

School inspection report

21 to 23 January 2025

St Martin's School

40 Moor Park Road

Northwood

HA6 2DJ

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school. They are well informed about the school's work and performance through detailed updates, visits to the school and regular meetings with leaders and staff. Governors understand the work of the school. They hold leaders effectively to account for their work to promote pupils' wellbeing through all aspects of school life.
2. Leaders focus on building a community of happy, confident and mutually respectful young people. They are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Through the curriculum, teaching and wider school experiences, leaders equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
3. A broad and varied curriculum enables pupils to develop their understanding and skills across a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is taught well throughout the school. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Pupils make good progress.
4. Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful and positive. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. They are polite, considerate and respectful. However, in the younger year groups, staff do not implement the behaviour policy consistently well across all classes. This means that in some lessons, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
5. Pupils learn about and appreciate different cultures, traditions and beliefs and how these are celebrated. Pupils demonstrate respect, kindness and empathy. They understand how to be responsible citizens and how they can make a positive contribution to society.
6. Leaders have implemented a digital wellbeing tool which enables pupils to reflect on their emotions and gives them access to support and activities. Pupils develop an understanding of their own and others' emotions and strategies that help them reflect on and manage their emotional wellbeing.
7. There is a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Appropriate measures are in place to promote the welfare, wellbeing and safeguarding of pupils. This includes through the effective oversight of safeguarding by leaders, and comprehensive training and vigilance from governors, leaders and staff.
8. Leaders carefully monitor pupils' attendance. Practices were reviewed as a result of statutory guidance in relation to managing school attendance. However, leaders did not ensure that the new attendance codes were implemented in the school registers as they were required to do. This was rectified during the inspection.
9. The school site is well managed. There is a thorough and methodical approach to managing health and safety. Risk assessments are detailed and effective. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively in relation to the Equality Act 2010, including through the implementation and regular review of the school's accessibility plan.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the latest statutory guidance is fully implemented in a timely way
- ensure there is a consistent approach to managing the behaviour of the younger pupils across all classes.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors work closely with school leaders to ensure that the Standards are consistently met. They are well informed about the school's work through their regular committee meetings and focused visits to the school. Governors ensure that those with leadership responsibilities have the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. They hold leaders to account for their work to promote the wellbeing and safeguarding of pupils. Governance is effective.
11. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which can be further improved. Leaders regularly review their areas of responsibility and devise focused action plans to support the further development of the school and provision for pupils.
12. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and development. They successfully meet their aim to equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them to be successful and happy and well prepared for the next stage of their education. In the early years, leaders maintain clear oversight of children's development. They use the information gathered to plan a curriculum which takes into account children's interests as well as their needs.
13. The school provides parents with all of the required information and policies which are published on the school's website or by request from the school office. Regular updates and newsletters keep parents informed of various aspects of the school's provision. Parents receive relevant information about their child's progress and attainment.
14. The school implements an appropriate policy for handling complaints. Leaders work with parents to resolve concerns before they escalate. Leaders keep detailed records of all concerns and how these are followed up. Formal complaints are rare. Suitable arrangements are in place to handle any formal complaints if they occur.
15. Leaders have forged effective links with external agencies as sources of advice, guidance and support. This includes the local authority children's services and the local authority designated officer (LADO).
16. Leaders ensure that those responsible for maintaining the health and safety of the school site access the guidance and support they need to carry out their roles confidently and effectively. This includes access to national bodies who advise on health and safety matters. Leaders ensure that effective systems are in place to support pupils' wellbeing and that the health and safety of pupils and staff is a priority.
17. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and actively promote the wellbeing of all pupils. Leaders ensure that an appropriate accessibility plan is in place and is regularly reviewed.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders have carefully developed a broad and varied curriculum. This enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. Thoughtful planning, assessment and purposeful use of well-chosen resources means that pupils are interested in and focus on their work.
20. Leaders have developed a set of 'SMART' personal and learning attributes which are understood by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and apply the qualities of resilience, collaboration, curiosity, risk taking and empathy to their learning and in all aspects of their school life.
21. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and plan lessons well. Careful questioning challenges pupils' thinking. Pupils increase their knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding. Teaching encourages pupils to be curious and helps them develop their interests. Pupils make good progress across the wide range of subjects that they study. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
22. Leaders promote a culture of perseverance and determination. Pupils confidently return to their work and improve it. In design technology, pupils act positively on feedback to continue to refine their design projects. In the early years discovery area, children think hard about how cameras and microphones work.
23. Through effective assessment, observations and scrutiny of data, staff identify pupils who may be at risk of underachievement. Additional support is put in place to help pupils overcome challenges so that they can achieve well. Leaders ensure the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully matched to their needs so that pupils make good progress.
24. There is a focus on developing pupils' language and communication skills from the early years. Pupils become articulate communicators. Pupils are confident to talk with adults and share their learning and experiences. Older pupils develop their skills in public speaking. Pupils take seriously their preparation for the persuasive speaking competition. Teaching helps pupils extend their vocabulary and helps them make connections in their learning. In foreign languages lessons, pupils apply their language learning to real life situations such as cooking and baking in French. Older pupils use the knowledge they have gained in learning Latin and apply that to the understanding of how Greek is structured.
25. Pupils become confident mathematicians. Younger pupils develop their knowledge of number and fluency in calculations through regular practice. Teaching in mathematics is well planned to help pupils build on what they know and understand. Staff quickly identify and address any mathematical misconceptions pupils may have. In the early years, children respond enthusiastically to being 'maths detectives' through purposeful play, such as linking the correct number of blocks to a number card. Older pupils are able to apply their knowledge in reasoning and solving mathematical problems in increasingly complex situations.
26. Leaders have developed a coherent framework for assessing and reviewing pupils' progress from Nursery to Year 8. Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievements. Parents of children in the early years receive helpful resources to support their child's reading and language

