

Martin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135226
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	329059
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Pritiben Patel

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	488
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	Ms Helen Drake
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Morrison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Plane Tree Walk East Finchley London N2 9JP
Telephone number	020 8883 1455
Fax number	0208 444 9988

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Martin Primary is a large school that opened in September 2007 after the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds including White British, Other White, Black and Asian. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is nearly three times higher than the national picture. A higher proportion of pupils than is usually found speak English as an additional language. Thirty nine pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of educational needs is above average. Pupils' needs are related to speech, language, communication, behavioural and social difficulties. More pupils than is usually found are entitled to free school meals. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision which comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. After-school on-site childcare is provided by an independent organisation. The school attained Healthy School Status and the International School Award in 2008. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Martin Primary is a good school because pupils make good progress. It has outstanding partnerships, for example, with parents. This is illustrated well by a parent who, expressing the views of many, wrote, 'Martin Primary is a very happy, supportive school that encourages parental input.' Parents are very enthusiastic about the school and hold it in high regard. The following comment illustrates this well: 'I have nothing but praise for the school.' Parents show strong commitment and support, for example through the Parent, Carers and Teachers Association, which raises money for the school by arranging cake stalls and discos. Parents helped develop the outdoor playground as well as contributing to the home/school learning policy.

Parental support for the new headteacher is strong. She has provided stability for the school and has worked hard to gain the confidence of staff, who are fully supportive of her and are working well collectively to improve outcomes for pupils. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school. Already she has correctly evaluated the school's work and put a clear school development plan in place to move it forward. She has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning through monitoring, and on pupils' behaviour by improving policies and giving greater ownership of school rules to pupils themselves. The school recognises that due to amalgamation and the creation of new roles, some leaders and managers require appropriate training, coaching and experience in order to maximise their impact on pupils' progress.

From below average starting points, pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and attain broadly average standards. This prepares pupils well for the next stage of their schooling. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those speaking English as an additional language, progress at similar rates to their peers due to the good adult support they receive. The school's information about attainment in 2008 at the end of Year 6 shows that pupils attained in line with the national picture in English, and were just below in mathematics and science. The school has put plans in place to improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics, for example by having 'Problem of the Week'.

Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well, have good questioning skills, and use the interactive whiteboard to engage pupils. Teachers make lesson outcomes clear so that pupils know what they are learning about. Relationships between teachers and pupils are a strong feature, and this helps pupils to learn with confidence and explore new ideas, and contributes greatly to their outstanding enjoyment of school. A current focus for teaching in mathematics is to give pupils more opportunities to investigate problems.

The curriculum is good. It is well planned, broad, balanced, and stimulating for pupils. Enrichment activities such as regular themed days, theatre groups, puppet shows, and special weeks such as Art Week, all contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils behave excellently, and have positive attitudes and good attendance. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community through the school council, choir, orchestra, fund-raising activities and the termly school newspaper, 'The Martin'. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding; for example, they celebrate 'language of the month', learn about Shakespeare, and reflect on their achievements. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is outstanding, and as a result the school has attained Healthy School Status. They

participate in a wide range of sports activities, grow their own vegetables, and readily eat fruit and healthy lunches.

Pastoral care and support for pupils are a strength. Pupils are very well cared for, and health and safety procedures are robust. Visitors such as the fire and police service help pupils to develop an outstanding understanding about safety. Pupils' performance is regularly tracked, and during termly 'Pupil progress meetings', the progress of every child is discussed and extra support is provided for those that need it.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding below what is usually expected. Around a third of children are new to speaking English. Children quickly settle into the Nursery, helped by the excellent contacts established with parents before they begin. By the time they leave the Reception class they have made good progress in learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development, and many reach the goals expected for their age. Progress in English is particularly strong, being built on the good provision for those children who speak little English, and on the school's intensive focus on developing skills in sounds and letters.

Teaching is good overall, and staff take care to ensure children's good personal development and welfare. Lessons in the Nursery are often outstanding. Children are fascinated by the activities provided, concentrate very hard, and learn at an excellent pace. For example, they were excited by a dinosaur picture hunt, which involved them in counting how many they could find in the outdoor area. They then used binoculars to find dinosaur pictures outside the school grounds, and returned to the classroom to work out how to make model binoculars of their own. In this one activity they learned counting skills, how binoculars work, the names of some dinosaurs, and how to select and assemble appropriate materials for a construction task. Work is well planned to ensure good progress, although routine daily activities are occasionally not challenging enough for some children. The skills and depth of experience of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader have brought vision and quality to the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to solve problems.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels are helped to develop fully in their roles in order to maximise their impact on pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's tracking information shows that pupils make good progress and attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language progress in line with their peers, because of the regular tracking of progress and the good adult support provided, as well as effective additional resources.

The school's own attainment information highlighted that in 2008 the attainment of girls was not as strong as that of boys in English and mathematics. Their analysis shows that this was

due to the high proportion of girls in the cohort with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Current progress data show no marked difference between the performance of girls and boys.

Pupils' attainment overall in mathematics was not as strong as that in English. The school is implementing plans to ensure that pupils are provided with more opportunities to use their problem-solving skills. The school is also involving parents in order to raise standards in mathematics, for example by providing information on calculation methods.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are very happy. This is evident from their improved attendance. Pupils' outstanding personal development springs from the high quality of relationships between adults and pupils, and their very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils behave very well, and this is reflected in their respect for each other and the low rate of exclusions. They have an outstanding understanding about healthy lifestyles and how they can keep safe both in and out of school. Their contribution to their community is outstanding, as demonstrated through participation in the 'buddy reading' programme and the work carried out by the eco representatives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding, as pupils show very good respect and understanding of the different cultures within the school. The enrichment morning, when the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 work with the pupils in Key Stage 1, is another example of excellent social development. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously, has a voice in the school in helping to make it a better place, and is very proud of its impact on improving toilets as well as the outdoor environment. Year 6 were particularly proud of their edition of 'The Martin' newspaper, which they sell to raise money for charities. They develop their enterprise skills - for example, during non-uniform days and through the selling of old books in order to purchase new ones.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching across the school is good, and in several classes outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers set a range of activities to match the abilities of their pupils. These call for initiative, concentration and sustained hard work. Pupils become deeply involved in the work, and support staff are very effective in supporting groups and individuals in their learning. Pupils behave excellently and learn a lot in a short time. Some Year 6 pupils were asked to predict what the relationship would be between the height of a ramp and the distance travelled by a model car rolling down it. They discussed how they could collect reliable experimental data, and how to record them to confirm or disprove their prediction. They conducted their experiments, calculated averages of their results, and constructed and interpreted accurate line graphs. Activities like this extend pupils' thinking and accelerate their progress, but the school is aware that some lessons do not offer the more-able pupils sufficient challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum to motivate pupils and cater for their interests. The core programme for literacy is particularly strong, and there is an excellent range of additional support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or those that speak

English as an additional language. This underpins the good progress that pupils make in English. Information and communication technology is a strength of the school. Resources are excellent, and many pupils have become highly skilled in their use. There is very good provision in the arts - especially in music - and in sports. The curriculum encourages teachers to explore the links between different subjects in order to ensure that pupils transfer the skills learned in one subject area to another. Key Stage 2 lessons in Spanish enrich pupils' understanding of the world beyond the classroom. A rich programme of clubs, educational visits and visitors brings learning to life for the pupils. The school is currently working hard to raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils have greater opportunities to use their problem-solving skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Support for pupils' pastoral welfare is a strength of the school and is underpinned by very caring staff and outstanding relationships. An extensive range of valuable links with outside agencies extends the very good care provided in the school, and ensures that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, receive the support they need. This is illustrated well in the following comment made by parents, who wrote to say that their child received 'excellent additional support in reading and writing'. Pupils value the kind, caring and happy working ethos, and feel that their views are listened to. They are also confident that they can share with adults any problems or worries that they have. The school offers a balanced and interesting range of enjoyable activities for pupils in the extended school provision with breakfast club, lunchtime and after-school clubs. Child protection, safety and safeguarding systems are rigorous, and are in place. They are well managed and promote a safe and supportive learning environment. Assessment and tracking systems are securely in place, and marking is up to date, but there are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' academic feedback to pupils. As a result, not all pupils are clear about what they need to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. In the short time that the headteacher has been in the school, she has made a positive impact on its work. She has put plans in place to equip leaders and managers at all levels with the appropriate professional development opportunities and training, to help them lead their areas with confidence and make a greater impact on pupils' progress. These plans are in their early stages. The headteacher has identified ways in which community cohesion can be further enhanced to develop pupils' global understanding. The school attained the International School Award in 2008 for work in Poland and Spain. The governing body is very supportive of the new headteacher. The governors have a good understanding of the school's work, and contribute effectively to the evaluation process. Together, they provide good capacity for the school to move forward.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
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?	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?	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	3
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?	2
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**

02 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Martin Primary School, London, N2 9JP

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you so much for helping us when we came to find out how well you are getting on. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to some of you, and meeting some of your parents. We agree with you and your parents that Martin Primary is a good school.

Here is a list of just some of the good things that we found out about your school.

- You make good progress, and attain broadly average standards by the time you leave in Year 6.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good; teachers provide interesting experiences, and children make good progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you enjoy school very much.
- The curriculum is good because of all the different visits, visitors, and themed weeks such as Art Week.
- All the adults in your school show good care for you, and as a result you feel well looked after.
- Teaching is good because lessons are well planned, activities are interesting, and teachers make it clear to you what you have to learn, which helps you to make good progress.
- All the adults in your school work hard to ensure that you receive a good education.

Even in a good school like yours there are areas that can be improved. I have asked that you have more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, so that you can attain better standards. I have also asked that some leaders and managers at the school understand their roles well, so that they can help you make even better progress. I am sure that you will continue to enjoy school and work hard!

Yours faithfully

Pritiben Patel

Lead Inspector