

Martlesham Beacon Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124596
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328173
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	123
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan White
Headteacher	Mr Alan Murray
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Black Tiles Lane Martlesham Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4SS

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Inspection number	328173

Telephone number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a village on the outskirts of Ipswich and draws its pupils from both the village and the surrounding areas including the towns of Woodbridge and Ipswich. The large majority of pupils are White British. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds some of whom have English as an additional language. None is currently a beginner in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average. However in some year groups it is high. Most of these pupils need additional help with literacy or numeracy. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Pupils are organised into five mixed-age classes because of small numbers. Although the number of pupils who leave the school before the end of Year 6 is small, the numbers joining after the start of the Reception year is high and this is particularly so in Years 4 to 6. Many of the pupils who join have additional learning needs. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

The school has pre-school provision on site which is managed by an external provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality and rounded education for its pupils. Hence, they make good progress. The warm and welcoming atmosphere contributes to pupils' good personal development. They develop into confident and articulate youngsters who enjoy school. Pupils who join the school mid-way through their primary years settle in quickly and also make good progress in their learning.

Attainment on entry to Reception varies from year-to-year, but more often than not children begin school with skills and knowledge that are in line with their age. Because of small numbers in each year group, changes in the group due to movement of pupils into the school often makes a noticeable difference to the group's overall attainment. This makes year-on-year comparisons and comparisons with national averages less meaningful. Standards in the current Year 6 are in line with national averages and inspection evidence indicates that pupils' overall progress from their starting points is good. Those in English are above average because pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing across the school. Writing standards have improved well since the last inspection because of the school's sustained and effective focus on developing better writing, especially for boys. There are examples of very good quality writing in Year 6. Pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Progress across Years 3 to 6 has not been as good in the past due often to weaknesses in pupils' problem-solving skills. However, this academic year pupils across the school have made consistently good progress particularly in number work. Their ability and confidence in solving mathematical problems have improved, although able pupils sometimes find the tasks they are given a little too easy and some lower and middle attainers still need help in working out problems. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are good and support their work in English, mathematics and science well. Standards of work in art, drama and music are high.

Effective relationships and well-organised lessons lead to good learning, although work is not always well matched to pupils' needs. A good curriculum supports teaching and learning. It also makes a very effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils develop an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles. Their social and moral awareness are promoted exceptionally well through the curriculum and the regular opportunities they have to work together. Spiritual development is good. However, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, though satisfactory, is not as well developed. A caring and supportive environment ensures that pupils are well looked after. This, coupled with good behaviour makes pupils feel safe. Given the good progress and social and teamwork skills they develop, pupils are well prepared for their next step in education.

The school is well led and managed. A clear direction for development has seen the school improve its provision from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. Effective self-evaluation ensures the school has an accurate view of how good it is, and enables it to prioritise the right areas for development. Good tracking of pupils' progress enables the school to identify and address underperformance quickly. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Assessment information is used to set learning targets for pupils in English and mathematics. However, pupils are not always sure of their targets or how to use them to improve their work. Community cohesion is promoted well within the school and local community and pupils have sound opportunities to learn about different cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad. However, they do not have enough opportunities to learn about cultural diversity through first-hand experiences. This limits their understanding and appreciation of it. Governors provide

