expected nationally. They make good progress in Foundation Stage and start Year 1 with attainment just below expected levels. Improved and good progress last year meant that by the end of Year 2, pupils attained above average results in reading and writing and standards were in line with national expectations in mathematics. Last year higher attaining pupils in Year 6 did not do as well in mathematics and science as they did in English, and the school's results dipped to below national expectations in these subjects. The school's very careful analysis shows that this is because several pupils predicted to achieve the higher Level 5 missed this by a few marks. Current school data and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are on track to achieve expected levels by the end of Year 6 in all subjects this year.

Pupils who find learning difficult and pupils whose first language is not English, make good progress throughout the school because of the very well planned, excellent support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly to visitors and have very good attitudes to learning. They value diversity and care about each other. Attendance levels are high and pupils' behaviour is exemplary in class and around the school. Pupils feel free from bullying and say that when they have concerns they have confidence in the school's systems to support them. For example, the use of the 'sharing box' that is monitored and responded to by the Learning Mentor. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. There is a high level of participation in a wide variety of physical activities, particularly during the Key Stage 2 residential visits. Also in the words of one child, 'School dinners give us a well balanced diet.' Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most lessons seen during the inspection were good or better, however, the quality ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. In the best lessons learning objectives and success criteria were made very clear and helped guide and review pupils' learning. Work was well matched to the pupils' differing learning needs, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who need help with their learning, who were very ably supported by teaching assistants. Pupils were actively involved in their learning and teachers' questions extended pupils' thinking. Where teaching was not so effective, explanations lacked clarity, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills, and activities did not catch pupils' interest or motivate them to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to pupils' differing needs and interests, and includes French and German in Key Stage 2. Good progress has been made in using the latest national guidance for teaching English and mathematics. Teachers plan their lessons in year groups but whole-school curriculum plans have not been recently updated for several subjects. Teachers have started to make valid links between subjects. There is a good programme of extra-curricular clubs which are attended by about half of the pupils. Some of these clubs are targeted at the learning needs of particular groups of pupils. There is good enrichment of class lessons by two residential courses and all year groups have visits and visitors to enhance learning. Pupils enjoy the 'curriculum alive' day held each term for a particular subject, and there are excellent community cohesion weeks each term that involve work in different subjects, and contributions from parents. These weeks are highly praised by pupils and parents and contribute to the excellent provision for pupils whose first language is not English and to the good progress made by these pupils. The school provides activities before and after school for about 70 pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents value the outstanding quality of pastoral care and support that all staff provide, and this effectively helps all groups of pupils to learn well, including those whose first language is not English. As one parent wrote, 'Everyone works together to make the children feel safe, happy and willing to learn.' The learning mentor and family worker give outstanding support that helps many pupils to overcome barriers to learning. The school encourages very good quality family learning, for example, when Year 1 pupils worked with their parents during an English lesson. There is excellent support for vulnerable pupils. The school has very good procedures to encourage good attendance. The necessary requirements for safeguarding pupils are met, and the school has carried out the required health and safety audits.

The school has excellent transition arrangements that support all pupils when change occurs at whatever stage.

There is satisfactory guidance to pupils about how to improve their work because teachers usually make clear the strengths achieved. However, marking rarely helps pupils to identify the next steps they need to take to improve their standards and pupils do not always know what

their learning targets are. For Key Stage 2, teachers' assessment of pupils' standards does not always make accurate use of National Curriculum criteria.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels in the school are good. This is because the headteacher has been determined to ensure that both staff and governors have clear roles in improving standards, achievement and provision for all pupils. The senior leadership team work well together to evaluate the work of the school. They have implemented systems to monitor the quality of teaching and to track pupils' learning. The termly learning conversations with teachers ensure that pupils who are not making expected progress are identified quickly and appropriate support is given. The curriculum teams meet regularly to review standards, achievement and progress in their curriculum area. However, these systems do not always lead to required improvements because not all teaching is as good as it could be and assessment at Key Stage 2 is not always accurate.

The management of provision for pupils who need additional help with their learning is excellent because of the outstanding work of the special needs coordinator very ably supported by a Family Support Worker and Learning Mentor. Governance is good because governors hold the school to account by asking searching questions and ensuring that these are followed up by the school. Resources are deployed well and the school gives good value for money.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin de Porres Primary School, Luton, LU4 0PF

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to your school. We really enjoyed our visit and it was good to meet you all. We were very impressed with how well behaved, polite and caring you are because you were always willing to show us around and tell us all the good things about your school.

We think that St Martin de Porres is a good school. Your teachers and headteacher are doing an excellent job in helping you understand what it means to live a healthy lifestyle and to be safe inside and outside of school. Your community cohesion weeks are an outstanding way to enable you to appreciate and understand the different cultures within your school. I was very lucky to have lunch with pupils from several different countries and it was great to see you all working and playing together so well. You and your parents really appreciate how your school cares about everyone and gives opportunities for families to learn together.

One pupil told me that she was doing so well because of the good teaching in the school and we agree with this. However, some lessons have better teaching than others and we have asked Mr Carroll to make sure all lessons are good so you can learn even better. We have also asked him to make sure you know and understand your learning targets and that teachers are always clear about what you need to do next to improve your work and also what level you are working at.

Your school mission statement says that you are 'Working together in the light of the Lord' and we could see how this was being put into action in your school.

With every good wish for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

Her Majesty's Inspector