development and extend their vocabulary. Parents are informed about their child's progress through regular written reports and parent meetings.

27. There is a broad extra-curricular programme for pupils of all ages which meets their needs and encourages pupils to extend their interests and skills. Pupils participate well in musical, artistic, sporting, performing arts and problem solving clubs such as choir, fencing, swimming, team sports, drama and metacognition club.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 28. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

29. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful and positive across the school. This can be seen in the focused atmosphere in lessons and in pupils' commitment to hard work. Pupils are enthusiastic about their time at school. Residential trips, outdoor learning, music and sports contribute positively to their wider experiences and help pupils build relationships with one another.
30. Pupils have a positive sense of managing their own emotional wellbeing through the established use of a digital wellbeing tool where they regularly reflect on their mood and emotions. Pupils can access support and activities that promote their own emotional health. Pupils are reflective and develop their understanding of ways to manage their emotional wellbeing and of managing their own emotions and mental health.
31. Staff in the early years are effective role models. They demonstrate care and empathy through their interactions with children. Children happily engage with the adults and with each other. Routines are well established in the early years. This gives children the confidence to explore and play independently. Children learn to share and take turns in activities and games with each other. Children benefit from a supportive and tailored swimming programme which supports their physical development as well as their self-esteem and self-confidence.
32. The behaviour policy sets out clear expectations for pupils and staff to follow. Older pupils conduct themselves well during lesson times and throughout the school day, including in less structured times. Pupils listen carefully to one another and are polite, courteous and respectful of other people. Behaviour is well managed. However, leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to managing the behaviour of some of the younger pupils. This means that in some lessons, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could because they are not consistently focused on their learning.
33. Pupils keep physically fit and active through regular participation in physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils regularly take part in competitive and team sports, including sporting fixtures. In the early years, children have many planned opportunities to help them develop their physical skills. The nature area is well used giving children opportunities to explore and to learn about nature and their natural surroundings.
34. A well-structured programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships and sex education (RSE) is in place. Leaders ensure that what pupils are taught is age appropriate and suitable for pupils' needs. Staff check pupils' understanding through discussions in class and by revisiting topics. Information about the provision of RSE is published for parents on the school's website.
35. Pupils develop their leadership skills as prefects and as representatives on a range of committees such as school council, charity committee and as 'eco reps'. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils and provide a channel of communication to the leadership of the school. Pupils influence the decisions leaders make to improve the school's facilities and provision such as the acquisition of a new table tennis table, the introduction of Gaelic football and 'Taco Tuesday'. Pupils

readily volunteer for roles such as recycling monitor. They promote wider awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and ensure the effective recycling of waste materials.

