

Martley CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116831
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312418
Inspection date	1 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Sanderson
Headteacher	Helen Davies
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Martley Worcester WR6 6QA
Telephone number	01886 888201
Fax number	01886 888201

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Martley is a small primary school that serves a rural area to the north west of Worcester. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Martley is a good school where pupils achieve well. They are well prepared for their next stage of education because they get such a solid grounding in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school, progress is usually good in lessons because teachers prepare very well and think carefully about the resources they will use. Progress in reading is good in all years, but in Years 1 and 2 progress for pupils of average and lower ability is a bit slower in writing and mathematics. This is because the tasks they are given are not sufficiently challenging. However, the work given to pupils in Years 3 to 6 is consistently more demanding and as a result they make good progress in mathematics and science. In these years, most pupils do well in their writing, but the progress of the most able is only satisfactory because they are not given enough opportunities to be creative. Older pupils make slightly better progress than younger ones because they receive very good guidance on how to improve their work.

Attendance is very high because pupils like coming to school, where they have lots of friends and get on well with each other. Parents rightly praise the school for its work in helping children to settle quickly into the Foundation Stage. Children were already confidently following routines after being at the school for only four weeks. Pupils are very well looked after by the staff, who ensure they remain safe. Pupils behave well and are polite because they respond positively to the expectations of staff in these aspects of their personal development.

The headteacher and governors have a clear picture of where the school's main strengths and weaknesses lie. Pupils' progress is analysed particularly well in Years 3 to 6, so managers have been able to carefully target their efforts on where they will have the biggest impact on standards. The analysis is not as good in Years 1 and 2, so actions are not as effective. Nevertheless, the improvements in standards of writing show that the school's managers have the skills necessary to continue to take the school forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the Foundation Stage. They settle very quickly because links with the pre-school are strong. Children from pre-school come to the school for lunch every day, so they know many of the faces and start getting used to routines. Lessons provide a good balance of learning through play and more formal sessions. A strong emphasis is placed on activities that teach children to read and write, as these are relatively weaker areas of development when they arrive, while building upon their good personal development. The result is a group of children who are confident and well equipped to start Year 1. However, because of changes to the recording system, recent assessments of children's progress have not always been accurate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of average and lower ability Years 1 and 2 pupils in writing and mathematics by ensuring that the work is sufficiently demanding.
- Improve the progress in writing of the most able pupils in Years 3 to 6 by giving them more opportunities to be creative.
- Improve leadership and management by analysing pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 in the same depth as in other years.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well at the school, improving the standards they attain from average when they join to above average when they leave. Progress in writing, although satisfactory, has been slower than other subjects over the past few years, but results in 2007 showed a significant improvement on the part of average and lower ability pupils. All pupils leave with good spelling, punctuation and grammar, but the more able do not show the creativity that would usually be expected of them. Progress in writing and in mathematics remains slower in Years 1 and 2 than in reading, which is particularly good throughout the school. Nevertheless, more able pupils make good progress in these years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and most speak highly of it, especially the orderly and welcoming atmosphere. This enjoyment is reflected in excellent attendance and good punctuality. Pupils behave well in lessons and play safely and sensibly, although some in Years 2, 3 and 4 are still a bit immature for their age and are quick to complain to a teacher over very minor disagreements. Pupils form good relationships and show kindness to one another. They are tolerant of people different from themselves but have rather limited knowledge of beliefs and cultures other than their own. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and, despite too many crisps and sweetened drinks in lunchboxes, most make healthy choices. Pupils take on responsibility well, for example, school councillors are keen to develop their new role, and many Year 6 pupils have been trained as 'young leaders'. Some older ones, however, are rather reticent in putting forward their opinions. Contributions to the wider community are also good through pupils' involvement in local events such as the Annual Martley Spring Gardening Show and their links with the local church.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are consistently planned and prepared in great detail, so all resources are readily available and teachers are prepared for all eventualities. This means that lessons continue without interruption and that pupils learn at a good pace. Physical education lessons, for example, have a 'dry' alternative if pupils are unable to go outside. In one Foundation Stage lesson, children were naming words ending in 'ig'. 'Fig', said one. 'What's a fig?' said others, at which point the teacher produced two figs, one already cut up so they could see inside. Planning includes different tasks for different groups of pupils, according to their ability. In Years 1 and 2, however, these tasks are sometimes too easy for those of average or lower ability in mathematics and writing, which slows their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

From the moment they start in the Foundation Stage to the time they leave in Year 6, the curriculum provides pupils with a good grounding in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. This is one of the reasons why pupils do well in these subjects, although higher

attainers are not given enough opportunities to demonstrate creativity in their writing, so their progress is not as good as that of other groups.

The school provides many clubs and other activities that play an important role in developing pupils' social skills and moral values by getting them to play and work with those from other year groups. The school has good links with other organisations, and visitors come to the school to expand pupils' horizons and understanding of the wider world. Pupils do projects on different cultures and religions, but these do not leave a lasting impression on them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff take good care of pupils. They know their backgrounds and are quick to spot when individuals have concerns. Staff are good role models for pupils. Child protection procedures are robust. Even Father Christmas is checked at Martley! Risk assessments are carried out well for activities in school, but systems for ensuring that all staff are aware of these on outside trips are not tight enough. Academic guidance is very good for older pupils. Work is assessed accurately and individual targets are set that show pupils exactly what they need to do to improve. This is supported by some excellent marking that praises success while pointing out any errors that need to be corrected. The system is not so successful for younger pupils because they often have far too many targets, some of which they cannot understand.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected because the headteacher and governors have been clearly focused on raising standards. Pupils' progress is tracked particularly well in Years 3 to 6, so the headteacher has been able to pinpoint exactly where improvements can be made and set challenging targets for improvement. The actions taken have been successful in improving pupils' progress in writing, which is now as good as in other subjects. The same rigour of analysis is not applied to Years 1 to 3, so progress here remains slightly slower in mathematics and writing than the rest of the school.

There is a good team spirit among staff, all of whom are clearly focused on doing the best for pupils. Subject coordinators play a strong role in checking the quality of teaching, although there is variation in the guidance provided for teachers. Some, for example, are given clear pointers as to how even the best of lessons could be improved, while others simply have their lessons described.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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 the 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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Martley CofE Primary School, Worcester, WR6 6QA

Thank you very much for all your help when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your good manners and how well you get with one another.

You go to a good school where you do well. You learn to read much quicker than we often see. Some of the younger ones find the work a bit easy in maths and their writing, so we have asked the teachers to make sure they are given work that really makes them think hard. Your teachers plan your lessons really well, so you get lots of work done. By the time you leave school, you are good at all the basics of reading, writing and maths, but some of the cleverest of you could show a bit more imagination when you are writing. So we have asked the teachers to give you more practice at being creative and letting your imagination run wild!

You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and you clearly come whenever you can. All the grown ups take good care of you and are quick to help if you have any problems. You try your best to live a healthy life, but this is not helped by some of your packed lunches. You could help yourselves here by asking your mums and dads not to give you crisps and fizzy drinks for lunch, and asking them for something healthier.

Your school is getting better and better. The headteacher and others who run the school know what to do to make things better because they check your progress very carefully. We have asked them to do the same for Years 1 and 2, so pupils in those years learn even more.

Thank you again for your help.

With all best wishes for your futures

David Driscoll Lead inspector



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