

# St Martin's Garden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133290
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	316064
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Shears

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Cross
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Pope
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lympsham Green Odd Down Bath BA2 2UN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 832112
<b>Fax number</b>	01225 833101

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Martin's Garden is a larger than average primary school with a unit for autistic pupils, The Margaret Coates Centre, on the same site. The school serves an area that has high levels of disadvantage. There are a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties. There are a small number of pupils from ethnic minorities. However, there are an increasing number of pupils at the early stages of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvements because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to improving pupils' achievement and raising standards in English and mathematics.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. Since the last inspection, there has been a gradual decline in standards. Standards in both Years 2 and 6 are now exceptionally low. Despite a good start in the Nursery class, pupils do not make adequate progress during their time at the school. Nevertheless, the senior leaders have correctly identified the causes of weaknesses and have begun to put measures in place to overcome them. The leaders in the school have been successful in creating a warm, purposeful environment where pupils are keen to learn. New initiatives have led to improvements, especially in speaking and listening and in writing, and this has meant that there are now signs of satisfactory progress during lessons and in pupils' books. This demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties are effectively supported through a planned system that tracks their development and consequently their progress has been better than that of their peers. Pupils in the Margaret Coates Centre achieve well, making especially good progress in developing their social skills.

The school is highly inclusive and all pupils, regardless of background or ability, receive a good level of pastoral care that impacts well on their personal development. This has resulted in improved behaviour in lessons and in the playground. Although a small number of parents are concerned about poor behaviour, none was seen during the inspection. Pupils look after each other well, caring for each other in the playground and working well together in the classroom. Assessments are carried out three times a year and the school uses this information to accurately identify areas of underachievement. However, senior and middle leaders do not consistently and effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching to ensure improvement in achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory but, due to the lack of pace and challenge, they are not good enough to accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils and reverse the decline in standards. Observations of teaching are beginning to support improvements but monitoring lacks rigour and consistency.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

A large majority of children start in the Nursery with skills that are less well developed than expected for their age. They make good gains in their personal development as a result of the good care and support they receive. However, their progress in developing language and mathematical skills is only satisfactory. Children enjoy their time at school, have good relationships with staff and become aware of the needs of others. Staff observe the children closely and plan activities carefully to meet their individual needs and interests. The accommodation, including the outdoor area, the resources and range of activities are all of good quality. Self-evaluation is realistic and teamwork is strong, with a common sense of purpose amongst the staff. The leadership recognise the need to improve the use of assessment and increase the consistency of teaching approaches. There is a productive partnership between the school and the neighbouring children's centre.

## What the school should do to improve further

- improve achievement and standards in English and mathematics
- ensure that senior and middle leaders effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching
- improve teaching by increasing the pace and challenge of lessons, particularly in English and mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Most pupils enter the Nursery well below the national expectations in all areas of development. The good provision in the Nursery ensures that by the time they enter Reception, skills have improved, although they are still below expectations for their age. In Reception, satisfactory teaching ensures that children continue to make small steps of progress. However, in Years 1 to 6, not enough progress is made, resulting in standards that are exceptionally low in both English and mathematics. The school has recognised this and has correctly identified the areas in which it needs to improve. There are signs that progress is improving as a result of a variety of initiatives that the school has put in place, for example to improve writing. For pupils with learning difficulties, progress has been better in comparison to their peers. This is due to the effective monitoring of their learning and the support that they are given.

Pupils in the Margaret Coates Centre attain standards that are well below those expected for their age because of the difficulties they have with learning. However, they achieve well against their targets, especially in learning to communicate and interact with the staff and their friends.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at break times and around the school is good. Teachers work hard to successfully manage pupils whose behaviour presents difficulties to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on others. Pupils have a good attitude towards their learning and show this by behaving well and listening carefully. Playtimes are harmonious, with pupils showing a good awareness of the need to use equipment safely, to take turns and abide by the playground rules. Older pupils display genuine care and concern for the younger ones, looking after them at lunchtime in particular. They have many jobs in class and around the school which help to develop responsibility and enable them to feel they are contributing to the community. Pupils feel that the school council plays an important role as a vehicle for their views and opinions to be heard. They have a good awareness of how a balanced diet and regular exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle. At breaktimes, many pupils engage in the range of physical activities provided and enjoy the fruit on offer. Pupils' good relationships with each other and with staff greatly contribute to their enjoyment of school. Although most pupils are keen to come to school, a small minority have frequent absences for unauthorised reasons, so attendance is below average despite the school's efforts to improve it. Pupils appreciate the care shown to them by staff and feel confident there is always someone to speak to if they have a problem. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, effectively promoted through the school's care, guidance and support and through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Although the literacy and numeracy skills of many pupils do not prepare them as well as they should, pupils' confidence and their good personal and interpersonal skills ensure that they have satisfactory skills for their future lives. Pupils in the Margaret Coates Centre very quickly learn to accept its rules and expectations for learning. Their behaviour is

