

# The Martin Wilson School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123447
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327912
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

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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<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 (total)	211
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	43
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Benjamin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nikki Jamie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	New Park Road Castlefields Shrewsbury SY1 2SP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 236520
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 245737

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Martin Wilson School is a primary school of average size. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has recently suffered a period of considerable difficulty, with high staff turnover and many leadership changes. The present headteacher was appointed in 2007. There is a privately run nursery on the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The Martin Wilson School is a satisfactory school. Pupils attain below average standards but their achievement is satisfactory. The school is improving under the good leadership of the new headteacher. Underachievement has been tackled successfully and standards are rising. Progress in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory overall. For example, progress is good in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics and pupils attain average standards by the time they leave school. Progress in writing, whilst satisfactory, is slower than in reading because pupils' use of vocabulary and the accuracy of their punctuation are weaker elements of their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy working in the school's happy, stimulating atmosphere. They are confident, polite and thoughtful about the needs of others, and develop into mature young people. They feel very safe in school. One pupil summed up the views of many saying, 'People treat each other properly here.' Most parents are supportive of the school. One parent wrote, 'My son is happy at school and is growing in confidence and I am very pleased with his progress.' A small minority of parents voiced concerns about standards of behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour was good in classrooms and around the school.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception, where teaching is good. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory because the level of challenge presented to pupils is not yet consistently good. This means that in a minority of lessons pupils find their work either too hard or too easy, which slows their progress. There are many signs that teaching and learning are improving. Relationships in the classroom are positive and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations and there are now many good lessons in which pupils work hard and make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory. Changes to the curriculum in mathematics are having a positive effect on accelerating pupils' progress. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Their pastoral care is very effective. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive support that enables them to join in all activities. Academic guidance is good, and has improved considerably since the last inspection.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff share the headteacher's unrelenting drive to raise standards. Other leaders and managers enthusiastically support her. However, most of them are new and are not yet fully involved in planning improvements and checking work in their areas of responsibility. This means that the school's rate of improvement is not as rapid as it might be. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception although standards remain below average by the time they start Year 1. Children make best progress and reach the expected goals in their personal, social and emotional development. Parents are happy with the standards of care and education provided. 'My child has gained so much confidence,' and 'my daughter really enjoys coming here,' were typical comments made by parents about the school's Early Years Centre. Parents especially like the effective induction procedures that ensure children settle quickly into school routines. Parents are kept well informed through regular discussions on the progress of their children and the notice board that tells them about daily activities. Children are self-confident and relate well to adults and to their peers. Teaching and learning are good because staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities that children thoroughly

enjoy. Adults are particularly skilled at questioning and developing children's speech, vocabulary and mathematical skills. Staff foster children's skills of working independently well. For example, children capably organise their chosen activities and put on their own aprons before practical work. Children have ready access to the outdoor learning area but the school recognises that learning outdoors is not linked effectively to that indoors. Leadership and management are good. The programme of training they provide for staff is effective in ensuring they have a wide range of appropriate skills to promote children's learning and welfare. The regular assessments of children's progress are used well to plan appropriate work for each child. Occasionally, planning focuses too much on what children are doing rather than on their learning.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and science to the level of that in mathematics.
- Secure consistently good teaching, particularly in the level of challenge pupils receive.
- Ensure staff with leadership responsibility contribute to strategic planning and the checking of standards so that the pace of change can accelerate.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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**

Children's skills and experiences on entry to the Nursery are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory progress between Year 1 and Year 6. Standards by Year 6 are below average overall but have risen considerably from exceptionally low levels last year. Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory.

Standards in reading are broadly average. An effective programme of coaching is rapidly improving the reading ages of pupils who have fallen behind. Writing is a relative weakness because pupils do not use the correct words to express their ideas. Longer pieces of writing, such as stories and reports, do not always flow well enough to make their meaning clear. Sharpening pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems and their understanding of number are resulting in rapid improvements in this subject. Progress and standards in information and communication technology and science are also improving because pupils undertake investigations that are more practical.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings. They respect property and other people, and care for the environment. A clear understanding of right and wrong underpins their good behaviour. Occasionally, pupils become restless when the work does not challenge them sufficiently. Pupils readily share apparatus, cooperate well and help each other. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of British culture, although satisfactory, is not as well developed as other areas.

