

St Martin's Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116685 |
| Local Authority | Herefordshire |
| Inspection number | 326427 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Anthony O'Malley HMI |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 291 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 74 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Christopher Chappell |
| Headteacher | Euan McGilp |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 October 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Holly Bush Walk Hereford HR2 6AF |
| Telephone number | 01432 273633 |
| Fax number | 01432 277162 |

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| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 September 2008 |
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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 one of the largest primary schools in Herefordshire, situated in the South Wye area of Hereford. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision and the school runs breakfast and after-school clubs. The school serves an area of relatively high disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average and a small number have disabilities. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has achieved the Active Mark Gold and Healthy Schools Award.

Additional on-site childcare facilities are managed by a private company.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| 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 this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is thereby given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards.

When the school was last inspected, it was judged as satisfactory. Since then provision and outcomes have improved in the EYFS and children enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. However, a combination of inadequate teaching and poor behaviour has had a damaging effect on achievement and standards in Key Stages 1 and 2. This was particularly severe in 2007, when standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average. Appropriate action by the headteacher and the senior leadership team has led to a significant improvement. All teaching is at least sound and pupils learn and play in a safe environment. Each major aspect of the school's work is now satisfactory with the exception of pupils' achievement and standards. Such is the legacy of poor provision that serious gaps remain in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Impressive gains have been made in English, but standards in mathematics and science are still well below average. Pupils throughout the school are making better progress, including those with learning difficulties and the small number with disabilities, but the improvements have not been rapid enough to close the gap between pupils' achievement in this school when compared with others.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The strong emphasis on teaching personal, social and emotional skills is having a positive impact and behaviour is now satisfactory. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to stay healthy and they enjoy an appropriate range of physical activities. They make a sound contribution to their school and local communities and are keen to do more. However, they are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education because of their low level of basic skills, particularly in numeracy. Parents commented warmly about the school in conversations and in their answers to questionnaires. Their confidence in the school has returned and they confirm that the pupils enjoy school. Attendance, which was inadequate at the time of the previous inspection, is now broadly average.

The headteacher, staff and governors recognise there is still much to do. Teaching and learning are no better than satisfactory because there is not enough good teaching that ensures all pupils achieve as well as they can. The curriculum is satisfactory and benefits from good resources in information and communication technology (ICT). These support learning well in many subjects. Improved behaviour and attendance reflect the school's strong systems of care and support. Academic guidance is not as effective and too many children do not fully understand what they need to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have the capacity to make the improvements needed. There is now a clear focus on raising standards and subject leaders are working diligently to build on last year's relative successes. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate, but does not always sharply identify the factors leading to underachievement. The governing body has worked closely with the senior leadership team during difficult times; governance is satisfactory. It has helped to secure improved behaviour in the school and develop the premises. It is now fully aware of its responsibilities to secure an adequate standard of education for all of its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with skill levels that are lower than normally expected for their age. They make good progress in the EYFS and by Year 1, reach broadly average standards in most areas of learning, and a few exceed these. Standards are below average in communication, language and literacy. Children enjoy their time in school and learn to work and play well together. Good teaching and interesting activities focus on building children's self-confidence and developing skills. The curriculum is good. Careful planning ensures that effective use is made of the outdoor provision to enrich learning. The school has developed effective assessment systems, and targets are meaningful and challenging. There are good links with parents who are kept well informed about their children's progress. The EYFS is well led and managed. The school is rightly focusing on raising standards in communication, language and literacy, especially writing. It is also working hard to improve the outdoor provision and resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure consistently good teaching enables pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure academic guidance makes clear to pupils the next steps in their learning.
- Improve the rigour of self-evaluation so that teaching can successfully address the precise causes of low achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement in the EYFS is good and children reach broadly average standards. There are signs of improving progress for pupils in Years 1 to 6, but for too many pupils, achievement is inadequate and standards remain too low. The focus last year on improving literacy has led to accelerated progress in reading and writing, particularly in Year 6. However, standards in mathematics and science remain very low. For example, in mathematics, mental arithmetic skills are weak and even older pupils have gaps in their knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils with learning difficulties make unsatisfactory progress. The additional support they receive in mathematics is not helping them catch up with their peers. Pupils with disabilities make sound progress and benefit from the school's accurate understanding of their needs and strong links with parents.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a satisfactory attitude to learning and the great majority behave appropriately. They say that school is better now because there is much less bullying. Efforts by the school to improve attendance have been relatively successful; it is now broadly average. Pupils are confident that staff will help them if they have a problem and their knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy is satisfactory. The pupils make a sound contribution to the life of the school through the school council and a range of roles including peer supporters and the 'ICT Tech. Crew'. In discussions with the pupils, it is clear that they have plenty of enthusiasm and ideas to improve their school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They understand well how their fund-raising helps communities around the world. However, their understanding and experience of Britain as a culturally diverse society is quite

