

St Martin's CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125157
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340730
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs L Hutchings
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching and support staff, governors, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils who have special educational needs, minutes of governors' meetings and 92 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact of school's provision for pupils' personal development
- how well teaching and learning meet the needs of different groups of pupils
- the impact on the quality of learning of the revision of the curriculum and the use of assessment
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governors, in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

St Martin's is larger than most infant schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage and although a minority speak English as an additional language, this number is growing. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but the number who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The majority of these pupils have early language or specific learning difficulties.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Martin's School provides a good, and improving, education for its pupils. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know the school's strengths well and what needs to be refined further. The school's view of itself is accurate and the track record of consistently improving standards since the last inspection through more effective monitoring systems shows that it has a good capacity to continue improving. With the renewed help from parents, staff have a shared ambition to turn what they know to be a good school into an outstanding one. There are good partnerships with the community, the local church and with other schools and organisations. One parent reflected the thoughts of many by writing, 'St Martin's strikes the right balance between learning and achievement and making the environment safe and enjoyable for the children. I have had a child in the infants from 2005 to present and I have seen marked improvements in the creative approach to ensuring each child is stretched/supported'.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and are inquisitive learners. They enter the school with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Very effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make good progress immediately in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good start is consolidated through good teaching and so standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. Much of the pupils' success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. Although teaching is consistently effective, a very small number of lesson activities are not sufficiently fine-tuned to cater for individual pupils' needs. Individual improvement targets and outstanding support from teaching assistants for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently raise their levels of achievement significantly.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being help their all-round achievement. They acquire a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school council are justifiably proud of the input they have made to influence changes both inside and outside the school. Attendance is above average, as pupils enjoy all their time at school. Pupils' good behaviour, together with their above average skills in reading, writing and mathematics, prepare them well for the next stage in their learning and later life.

The curriculum covers all subjects well and is enhanced by a range of additional activities, visits and visitors. The school has started to make it even more relevant and exciting. As a result, pupils increasingly enjoy opportunities to practise and further consolidate their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and both staff and parents agree that they are striving to 'make the curriculum come alive'. However, different subjects have not yet been linked well

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enough to ensure that all lessons are as relevant to pupils' interests as possible.

The school does much to promote their place in the local community and works effectively with many local nurseries, playgroups and local businesses. The contribution of the recently reformed parent teacher association is exceptional, and is greatly appreciated by all involved. The audit of community cohesion, undertaken by the headteacher and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of these factors in the school's context. While these links with the local community are good, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse Great Britain are not developed sufficiently well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that by July 2010 pupils are enabled to embed their learning and skills, by:
 - modifying the curriculum to provide exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas
 - improving the quality of teachers' daily planning to cater consistently well for individual pupils' interests and needs.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse Britain and extend the provision for community cohesion by:
 - building on the findings of the recent analysis of community cohesion
 - implementing the plans for twinning with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, pupils make good progress regardless of their background or ability. In most lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in an excellent Year 2 lesson where the pupils' responses, when using their own carefully constructed template, created autumn leaf pictures they all enjoyed. As in all lessons observed, the pupils could hardly wait to share their thoughts and ideas. This is a reflection of the way the school constantly encourages good behaviour, attentiveness and hard work. The school's data show that their focus this year on writing has been very successful. In the 2009 national tests, results again improved on the previous year and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was above that found in most infant schools.

Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is caring. As one parent said, 'The school has a real community feel. It is friendly and actively involves parents in all aspects of their children's education'. The impact of the school's good support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' good standards of behaviour and social skills. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is good. They are given a good grounding in citizenship and in contributing to the community

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through, for example, being playground mentors and school councillors. The resulting thoughtfulness and care shown by pupils was evident in an assembly led by the local vicar, where pupils encouraged and applauded the school choir. The effective care begins in the Reception classes, gives the children a real sense of determining their own way forward, and guarantees their full involvement in all activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is effective and so pupils make good progress. A common planning format for lessons includes specific provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that these pupils make good progress. More boys than girls have literacy difficulties, and many pupils have benefited from tailored individual or small-group literacy sessions, which have successfully helped to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses to learn and identify letter sounds have aided their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has had a positive effect on their learning in other subjects. This helps focus the work of the excellent support staff in lessons. In addition, there are well-targeted

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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additional programmes. These approaches mean that different groups of pupils generally make equally good progress.

An outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson on common 3D shapes involved pupils in carefully structured, practical tasks with simple resources. It is lessons like these that the school is planning to make a more integral part of its curriculum to enhance learning and enjoyment even further. Currently, the curriculum covers all subjects effectively and is enhanced by a range of additional activities. All staff are looking for ways to enthuse pupils further through modifying and sharpening their approach to delivering the curriculum, and are keen to build on what has already been achieved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school and works closely with a wide range of other agencies and partners to achieve success and enhance provision. In this school, teamwork is strong and the deputy headteacher and her colleagues share the headteacher's vision for improvement, and are clearly excited by the possibilities that their new curriculum will offer to the pupils.

The administrative and caretaking teams play a central role within the school. Their work is much appreciated. There is a corporate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development based on an accurate diagnosis of its work. The school, therefore, has a good strategy to support different pupil groups, which has led to improved pupil outcomes in many areas. There is an effective plan for further development and a shared vision and willingness to work hard to make further improvements. The governing body brings a wide range of skills to bear to act as critical friend and requests explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously and is effective in this. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other local schools and agencies are harnessed well. The need to expand its links to provide a national perspective is well understood by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception classes and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to make all children feel welcome, as the open days witnessed on the inspection showed very clearly. This smooth introduction to the school is achieved despite children arriving from a wide range of different nurseries and playgroups. As one parent observed, summing up the comments of many, 'As Reception Year parents, we have been very impressed with the lengths and effort the school has made to ensure our child has settled in' this was excellent and very reassuring'.

Staff know the children very well and the good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis and through meetings, so parents understand how their children learn. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed extremely well and clear priorities are set for improvement. The enhancements in provision and outcomes since the last inspection are recent but considerable and clear, and are testament to the excellent leadership of the coordinator.

Planning is generally good because careful account is taken of the regular ongoing assessments of children's progress, which are also recorded in their 'learning journeys' booklet. Adults work together well as an effective team, provide good routines, have high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and relationships are excellent. Consequently, children develop well personally and engage well with their learning. Teaching and learning are good. Stimulating and interesting activities are provided and there is a suitable mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children's language skills are being developed well with a clear focus on vocabulary. The large

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outdoor areas are now used well to support learning. As the school is aware, the changes made are not yet fully embedded and, as yet, children do not always have enough opportunities to make their own choices and decisions.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority hold the school in high regard. They commented on the openness of staff, their children's enjoyment of learning, the outstanding start their children made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the way that the school welcomes all children and the care shown by all staff. Many parents agreed with the sentiments of one who wrote, 'The teaching at the school is very engaging for the children. Above all, we are confident that our son is well cared for and protected by all members of staff'. However, a small number of parents expressed misgivings about the school and these were shared with the headteacher and staff. There were no particular trends in these very few criticisms received by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Martin's CofE Infant 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	65	31	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	64	32	35	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	35	49	53	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	46	41	45	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	51	40	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	46	43	47	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	53	40	44	3	3	1	1
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)	44	48	38	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	45	41	45	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	35	44	48	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	34	33	36	9	10	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	40	39	42	10	11	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	61	32	35	2	2	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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin's CofE Infant School, Epsom, KT18 7AA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing how you work in your lessons, and sharing your assemblies, lunch and playtimes. We also enjoyed talking to your parents and reading their questionnaires. We worked closely with your headteacher. We also spent time talking to some of your teachers, governors and parents and looking at your work.

We have judged your school to be good. We were pleased to see how the school has improved since its last inspection. Here are some of the things we liked most.

- The school looks after you well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start at the school.
- You behave well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- You all have good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want.
- You understand how to live healthily and really enjoy school.
- There are exciting things for you to do in school, on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school well.

We have asked your teachers to think hard about how they can make all the subjects you learn exciting and interesting, and as well matched as possible to your individual needs and interests. We have also asked your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places that are different from where you live. You can help by continuing to listen carefully and take note of what they say.

Yours faithfully,

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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