outstanding and they show that they enjoy school by working hard for the staff, in order to please them.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have created a positive learning environment that enables pupils to be ready to learn as a result of good strategies that support their behaviour. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and those with English as an additional language are supported well in their learning and in developing their social skills. Pupils are very clear about what they are going to learn because lessons are well planned and methodically taught. They are keen to participate and produce their best work. Although pupils now make satisfactory progress in lessons, the pace of some is too slow and teachers' expectations are not high enough to ensure pupils reach satisfactory standards by the end of each year.

Recent improvements in the way pupils' work is marked are ensuring greater consistency in giving encouragement and showing pupils the next steps in their learning. This new initiative has been particularly successful in writing although standards remain below average. Teaching in the Margaret Coates Centre is good. Teachers understand the pupils' needs extremely well and have high expectations of them. They establish clear routines to enable them to learn. However, academic pupil tracking and target setting is not yet embedded, making it difficult to judge their progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a range of activities designed to make learning enjoyable and meaningful. Strong features are the provision for PSHE and for physical education. The school has recently introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics which is showing early signs of success in starting to improve pupils' progress in reading and writing. There is appropriate emphasis on provision to improve pupils' literacy skills, including a range of educational trips and visitors, for example visits from theatre groups and authors to stimulate pupils' imagination and provide them with real experiences to talk and write about. There are planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their speaking and listening skills, and their information and communication technology skills, in different subjects such as history and geography. When a need is identified, the school makes arrangements for pupils to work in small groups with focused support to assist their progress. The school recognises the need for more practical activities in science to raise standards, including a planned programme for the teaching of investigations across the school. The Margaret Coates Centre's curriculum is well matched to pupils' interests and capabilities. Especially good use is made of visits off site. These promote pupils' social development and enhance communication skills.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The staff are united in their dedication to care for their pupils. Considerable effort has been put into addressing the welfare of pupils, many of whom have a wide range of problems and difficulties in their lives. Much time is spent working very closely and successfully with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Good procedures are established for the health

and safety of pupils. Child protection issues are dealt with efficiently and the designated officer is effectively involved with outside agencies. Risk assessments and checks are routinely carried out to ensure the safety of pupils both in and out of school.

Staff give consistently good guidance to all pupils regarding their behaviour and learning. Academic guidance for pupils with learning difficulties, although in place, is insufficiently specific to enable progress to be measured in enough detail. Relationships between staff and pupils in The Margaret Coates Centre are outstanding because staff know their pupils well as individuals and are sensitive in dealing with their difficulties and in developing their social skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership provide clear direction for improvement and teamwork is strong. They have successfully focused on tackling behaviour difficulties and creating a calm, purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. This has resulted in pupils being ready and able to learn because they feel safe and secure in the knowledge that all the adults care.

Work on improving the achievement of pupils is showing signs of success. Correct identification of weaknesses has helped leaders to put in place initiatives to improve learning. Recent progress is evident through current work in lessons and in books. However, the monitoring of teaching is not yet sufficiently robust to accelerate the progress of pupils. Although several subject leaders are new, they are beginning to have an impact on improvement by developing their role in supporting staff. Governors are knowledgeable regarding the school's issues but although they support the school well, they do not yet challenge them about areas that need improving. Although a few parents would like to be given more opportunities to share their views about the school, the vast majority are very happy, saying, 'staff are very caring' and 'my child happily goes to school every day'.

Leadership and management of The Margaret Coates Centre are good, particularly in promoting the personal skills of pupils, helping them to develop independence.

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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?	4
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?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	2
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?	2

<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	4
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	4
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's Garden Primary School, Bath, BA2 2UN

Thank you for being an important part of our visit to you this week. We all enjoyed meeting you and talking with you about your school.

You have told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you feel safe and secure. You like your teachers and feel that they care about you. We enjoyed watching you work and play and agree that you are fortunate to have a friendly, caring school to be a part of. However, we are worried that many of you are not making as much progress in your work as you should.

Here are some strengths of the school:

- you are well looked after and cared for
- you behave well both in lessons and in the playground
- you are good at looking after and supporting each other
- teachers organise interesting trips and visitors to make your work fun.

What we have asked the school to do:

- make sure that you are helped to achieve your best in English and mathematics
- make sure that the teachers check that your lessons are really well taught so that your learning improves
- make sure that you are given enough work and that it is hard enough.

You could also help the school to improve by making sure that you come to school every day so that you don't miss any of your lessons.

Thank you for a very special two days.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Shears Lead Inspector

26 September 2007



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Lead Inspector