limited. The pupils' preparation for the future is inadequate, since the level of basic skills needed to succeed at the next stage of their education is too low.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is too little good teaching to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Although the school collects a wide range of assessment information, it is not used consistently to match work closely to pupils' needs. Even during lessons where questioning is competent, opportunities are missed to respond to pupils' misconceptions because teachers stick too closely to their lesson plans rather than dealing thoroughly with errors as they arise. Nonetheless, examples of good teaching are evident. Support from the local authority is helping improve the teaching of phonics, guided reading and writing. The professional development of teaching assistants is also improving their practice. For example, pupils made good progress in a mathematics lesson because the teaching assistant was well briefed on the concepts and expected misconceptions, and able to provide support throughout the lesson that enhanced pupils' understanding and independence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

As well as studying all the subjects of the National Curriculum and, more recently, French, the pupils have lessons to promote their emotional development and personal well-being. There is a greater focus on developing literacy skills than numeracy skills, and the varying standards achieved in both areas reflect this. ICT provision is good and pupils use a range of resources confidently across the curriculum. The Active Mark Gold and Healthy Schools Award indicate other curriculum strengths. Overall, the curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' personal development but is relatively weak at developing their understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents rightly value the effective pastoral care for pupils. Adults are sensitive to the needs of pupils and take good steps to ensure they are well cared for and supported. Appropriate links with other agencies have reduced exclusions, improved behaviour and helped pupils with disabilities make satisfactory progress. The strong commitment to Family Learning is also helping remove barriers to learning. Attendance, which was inadequate at the time of the last inspection, is now broadly average. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Academic guidance is not as effective as the care and support provided. Pupils are not fully aware of their learning targets and too many are unsure of what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve the school's effectiveness. Long-standing behavioural and attendance issues have been resolved and raising achievement and standards is now at the centre of its plans. Challenging targets, satisfactory monitoring of teaching and learning and appropriately planned professional development are helping improve the inadequate rates of progress for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. These improvements are not as rapid as they need to be, partly because subject leaders have not identified clearly enough the precise factors stopping pupils making better progress. The school is satisfactorily meeting its duty towards promoting social and community cohesion. Its work with parents and local agencies shows an appropriate drive to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups. However, its work to increase pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom and global communities is less effective.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 4 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good are 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 4 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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|--|-----|
| 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 eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 |

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's Primary School, Hereford, HR2 6AF

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave Miss Robinson, Mrs Green and myself when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about all the things that you do and what you thought about your school. We could see that the school council works hard on your behalf and that all the adults in the school look after you well.

It was pleasing to hear from you that behaviour has improved and you feel safe and happy in school. We were particularly impressed with the good teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.

However, we are concerned that in Key Stages 1 and 2 you are not making enough progress in your learning. We have asked your school to make sure that:

- you do much better in English, mathematics and science and reach higher standards
- teaching is consistently good and helps you achieve as well as you can
- you know your learning targets and how to achieve them
- teaching ensures you clearly understand any problems that may be stopping you make better progress.

Inspectors will visit your school again to check on how well it is doing.

You can help by working extra hard and making sure you know what the teachers are asking you to do to reach your targets. You can also remind your parents how important it is for you not to miss any lessons, so that you can achieve as well as you can.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Anthony O'Malley Her Majesty's Inspector