36. The school premises are well maintained. Leaders ensure that the site is safe and secure at all times. Leaders have a considered and thorough approach to the management of risk and carry out detailed risk assessments. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day.
37. Appropriate procedures for the administration of first aid and medicines are carried out by suitably trained staff. Records are well maintained. Early years staff are suitably trained in paediatric first aid. There are regular fire drills and record keeping is accurate and timely. Staff are well prepared to deal with emergencies.
38. School attendance rates are high overall. Leaders track and monitor attendance effectively and inform the local authority of pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition times. At the start of the school year, leaders reviewed their practices in light of the new statutory guidance in relation to managing school attendance. However, leaders did not ensure that the new attendance codes were implemented in the school registers as they were required to do. This was rectified during the inspection.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 39. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. Through the curriculum and wider school experiences, such as visits to a local temple and to the church, pupils deepen their understanding of different cultures, traditions and beliefs and how these are celebrated. Pupils are respectful towards each other. They show kindness and empathy in their interactions with one another. From an early age, children learn the impact of their actions on others.
41. Pupils have a secure understanding of democracy. They understand that we elect people to represent us in a range of roles from school council to Parliament. During school elections, pupils participate in hustings, engage in debate and discuss results. Pupils are encouraged to see things from different points of view and listen carefully to other opinions and ideas. School visits, such as to the Houses of Parliament, enable pupils to see democracy in practice.
42. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society. Values such as respect and individual liberty are emphasised across the school. The school promotes pupils' independent thinking. Topics on global issues are discussed with sensitivity. The curriculum and wider experience help prepare pupils well for life in modern British society. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of identifying right from wrong. From an early age, pupils learn about the importance of rules that form part of our society. Teachers link respect for law to the rules that pupils follow in the playground. Pupils learn about the importance of the law to protect people from discrimination and exploitation.
43. Pupils learn about financial matters through the mathematics curriculum and PSHE lessons. They study the basics of finance, from saving their money to the risks and opportunities of investing in stocks and shares. Older pupils raise funds for the school's chosen charity through activities such as the enterprise project. This helps pupils practise skills in planning, collaboration and leadership.
44. Pupils learn about the importance of supporting and caring for others. They understand that giving our time to make a positive contribution is as important as making donations, for example to local food collections. Leaders encourage pupils to engage actively with their local community and to reflect on how they can make a positive contribution to society. Pupils talk positively about the recycling robot workshop with local schools which fosters community engagement and teamwork.
45. Pupils receive appropriate careers education from Year 7. Year 8 pupils participate in careers week which helps them reflect on their skills and interests and explore potential career paths. A well planned programme of trips enables pupils to consider a variety of careers. These include visits to hospitals to understand the various roles that people perform as part of health provision. External speakers, including returning alumni, provide a valuable insight into different career opportunities.
46. In the early years, leaders create suitable opportunities to promote children's social development. Staff model positive social behaviour. Children learn the importance of sharing and taking turns in situations such as role play on a bus.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. Leaders have established a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders, governors and staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Clear and comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to promote the safeguarding and wellbeing of all pupils.
49. Governors assure themselves that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. They maintain effective oversight to ensure that leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils at all times.
50. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and members of the safeguarding team are knowledgeable. They ensure that staff receive regular training that keeps their knowledge of safeguarding up to date. Staff know how to recognise the signs that a child may be at risk of harm and report their concerns promptly. The DSL ensures that the safeguarding of pupils remains the highest priority for all staff through weekly safeguarding discussions and updates. Staff understand the procedures for reporting low-level concerns in relation to staff conduct.
51. The DSL and safeguarding team hold weekly meetings to review all safeguarding concerns, monitor trends and implement any intervention or support required. They respond effectively if safeguarding concerns are raised. Pupils are confident to speak to adults in school if they have any worries or concerns. They know that adults will listen and take appropriate action.
52. Leaders ensure that appropriate systems of internet filtering and monitoring are in place. These are tested regularly to ensure that filtering is effective. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They know what to do to help keep themselves and others safe and manage potential risks. Pupils and staff understand and follow the school's policies in relation to the use of devices in school, including the use of mobile phones.
53. Leaders prioritise safer recruitment practices. They conduct thorough checks on all staff members before new staff are able to take up their appointment. All the necessary pre-appointment checks are undertaken and carefully recorded on the school's single central record.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 54. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	St Martin's School
Department for Education number	312/6005
Registered charity number	312648
Address	St Martin's School 40 Moor Park Road Northwood Middlesex HA6 2DJ
Phone number	01923 825740
Email address	office@stmartins.org.uk
Website	https://www.stmartins.org.uk
Chair	Mr Andrew Harris
Headteacher	Mr Simon Dunn
Age range	3-13
Number of pupils	393
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 March 2022

Information about the school

55. St Martin's School is a preparatory school for male pupils located in Northwood, north west London. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school has pupils from 3 to 13 years old.
56. There are 72 children in the early years comprising one early start class, two Nursery classes and two Reception classes.
57. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. The school has identified no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
59. The school sets out to provide its pupils with a broad education and range of experiences within a happy, safe and friendly environment, to enable them to realise their full potential and be well prepared for the future.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 to 23 January 2025

60. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

61. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

62. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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