

St Martin's Garden Primary School

Lympsham Green, Odd Down, Bath, Somerset BA2 2UN

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, the school has been through a period of unstable leadership. This has hindered school improvement.
- Pupils do not make consistent academic progress. As a result, too many do not reach the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage.
- Leaders' development plans are not focused precisely enough on the specific aspects that need to improve.
- Subject leaders' evaluation and monitoring sometimes lack precision. Therefore, plans for improving teaching do not focus sharply enough on remedying specific weaknesses in different subjects.
- Leaders are working hard to improve attendance, but it remains too low.
- Leaders do not use the pupil premium effectively enough to promote rapid improvement in disadvantaged pupils' attainment.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Teaching does not consistently challenge pupils to achieve well.
- The curriculum is not yet designed well enough to ensure good progress in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Some pupils do not have the resilience to apply their skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching in the early years requires improvement. It does ignite children's enthusiasm and a significant number do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff form positive relationships with pupils. The school promotes pupils' welfare effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. This includes those in the specialist resource, the Margaret Coates Centre.
- Phonics teaching has improved. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is rising year on year.
- Pupils feel safe at school and say that adults look after them well. Most pupils are keen to learn.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - senior and middle leaders' development plans focus more sharply on the areas that need to improve
 - the pupil premium is used more effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils
 - the curriculum is further developed, so that pupils gain the depth of knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate for their age in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve, so that they consistently plan work which challenges pupils
 - providing well-focused support for pupils who need to catch up, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Improving leadership and teaching in the early years by:
 - improving the accuracy of assessment and teachers' expectations, so that learning planned for children takes more account of what children already know, understand and can do
 - ensuring that children are routinely provided with teaching that encourages them to learn.
- Improving personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving attendance
 - capitalising on pupils' positive attitudes to learning by developing their resilience across all their subjects.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken to identify how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In recent years, the school has experienced instability in leadership. This has limited senior leaders' capacity to identify and improve areas of weakness in the school's performance. The trust is now providing support and training for staff. These are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, although it is not yet good.
- Senior leaders' development plans are not sharply focused enough on the areas that need to improve. Similarly, subject leaders do not use the school's assessment and monitoring systems with the precision needed to identify how to improve teaching rapidly. As a result, some weaknesses remain in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently well developed. Although pupils are provided with opportunities to learn new skills in a range of topics, sequences of lessons are often not securely planned. This means that pupils do not develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in depth.
- Leaders have not ensured that the pupil premium is used effectively enough. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils are still catching up from low starting points. They do not attain as well as they should by the end of key stage 2.
- The two special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) have a good understanding of the difficulties that pupils with SEND face. They work effectively with families and external agencies to provide well-targeted pastoral support. This enables pupils to manage their emotions appropriately and engage in their learning. Pupils are well supported to develop positive relationships with their peers. Parents typically praise the school for the specialist care and support they provide. However, it will take more time for pastoral support to have a consistently strong impact on pupils' academic progress.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in sporting activities such as rounders and gymnastics. However, there is no clear plan for the use of the sport premium. This limits how well leaders are able to evaluate the effectiveness of this additional funding for sport and physical education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported effectively. For example, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in lessons and assemblies. In Year 6, pupils reflect on different forms of life when, for example, they learn about Darwin's theory of evolution.
- Most parents who responded to the online survey and spoke with inspectors are happy with the work of the school. They typically praise the school for its 'dedicated and caring staff'. However, some parents express concerns about leadership and their children's progress.

Governance of the school

- The trust is keen to support the school and recent work has begun to improve the quality of teaching.

- Governors, many of whom have been in post since the school opened, are committed to improving the school. They regularly visit the school to meet leaders and review pupils' learning and rates of attendance. They ask appropriate questions to check the impact of the school's work. However, they have not been able to ensure that the school's work is consistently good in these areas.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school supports pupils' pastoral needs well. Leaders communicate effectively with families and provide them with appropriate help. Leaders do not hesitate to seek the advice of external agencies when necessary to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Leaders provide staff with updates to safeguarding training. All adults understand the need to be vigilant. Staff recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and can explain how to refer their concerns.
- Leaders have recently updated and improved their record keeping, so that details are readily accessible. Leaders routinely check the impact of their actions and modify their support when appropriate.
- All essential checks are made to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. The details are thoroughly recorded on the school's single central record. This process is overseen effectively by the governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time in all key stages has been too variable in quality. As a result, too few pupils make consistently good progress.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not precise enough and their expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough. As a result, teaching does not routinely build effectively on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Support from the trust, however, is beginning to improve the quality of teaching.
- Staff use appropriate questioning to assess pupils' learning but sometimes do not probe pupils' understanding deeply. When this occurs, it limits how well pupils are supported to extend their skills and knowledge. This can hinder pupils consolidating and applying their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Conversely, staff model learning well, which helps pupils understand what is expected of them.
- Phonics teaching has improved and is usually well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, younger pupils are making better progress in securing their early reading skills. However, some lower-attaining pupils still struggle to decode words accurately or comprehend what they read.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop an interest in reading. For example, the school has a well-stocked library and older pupils enjoy choosing books provided through the Young Readers' project. However, the teaching of reading across the school does not build on pupils' reading skills well enough to ensure that pupils routinely achieve their best.