good oversight of the work of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to the good links the school has with the local community. Given the progress made since the last inspection and the improvements to both teaching and achievement, especially in writing and more recently in mathematics, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception class. Standards were above average in 2008 by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children currently in their Reception year are also on track to attain above average results especially in personal and social development, literacy and numeracy. Good teaching and an interesting and varied curriculum make a strong contribution to children's learning and development. Good opportunities to work together ensure they develop good social skills, share ideas and make helpful suggestions to one another, for example, when trying to work out the relative sizes of different containers. Practical approaches enable children to grasp complex ideas such as 'capacity' and 'estimating' securely. Children have good opportunities to explore the world around them but the creative curriculum is not always as well developed and this is reflected in the lower standards attained in the past in this aspect of children's learning. Children are well looked after and cared for and there are good links with parents. Children's progress is effectively assessed and recorded, although photographic evidence is not used frequently enough to record progress and support assessment. Overall, the Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there is a keen desire for continuous improvement and to keep pace with national developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the level of challenge in work provided is well matched to pupils' learning needs especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that pupils know what they need to do to meet their personal targets and to improve their work.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn at first hand about cultural and religious diversity in British society in order to improve their appreciation of it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, test results at the end of Year 2 were well above average overall and in reading, writing and mathematics. Taking into account pupils' starting points, these results represent good progress. Results at the end of Year 6 were average overall in 2008 but above average in English where pupils' progress was good. In mathematics and science, results were in line with national averages, signalling satisfactory but improving progress across Years 3 to 6. Over the current academic year progress in mathematics has been consistently good across the school enabling many pupils to make up for lost ground. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. Their progress in investigative work is satisfactory and improving. Pupils make good progress in ICT where standards are above average. Pupils who do not find work easy make good progress in all areas, including English and mathematics, because they are well supported. Standards of work for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are similar to others. Pupils who join from other schools, sometimes coming from abroad, make good progress and achieve creditable results at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and the range of activities on offer. Pupils particularly enjoy and value the opportunities for using computers and physical activities. They are often enthusiastic about mathematics but sometimes find science uninteresting either because it is too easy or not practical enough. Pupils' behaviour is good and supports their learning well. They feel, and are, safe. Cycling to school and growing their own vegetables increases pupils' appreciation of healthy living. They play an active role on the school council and readily take on jobs around the school, thus making a good contribution to the school community. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local village and wider community, such as contributing articles to the school website and local community newspapers and receiving and entertaining visiting children from Chernobyl. Through activities such as these, pupils learn to understand and appreciate those from other walks of life. However, their knowledge and understanding of people from different ethnic backgrounds is not sufficiently well developed. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and consider life's bigger questions very seriously. Overall, they are well prepared for their next step in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers identify clear learning outcomes which are shared with pupils. This helps pupils to be clear about what they are learning. Questioning is good in the way it probes and extends pupils' ideas. Support staff are well used in lessons and make a noticeable difference to pupils' learning especially for those with additional learning needs or behavioural difficulties. Activities are interesting and often practical thus engaging pupils' interests well. However, work is not always well matched to the different, and often wide range of needs in each class. This is especially so in mathematics where work can be too easy for some and too hard for others. Teachers make good use of ICT to support learning. Marking is detailed and ensures work is properly corrected. It offers lots of praise and encouragement and often identifies when pupils have achieved a personal learning target. However, it does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of the mixed-age classes well. Work in English and most aspects of mathematics is successfully planned to develop new skills and knowledge in a systematic way. Provision for scientific investigative skills is beginning to be improved. For example, the school recently held a successful science day which focused well on practical and investigative activities. Support programmes for pupils who find learning difficult are well developed and, consequently, enable these pupils to do well. Excellent provision for the arts, drama and physical education (PE) promotes pupils' learning in these areas and their personal and social development exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy the annual drama production immensely and perform to a high standard.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the care of pupils in their charge. Health and safety are promoted well and statutory checks to safeguard pupils are in place. The school works well with other agencies to support individual pupils. Good links with parents help pupils to settle in and for the large majority of parental concerns to be addressed effectively. Parents' views confirm that this is a highly supportive school which cares for children as individuals.

Pupils have learning targets for English and mathematics and are involved in assessing their own work. Hence, most pupils are aware of the progress they are making. However, they are not always as clear about what they need to do to improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is well focused on raising standards. He and his senior colleague work closely together to provide a clear lead and good support to individual staff members. Middle leaders, including subject leaders, provide sound oversight of their areas. Many are new to management roles and their roles are being actively developed including their skills in monitoring. There is a good sense of teamwork and moving forward together to achieve commonly understood goals. The headteacher monitors the work of the school well, including teaching, and uses this information effectively to support improvement. Systems for tracking progress are good and enable the school to ensure pupils make good progress. Community cohesion is promoted well at school and local community level but there are gaps at United Kingdom and global level, such as few first hand opportunities to learn about others. The school is beginning to evaluate the impact of its community cohesion work and address these gaps. Governors provide good oversight of the school's work and know its strengths and weaknesses.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Martlesham Beacon Hill Primary School, Martlesham, IP12 4SS

I enjoyed visiting your school and would like to thank you for making me feel welcome. It was very nice to meet you and watch your lessons. The school gives you a good, rounded education. Hence you are well prepared for the next steps in your lives.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You develop into confident and self-assured youngsters who are polite and considerate to others.
- You are taught well and make good progress.
- Children in Reception get a good start to their education.
- The school provides outstanding opportunities for the arts, drama, music and PE.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported and, as a result, make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Your headteacher and staff work well as a team to help you learn.

I have asked Mr Murray and your teachers to help you make even better progress by:

- making sure that in lessons, work is not too easy or too hard, especially in mathematics;
- ensuring that you are more confident and aware about the next steps you need to take to improve your work;
- giving you more opportunities to learn at first hand about the different cultures in Britain today.

You can contribute to improvements by making sure you keep trying hard to improve your problem-solving and investigative skills.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector