

St Martin's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105703
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	336542
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Ofstell
Headteacher	Mrs Dianne Wright
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with two governors, staff, a group of pupils, a parent, the School Improvement Partner and the extended schools coordinator as well as talking informally with many pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation related to governance, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, and the school's action planning and policies. They took into account the views expressed in the inspection questionnaires returned by 38 parents and carers, eight staff and 100 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the school can provide convincing evidence that pupils' achievement, learning and progress are at least satisfactory
- the quality of teaching, to determine whether it is good enough throughout the school to enable pupils to achieve as well as they are able
- the strength of the provision for pupils who have additional needs
- the quality of leadership and management, to determine whether it is good enough to help drive forward improvements.

Information about the school

This average-sized school serves an area with mainly rented accommodation, some parts of which are undergoing regeneration. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is double the national average. The great majority of pupils are White British but an increasing number belong to minority ethnic groups and a few, mainly from Eastern Europe, are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Around one third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and broadly average numbers have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides a facility for pupils with visual impairment but no such pupils were on roll at the time of the inspection. In some year groups there are many more boys than girls.

Over recent years the school has participated voluntarily in the local authority's Intensive Support Programme to help raise standards in reading and writing and to improve the use of assessment. It is part of Hathershaw collaborative offering extended schools provision in a number of schools. In September 2009 it joined West Oldham Trust centred on improving outcomes for all members of the community. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were appointed, at short notice, in September 2009 on the substantive headteacher's two year secondment to work for the local authority.

The school holds the Healthy Schools award and has recently achieved the Activemark for the third time, the platinum Oral award for the second time and, in June 2009, the Eco-Schools silver award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Martin's is extremely popular with its pupils and with their parents and carers because it provides a very warm welcome to all. It is successful at helping pupils to feel safe, grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Its greatest strength is that it enables them to grow in tolerance and respect for others and to think deeply about moral issues. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Adults act as good role models, foster good relationships with pupils and offer them good quality care, guidance and support. This means that newcomers, including those who arrive at the school speaking no English, settle in swiftly because all members of the school, whatever their age, offer them the hand of friendship. The school promotes community cohesion well, making good use of its many partnerships to develop links with different groups.

Most children's skills on entry to Nursery are very low. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this satisfactory progress continues throughout the school. Taking into account the good progress made in personal development and English, together with the evidence of current progress in pupils' books, achievement is satisfactory. Although standards in English have risen to broadly average since the previous inspection, levels of attainment overall, and particularly in mathematics, remain consistently well below those achieved by pupils nationally. One of the main reasons for this is that teachers do not make sufficiently good use of assessment when planning lessons. Too often, all pupils are set the same work so that the level of challenge is not suitable for all, especially those who are more able. In other respects, such as behaviour management, the organisation and explanation of activities, and the quality of marking, teaching is satisfactory.

The very new leadership team has created a good sense of teamwork in the school. There is clarity about priorities and a willingness among all staff, which has been developing since the previous inspection, to share responsibilities. However, leadership at all levels is only currently becoming familiar with the use of assessment information to identify precise areas for improvement. As a result, self-evaluation is not consistently accurate and action plans are not always sufficiently precise. In a short time strategic actions, such as the movement of teachers to different year groups and the introduction of one-to-one tuition in mathematics for some Year 6 pupils, have had a positive impact. This confirms that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics to at least the level of those being achieved in

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English.

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school by:
 - raising the level of challenge for all pupils, especially those who are more able
 - making more cross-curricular links between numeracy and other subjects
 - ensuring that adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage take every opportunity to develop children's communication skills.
- Improve the use of information gained from assessing and tracking pupils' progress to:
 - provide an accurate foundation on which to build the school's self-evaluation and action planning
 - plan lessons throughout the whole school so that they consistently provide suitable levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

From a low base on entry, pupils of all ages, abilities and ethnicity make great strides forward in their personal development so that the school operates as a very harmonious, happy community in which pupils enjoy their learning. In lessons, they settle and behave well, follow instructions and take pride in the presentation of their work, although many are very reliant on adults to ensure that they are working to best effect. Attainment in English has been broadly average for three years during which time pupils have achieved significantly better in this subject than might have been expected from the levels gained at Key Stage 1. Over this period attainment overall and particularly in mathematics has been too low. In this subject the test results of Year 6 pupils in 2009 were considerably lower than expected and the majority of pupils had made slow progress. Work in the books of current pupils shows that, while standards in mathematics are well below those expected for their age, pupils are making suitable gains in their learning across a range of subjects.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of circumstances. They take a strong stance against bullying and racism. For example, Year 6 pupils made a successful bid for funding to support a visit from a dance company which proved the highlight of many activities devoted to enhancing appreciation of Indian and other cultures. Pupils participate keenly in physical exercise, sometimes through extra-curricular activities at other schools, and know that, for instance, eating fruit provides vitamin C that prevents scurvy. Older pupils act as cheerful playground pals and pupils in many classrooms make good use of talking partners or offer help to others who are stuck. School councillors have developed a pamphlet informing fellow pupils, and their parents and carers, of the importance of regular attendance in an effort to raise this above average. Pupils are generous and inventive fundraisers for charity and,

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through Eco-Schools and similar activities, make a strong contribution to the community. They have a clear understanding that self-respect and fair treatment of others are highly valuable assets which, in the school's motto, help them to shine.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good-quality relationships ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils enjoy school. Teachers are experts at curtailing any potential inattention or silliness, making good use of signs as well as words to gain attention. They usually explain clearly activities or new learning but this often leads to pupils sitting for too long listening, rather than participating actively in the lesson. This slow pace means that pupils often have too little time to practise their skills and this can lead to unfinished work and not enough time at the end of lessons to consolidate the new learning that has taken place. Teachers plan lessons diligently, often choosing activities with particular appeal for boys, but do not consistently identify tasks of varying levels of challenge to cater for pupils' different abilities. This is because they do not make sufficient use of assessment information, or their evaluation of previous lessons or pupils' work, to guide their planning. Teachers

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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mark pupils' work with helpful suggestions for improvement. Teaching assistants provide good support in the classroom and during small-group work.

The strong focus placed on promoting personal development is successful and helps pupils to leave the school as confident, competent young people. Teachers promote literacy skills across a range of subjects but there is little evidence of similar promotion of numeracy skills. Links within the community provide enhancement, for example, chances to experience outdoor activities or ball-skills coaching from professionals, and give older pupils opportunities to sample science in a high school. Good quality support at times of transition enables pupils to settle well into the different phases of education. High quality displays celebrate pupils' achievements and also provide guidance about, for instance, 'how to learn'. Staff know the pupils very well as individuals and provide a reliable source of support for them and their families in times of need. The recent organisation of the school into family groups creates a sense of belonging that pupils value. Well written individual education plans and close working with outside agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable support that allows them to make similar progress to their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are united under the new leadership team and determined to improve the quality of the outcomes for pupils. Many staff have recently taken on new responsibilities or new classes and, with good nurturing from the senior leaders, are growing more securely into their roles. They are fully aware that the assessment systems introduced over recent months are able to provide very useful information to guide both whole-school and classroom planning. They are also aware that their skills in using the data are not yet strong enough. Observations made of the quality of teaching and learning are perceptive and provide useful pointers that are already leading to improvements. Governors' growing understanding of their roles and responsibilities is enabling them to hold the school suitably to account. Sound systems and procedures, including safe recruitment of staff and good attention to health and safety, ensure that pupils are safeguarded from harm. The school is very inclusive but weaknesses in the use of data mean that it currently provides only satisfactory equality of opportunity. Strong links with the community, including with two schools with very different populations of pupils, along with careful evaluation of the impact of its actions mean

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that the school promotes community cohesion well. However, there is currently little in place to sustain the global links that it formed some years ago. The school has taken very effective action since the previous inspection to increase parents' and carers' involvement in their children's education. Family learning opportunities and guidance, such as how to help their children read, are having a positive impact and changing parents' and carers' attitudes to school so that, for instance, many helped their children in Year 4 to create impressive models of Tudor houses.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children join the Nursery with skills that are at levels at least one year behind those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress but, except for their physical development which is broadly average, the levels of children's skills at the end of Reception are still well below expectations. Their emotional and creative development, and their ability to link letters to sounds and to use language for communication and thinking are all particularly weak. This is largely because staff do not make sufficient use of their observations of individuals' achievements to ensure that they plan activities with suitable precision to cater for their specific needs. Some staff are too quick to provide suggestions for children rather than to help them think for, and explain themselves in more than one-word answers. Specific programmes to help develop individuals' communication skills are not carried through into everyday practice therefore missing opportunities for children to consolidate their learning. Staff provide children with a warm welcome and key workers offer a consistent source of support for

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individuals and families. Good promotion of personal skills means that children develop these basic requirements that enable them to concentrate on more academic learning as they grow older. Good use of praise helps children grow in confidence. Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that the provision runs smoothly, that staff work well as a team and that parents and carers are seen as partners in their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was low. The views expressed by the parents and carers who responded are exceptionally positive. They praise the care provided for children and the way that class teachers communicate closely with them over specific matters such as individuals' progress or behaviour. Typically, they comment, 'The teachers are fantastic,' and, 'There have been good changes since September.' Most of all they are pleased that their children are happy at school and settle well. Inspectors agree that children enjoy school, are well looked after and that the school is successful at engaging parents and carers in their children's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Martin's C of E Junior Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 257 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	62	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	72	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	59	14	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	56	15	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	62	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	59	14	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	69	10	26	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	49	13	33	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	62	12	31	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	67	11	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	51	17	44	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	59	13	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	74	8	21	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's C of E Junior Infant and Nursery School, Oldham, OL8 2PY

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave all the team when we visited your school recently, you really made us feel at home. A big 'thank you' to all of you who went out of your way to speak with us, especially those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to do so. Yours is a satisfactory school. It has some things that it does really well and others that we have asked the adults to concentrate on a bit harder to make them better – a bit like when your teachers mark your work and give you hints about what to focus on next to help you improve!

It was a real pleasure to see how well you all get on with each other, how you welcome newcomers and are happy to make friends with people who are different from you. We were also pleased to see how well you behave. We were impressed by how much you know about keeping safe and healthy and, especially, by how well you understand that showing respect for yourself and others is very important. You really know the meaning of your SHINE motto.

Your teachers work really hard to help you settle and feel relaxed in school. They have also worked hard to help you raise your standards in English. We have now asked them to make sure that your mathematics standards also improve. To do this we have suggested that they make better use of the information they have about what you can do. We have asked them to plan lessons so that they challenge you all equally, however easy or difficult you find learning. We have also suggested that your new senior leaders use the information to help them identify the most important areas to improve.

I know that all the staff are working together as a strong team which is determined to help the school to improve. I hope that you will do your best to help too, by making sure you attend regularly and by continuing to enjoy learning.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Sarah Drake

Lead inspector

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