- The school has changed its approach to planning sequences of lessons in mathematics and writing, to enable pupils to build better on their previous learning. Where teaching is improving, pupils are beginning to consolidate their knowledge and skills. For example, Year 3 pupils identify fractions, then apply their calculation skills to add and subtract fractions. Pupils across the school are developing their sentence structure and vocabulary. However, these improvements are not yet consistently embedded across the school.
- Staff in the Margaret Coates Centre understand pupils' complex needs and barriers to learning. As a result, they provide bespoke pastoral support, which is improving pupils' engagement in their learning and relationships with others. Consequently, some pupils are now making better academic progress. However, some teaching activities planned for pupils are not consistently focused on pupils' starting points. This hinders pupils from making the best possible academic progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners, but some pupils are not able to apply their skills effectively across all subjects. Their understanding of how to improve their own learning is not well developed.
- Pupils are encouraged to live by the school's values, 'Be kind, try hard, do your best.' As a result, pupils usually persevere with their learning, even when it is not particularly inspiring or sufficiently demanding.
- Pupils are polite and keen to talk about their work. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility, such as becoming members of the school council.
- Staff build positive relationships with pupils, which helps pupils feel valued. Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to if they are upset.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in the activities the school provides to enhance their learning. For example, pupils enjoy residential trips and opportunities to visit Longleat and the Bristol Science Museum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where teaching is less effective, adults do not respond well to pupils' disengagement, and low-level disruption ensues. On these occasions, some pupils are disrespectful to adults.
- Attendance has recently started to improve. Leaders work closely with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. However, despite leaders' efforts, a significant number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should, including

some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This has hindered them from taking full advantage of their education.

- Leaders have tackled incidents of extremely poor behaviour well. Leaders liaise with external agencies and produce precisely focused behaviour plans. There is a consistent approach to helping pupils to manage their behaviour. As a result, the behaviour of pupils who previously struggled to manage their emotions appropriately has improved. The number of exclusions has reduced. Most pupils behave well in and out of class, because they know what is expected of them and are keen to learn.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes are happy, sociable affairs. Pupils enjoy spending time chatting and playing with their friends. Pupils understand routines well and transitions into and out of class are effectively managed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's latest assessment information and pupils' work confirm that current pupils' achievement is too variable, because leaders' and teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- In 2017, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was well below average. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics improved and reached the national average. However, many pupils did not catch up quickly enough to reach the expected standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below average in 2018. Many pupils enter the school with weaker skills than those seen nationally. However, their progress in the early years and key stage 1 is not yet sufficient to enable them to reach the expected standard.
- Although the school supports pupils' welfare needs well, some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not make consistently strong academic progress. This hinders these pupils from catching up from their low starting points quickly enough.
- Outcomes in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics are not consistently good. This is because sequences of lesson in the wider curriculum are not well planned. As a result, pupils do not develop the depth of skills and understanding appropriate for their age in a range of subjects.
- Some recent improvements to teaching are starting to have a positive impact. For example, improvements to the teaching of phonics are reversing previously weaker outcomes. Consequently, more pupils are achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Year 2 pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in Year 1 are making better progress than previously.
- Many pupils can apply their knowledge of phonics to read accurately. However, the teaching of reading is not planned well enough to have a significant impact on pupils' wider reading skills, such as comprehension.
- In mathematics, pupils are beginning to apply the skills they have learned to solve problems. Pupils are developing their speaking and listening skills and improving the structure of their writing. However, it is too soon to determine if these improvements can be fully sustained so that they consistently impact on pupils' outcomes.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Over time, too few children have left the early years with a good level of development. Last year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development improved but was still below the national average.
- Teachers' planning is not precisely grounded enough in an understanding of children's prior learning. As a result, some children do not gain secure knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Leaders are aware that many children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. However, the teaching and support they provide are not yet sharply focused on supporting children to make strong progress to catch up.
- Children's work shows that some children have made progress in mathematics and writing, but this is not consistent. As a result, almost half of the children currently in the early years are still working below what is typical for their age.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are underdeveloped. The opportunities for children to become absorbed in purposeful and exciting learning are limited. As a result, some children often show little enthusiasm for learning, because they are not inspired to explore and find things out. The most able children are not sufficiently challenged.
- Staff do not make their expectations of children's behaviour explicit enough. Consequently, some children are disrespectful and choose not to listen to adults' instructions.
- Phonics teaching is improving children's ability to read accurately. However, children are not yet consistently transferring this knowledge into how to spell words and construct sentences for themselves.
- The learning environment is safe. Staff have been suitably trained to keep children free from harm. Parents are happy with the care and support that adults provide in the early years. They typically comment that communication is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	143108
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10088280

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julia Garratt
Headteacher	Julie Jones (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01225 832112
Website	www.stmartinsgarden.org.uk
Email address	School@stmartinsgarden.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Palladian Academy Trust.
- The headteacher left the school in March 2019. The deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher until a new headteacher takes up her post in September 2019.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school. The Margaret Coates Centre provides specialist support for 23 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school is in the top 20% of all schools for the proportion of disadvantaged pupils. It is also in the top 20% of schools for the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan and for pupils who require support for special educational needs.
- In 2018, pupils' prior attainment was well below that of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups.

- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not, or is believed not to be, English is similar to that of pupils nationally.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Most observations were carried out jointly with either the acting headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of information including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, safeguarding records, behaviour logs and attendance information.
- Together with leaders, inspectors undertook a focused scrutiny of pupils' work in writing, mathematics and topic books in several year groups.
- A meeting was held with senior leaders to discuss the school's latest assessment information.
- An inspector held a meeting with a group of pupils to seek their views of the school. Several informal discussions were also held with pupils during lessons, breaktime and lunchtime. An inspector heard several pupils read.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the director of school improvement. Inspectors also held meetings with the two SENCos, the early years leader and subject leaders for English, mathematics and physical education. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, which included the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection and reviewed the school's latest questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also considered 15 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 14 free-text comments. Inspectors took account of nine responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hester Millsop

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