

Inspection of a good school: St Martin's C of E Primary & Nursery School

Younghayes Road, Cranbrook, Exeter, Devon EX5 7DT

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

St Martin's C of E Primary & Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Martin's is a happy place where pupils feel valued. They are at the heart of the school's work. Staff ensure pupils are nurtured and learn well. Parents agree. One parent said, 'The ethos of the school is simply wonderful. My child talks daily to me about being the best that he can be. Learning is celebrated.'

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Adults know pupils well. They provide effective care and support. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have beyond the classroom, in particular the forest area, which supports their social and spiritual development.

Pupils are polite and considerate. The school is a purposeful place to learn. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils understand what staff expect of them. They say bullying is rare. Pupils know that if it were to happen, adults would deal with it effectively.

Pupils understand what it means to be responsible citizens. They enjoy taking on roles such as learning ambassadors. Pupils understand they should 'treat others as they would like to be treated'. They say everyone is equal, and all should be respected whatever their differences.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for what all pupils can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teamwork is central to the school's work. Staff, including those new to the profession, value the support, care and guidance they receive.

Leaders prioritise reading. From the moment children join the school, they start learning how to read and develop a love of reading. Staff introduce children to a wide range of songs, rhymes and stories in the nursery class. This supports children with their early language and communication skills. Teachers' careful assessment means they know

exactly which pupils need extra help. Books match the sounds children are learning. Staff provide effective support to enable children to become fluent and confident readers.

Older pupils enjoy reading. They talk confidently about books they have read and enjoyed including from a range of authors. One pupil stated, 'Reading brings your emotions out.' Pupils understand why it is important to be able to read with confidence.

Leaders ensure there is a well-designed mathematics curriculum. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They talk confidently about how prior learning helps them learn something new. Staff use and explain a range of mathematical vocabulary clearly in lessons. In the early years, staff use repetition effectively, to check children's understanding. As a result, the youngest children use technical vocabulary accurately. Staff use assessment well in mathematics to identify any misconceptions.

Leaders are systematically developing the core content they want pupils to learn in subjects across the wider curriculum. In computing, the curriculum is designed and sequenced with relevant vocabulary that builds from the early years through to Year 6. Pupils can recall current learning well, but some struggle to draw on what they have been taught previously. In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' learning well enough. Consequently, gaps exist in their knowledge. Some pupils struggle to make relevant links in some of their learning to what they already know and can do. Some subject leaders are new to role, and as a result, their development is still in the early stages. They have not yet had the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in their areas of responsibility.

Staff tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They break learning into smaller steps. This enables pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers. Careful identification means effective support is in place. Staff work alongside external agencies to help those pupils with more complex needs.

Pupils of all ages play together harmoniously. They behave well. Adults ensure pupils understand what is expected of them. For those who struggle with their behaviour, clear plans are in place to support them to reengage in their learning quickly. Pupils form strong and positive relationships with adults.

The school's 'learning flowers' of thinking critically, playing and exploring, and being active, support pupils' character development. Leaders provide pupils with regular opportunities to reflect, debate and discuss topical issues. Pupils understand and value the contributions of others. They learn to respect differences between people.

Governors are ambitious that all pupils will succeed. They understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's direction of travel. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders in order to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and relevant curriculum offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They act in the best interests of keeping pupils safe. Staff receive frequent and up-to-date safeguarding training. They know what to do if they are worried about a child. Leaders take all concerns seriously. Staff know the potential risks that pupils may face.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks on the suitability of staff, to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Pupils know who to go to if they are worried. Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are new to role and at the early stages of developing the curriculum. As a result, they have had limited opportunities to check that pupils are receiving the curriculum they intend. Leaders need to provide all subject leaders with the support and development they need so they can assure themselves that their subject area is being effectively delivered.
- In some of the wider curriculum subjects, teachers do not check pupils' learning sufficiently in order to assess what they know and can do. As a result, pupils have gaps in subject-specific knowledge and understanding. Teachers need to ensure that they systematically check what pupils know and can do across all subjects so that all pupils secure the essential knowledge they need in order to achieve well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113351
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256740
Type of school	Nursery and Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Clements
Headteacher	Amy Hardinge (Acting)
Website	www.stmartinscranbrook.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Martin's C of E Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized school, with nursery provision located in Cranbrook on the outskirts of Exeter.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Exeter. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2022, where the school was judged to be excellent.
- The school is being led by an acting headteacher. She took up her role in January 2023, and was previously the substantive deputy headteacher.
- The school use one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, groups of staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the local governing board.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered the documentation around safeguarding, including the safeguarding checks made on staff. They discussed how the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- The inspector considered the 61 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 47 free-text responses, one email, 53 responses to the staff survey and 229 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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