Most pupils try hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating sensibly and taking plenty of exercise. Pupils feel very safe in school because they know that the rare incidents of bullying are quickly and effectively resolved. They understand how to keep themselves safe, for example

when using the Internet. Pupils clearly enjoy most aspects of school, especially art lessons and taking part in school clubs. Most pupils attend regularly but the school's overall attendance is average because of the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils. Pupils readily accept responsibility. For example, the school council helped plan refurbishments to the toilets. Pupils enthusiastically collect for charity and join in local events, such as the Christmas concert for pensioners. While pupils gain valuable experience of enterprise when they help manage charity events and have positive attitudes, their below average standards mean that their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers plan a good variety of interesting learning tasks that actively engage pupils in their learning. For example, groups of Year 6 pupils really enjoyed planning and undertaking their own experiments to help their understanding of friction. Teachers use data effectively and their improving subject knowledge is helping them to plan work which is sufficiently demanding work. However, there are occasions when the plans do not match the needs of pupils in the class well enough and their progress slows. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially when they are working with small groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are less effective in helping pupils' learning during class discussions. The many opportunities for pupils to debate ideas in small groups are making a positive contribution to learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Assemblies, physical education and health lessons support pupils' personal development well and led to the Healthy Schools award and Activemark. Art is planned well and there are many bright and exciting displays of good quality art around the school. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems. The school recognises that pupils do not spend enough time practising writing in all their subjects. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work with people from backgrounds different from their own to enable them to develop a good understanding of the diversity of British culture. The wealth of out-of-school clubs raises aspirations, and a good range of educational trips and visits, for example to museums, broadens pupils' horizons well.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff use their detailed knowledge of pupils very well to provide them with high quality personal care. Pupils are confident that they can turn to an adult if they have a problem, knowing their concerns will be quickly and effectively resolved. Learning programmes of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities accurately match their needs and are reviewed regularly to check their effectiveness. The school makes good use of experts to promote pupils' welfare and progress. For example, the school is working hard with welfare officers to improve attendance. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are robust.

Marking and other feedback provide pupils with a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work and this is having a considerable impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Pupils have

challenging short-term targets but the school does not yet provide them with long-term targets so that they can take responsibility for checking the rate of their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has a clear overview of its strengths and areas for improvement. The implementation of effective development plans is having a positive impact on these areas. For example, the school has provided training for staff to sharpen their teaching skills in mathematics and practical work in science. The school has set itself challenging targets and the checking of pupils' progress is now regular and robust. Pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and effective measures are taken to ensure they catch up rapidly. The headteacher's leadership in providing direction to the school's work is effective, but other leaders are not making a significant enough contribution to tasks, such as checking the quality of lessons, to accelerate the pace of improvement further. Good strategies exist for working with parents and the local community and ensuring pupils learn about different faiths.

The school has a deep commitment to inclusion. Exclusions are very rare because adults are skilled in managing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school welcomes and successfully accommodates pupils who have failed in other schools and need a fresh start.

The governors work hard on behalf of the school. Their understanding of data means that they are now starting to challenge the school robustly over such matters as standards, teaching and the curriculum.

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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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 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	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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Martin Wilson School, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SP

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. We enjoyed looking at the displays of your splendid art work. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere and you all get on so well together. We think The Martin Wilson School is a satisfactory school. We also think it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Sound teaching helps you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.
- You make a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception.
- Standards are average in mathematics but below average in English and science.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave well and your attendance is satisfactory.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with many exciting clubs and visits out of school.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- You have a clear understanding of how you can improve your work.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Help you to improve your progress, especially the accuracy of your punctuation and the way you use words in your writing.
- Make sure teachers plan work that makes everyone think hard.
- Make sure that all adults who are leaders help to check how well you are learning.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well, trying your best in lessons and improving your attendance.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin Lead inspector