

St Martin's CofE Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125141
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328297
Inspection date	3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	366
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	Mr James Masters
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Gorecka
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ranmore Road Dorking RH4 1HW
Telephone number	01306 883474
Fax number	01306 743328

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how well:

- leaders and managers are improving provision and pupils' performance in writing
- assessment, marking and individual target setting are promoting pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Martin's Church of England Primary School is larger than average. Most of the pupils are from a White British background. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A few are from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. These difficulties lie mainly in the areas of autism, dyslexia, language, speech and communication. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. This provision is on two sites. The proportion of pupils who join and leave other than at standard times is higher than average. A privately owned Nursery and after school club work in partnership with the school.

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's has made considerable improvements in recent years. As a parent remarked, reflecting the views of many, 'The school seems to go from strength to strength.' This is a good school. There are some outstanding aspects to its work. High-quality care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils. Children in Reception get off to a great start because of the good provision. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 achieve well because of good teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average.

Effective leadership and management are the main reason for the school's success and for the improvements made. An experienced headteacher conveys high expectations to all and is well focused on pupils' learning. She has rightly earned the confidence and respect of pupils, parents and staff. As a parent commented, 'The headteacher could not be better at driving the school forward. There is certainly no complacency and she does what is best for the children.' Her leadership is outstanding. She has created a very positive and professional culture among the staff. Teamwork is strong and there is a powerful commitment to continuous improvement and to doing the very best for the pupils. Senior leaders are well developed in their roles and this has a positive impact on provision and on the outcomes for pupils. School performance is systematically monitored and reviewed by senior staff. The findings are used well to inform planning and to bring about necessary improvements. There have been considerable improvements to assessment, writing, teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection. The school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to improve further. Governance is good and governors have played a valuable part in the school's development.

Community cohesion is promoted extremely well. Through careful analysis and evaluation, the school has a very good understanding of the community it serves. There are strong partnerships with parents and the local community. Different cultures and faiths are promoted effectively through the school's curriculum. International links with overseas schools are very strong so that the school understands and promotes very well the importance of global community cohesion. Parents are delighted with the care and education provided for their children. Leadership, teaching, care, pupils' progress and the school's ethos receive lavish praise. Some of the many positive comments from the parents' questionnaire were, 'Impressed with the leadership and teaching', 'The headteacher and staff provide a wonderful environment for my child', 'Really pleased with my child's progress', 'Fantastic school' and 'Very happy atmosphere'.

Provisional national test results for 2009, school assessments and pupils' work show that standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school has taken effective steps to extend and stretch the more able. Improving provision for, and pupils' performance in, writing has been a whole-school priority. Good progress is being made in this area and more pupils are attaining the higher Level 5. Speaking and listening activities are used well to develop writing. Drama and role play have been increased to inspire pupils' writing. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and in different styles. They are applying and developing their writing skills well in a range of subjects. Creative poetry competitions and information evenings on writing for parents also contribute to pupils' good progress.

Good teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. There are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Pupils are keenly interested and respond extremely well to their teachers' clear

instructions and demonstrations. For example, excellent modelling of work by staff shows pupils how to manage art and writing techniques. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating with high-quality displays reflecting the exciting range of work. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and to tailor activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged, their interest is maintained and they make good progress. Teaching assistants are used well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who have learning difficulties. The school provides a good range of support programmes for pupils who have specific needs in writing and mathematics. It has identified the need to sharpen the organisation of these to make them even more effective.

Pupils are set individual learning targets in literacy and numeracy so they know what to do to improve. Teachers provide clear success criteria to guide their learning and to review their progress. Pupils are given good opportunities to assess their own and others' work. Their skills in this area are developing well. The marking of pupils' work is helpful and comments clearly guide the next steps in their learning.

An exciting and innovative curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and makes an outstanding contribution to their personal development. Provision for English, mathematics and science is good and contributes well to pupils' good progress in these subjects. There are very good links between subjects which add meaning, relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. For example, the Year 4 topic on Charles Darwin successfully incorporated science, geography, writing and art. Pupils produced striking pictures of HMS Beagle in watercolours or pastels. Art and design is a real strength with a broad range of high-quality work by pupils on display. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and to perform in the school orchestra. Themed events such as 'China week', 'Book week' and 'World Games Day' are popular. The school offers a very good range of additional activities, including clubs and visits. These are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. The large grounds with woodland, a pond area, and sports fields are used well to support pupils' learning. Health and safety education is promoted extremely well across the school.

Outstanding pastoral care underpins pupils' personal development and well-being and there are robust procedures to safeguard pupils. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for at school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is shown by their enthusiastic participation in the activities provided and their good attendance. The school works hard to promote good attendance. Pupils show an excellent understanding of other cultures because of the school's effective partnerships with schools in France, Germany, China and Uganda. High expectations by staff and the very positive relationships between adults and pupils lead to excellent behaviour in class and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show a genuine understanding of the importance of healthy diets and regular exercise. Pupils thrive on the additional responsibilities they are given and make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the wider community. Members of the school council organise successful charity events such as 'Help for Heroes' and 'African Revival'. The choir and orchestra perform confidently in the local community. At St Martin's, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They leave the school with good literacy and numeracy skills. Their personal and social skills are extremely well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. By the end of Reception, they attain standards that are above average in most areas of learning. The Early

Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Children make outstanding progress in their personal and social development because of excellent care and the very positive relationships established between adults and children.

Good teaching and a wide range of interesting activities enable children to make good progress in other areas of learning. Children are well motivated and thoroughly enjoy their time in Reception. All the required areas of learning are successfully incorporated into exciting topics such as 'Life cycles'. As one parent wrote, 'My child is full of enthusiasm for the topics covered.' During the inspection, children in Reception presented a wonderful assembly to the school and to parents on the life cycle of the frog. This successfully incorporated a full range of learning activities including speaking, art, dance, poetry and singing. Children have good opportunities to acquire and practise early reading and writing skills. Staff carefully demonstrate and model writing. The school has recognised the need to extend opportunities for children to choose their own activities and improve the balance of adult-led activities and enabling children to explore.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the organisation of the support programmes for pupils who have specific needs in literacy and numeracy as indicated in the school's self-evaluation and planning.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	2
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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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?	1
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

15 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's CofE Controlled Primary School, Dorking, RH4 1HW

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. Some areas of the school are outstanding.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and attendance is good.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- There is an outstanding range of learning activities provided for you.
- Behaviour is exceptionally good in lessons and around the school.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Your artwork on display is of high quality.
- Staff take exceptionally good care of you and provide very strong support.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the wider community.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and she receives good support from senior staff.
- The school has very strong partnerships with parents, the community and schools overseas.

There is just one area the school has been asked to improve.

- The school is keen to improve further the good support programmes for pupils who need specific help with literacy and numeracy.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector