

Martin High School, Anstey

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137828
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395850
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	637
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Blythe
Headteacher	Martin Furniss
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
School address	Link Road Anstey Leicestershire LE7 7EB
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Age group	11–14
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Philip Drabble

Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspection team observed 31 lessons taught by 30 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including plans, evaluations, policies and students' work. The views of 75 parents and carers, a sample of 71 students and 42 staff, expressed in questionnaires, were taken into consideration.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized middle school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 15% of students are from several minority ethnic groups with 4% of those being of Indian heritage. There is a lower-than-average proportion of students whose first language is believed not to be English. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school converted to academy status very recently with the intention to further its application to expand to become an 11–16 secondary school.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because, although middle- and lower-ability students make outstanding progress, the progress made by more-able students is only good. Aspects of monitoring and strategic planning lack sharpness, which results in minor deficiencies and inconsistencies in the quality of some of the school’s work, limiting provision to good – particularly that of teaching.
- Achievement is good and attainment in the tests taken at the end of Year 9 is above average.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good and there is some outstanding practice. Some teaching lacks sufficient challenge to enable many more-able students to make outstanding progress. In a minority of lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to work independently or collaboratively and, sometimes, teachers do not make it clear to students what level of work they are expected to achieve. The quality of marking is not consistently helpful, although most teachers provide frequent written feedback to students on their current level of attainment and advice on how they might improve their work.
- Students’ behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. The headteacher has prioritised the creation of a warm and cohesive community where students are individually – and highly – valued. Their learning flourishes in this happy and inclusive environment.
- The headteacher’s aspirational vision for the school places the well-being and achievement of each student at its centre and is strongly supported by students, staff, parents and carers. The school’s performance is managed well. Senior leaders accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and use their findings to support effective staff training. Performance management arrangements are robust and any underperformance identified is tackled using formal procedures where necessary. The promotion of students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make monitoring and planning processes more systematic so that the work of different subject teams and teachers is more consistent and any deficiencies are identified and rectified.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and much is outstanding to raise achievement further by:
 - helping teachers use the good-quality assessment data they are provided with to plan appropriately challenging work for more-able students
 - providing more opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently and to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum
 - making sure students are clear about the different levels of outcomes they are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson
 - ensuring consistency in the quality and frequency of marking so that all students are aware of their target grades and what they need to do to reach them, and any mistakes in spelling and grammar are corrected.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry varies between average and above average. Middle- and lower-ability students make excellent progress throughout the school so that the standards they reach in the Year 9 tests are well above the comparable national averages. Many more-able students and a few students who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Although this is better progress than similar groups of students make nationally, it is still below the exceptional rate of progress made by other students at the school. Students from all ethnic heritages achieve largely in line with each other.

Learning was good or better in the large majority of lessons seen by inspectors but a proportion was satisfactory. Students have excellent attitudes to learning, listening attentively when required to do so and participating enthusiastically in whole-class discussions at other times. Students enjoy and respond well to practical activities. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, for example, lower-ability students were well engaged by a game of 'Connect 4' which helped them learn about coordinates. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress because teachers excel at providing them with work of appropriate and increasing challenge and because they benefit, especially, from the excellent climate for learning at the school. In comparison, the learning of more-able students is sometimes limited because they have only moderately challenging work or because it is not made explicitly clear to them how they are expected to achieve a much higher quality of outcome than others in classes of wide-ranging ability. Inspection findings

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that students make, overall, good progress were fully endorsed by every parent and carer who responded to a questionnaire.

There is a detailed and comprehensive tracking system which collates regular assessments of students' work in all subjects and shows the progress they are making. Assessments are moderated internally and some are moderated in collaboration with other schools to standardise scores and ensure the tracking of individual progress is reliable. The school is predicting from its accurate tracking data that achievement is expected to remain good in the 2012 tests, but that the proportion of students attaining Level 7 is likely to be better than 2011 outcomes.

The school checks each student's reading ability during Year 7 and arranges additional support during form time to help weaker readers catch up. The library plays a key role in this. Books are specifically chosen to appeal to the interests of individual students and are colour coded to aid weaker readers in selecting books which are suitably challenging. Reading is carefully monitored by the librarians so that the school is aware, for example, that Year 7 students read, on average, four books each during their first half-term at the school. Some opportunities are taken to develop students' literacy and communication skills in other subjects as in an information and communication technology lesson, for instance, where students were coached in the art of effective public speaking when demonstrating their digital presentations. The systematic promotion of literacy in other subjects of the curriculum is not as well developed. Teachers of subjects other than English do not use marking enough to help students improve their spelling and use of grammar.

Quality of teaching

Teaching was good or better in nearly three-quarters of lessons visited. Typically, these lessons were characterised by a sense of purpose and direction. There were clear objectives and learning proceeded at a good pace. Excellent relationships between students and adults meant that good-quality learning continued to take place when students were working in small groups or independently. Students particularly enjoy the active learning commonplace in such lessons. Opportunities are fully exploited to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example learning about representations of good and evil in medieval paintings during a humanities lesson.

Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, teachers tend to talk for too long, which restricts the opportunities students have to work collaboratively or independently and slows the pace of learning. Teachers pay insufficient attention to the assessment information they are provided with for each class in planning work appropriate to the range of all abilities. The outcomes students of different abilities are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson are not always clear. Tasks are undemanding and more-able students, in particular, are not challenged enough by the learning intended.

In general, the school is remarkably effective at teaching disabled students and

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those with special educational needs. This is because these students are extremely well integrated into activities and because students are universally enthusiastic about learning and supportive of each other. Almost all parents and carers responding to the Ofsted questionnaire agree with inspection findings that their children are taught well, and students also think that they are well taught nearly all of the time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors' evaluation of students' conduct and their application to learning as outstanding was fully endorsed by parents and carers who are overwhelmingly positive about the behaviour and safety of their children at the school. Parents and carers fully support the school's aim for the holistic development of each individual, whereby equal emphasis is given to developing students' personal qualities and their learning skills so that the two reinforce each other. Students are specifically taught how to achieve personal development and 'happiness'. They are unusually self-confident, courteous and highly motivated to learn – even when teaching is not inspiring. Inspectors saw no incidents at all of any behaviour that was less than excellent and students spoken to said that this behaviour was typical of what they experienced every day. They said that, occasionally, they heard prejudiced-based name calling but they were clear that this was not malicious in intent and described it as 'just silly behaviour' by a few. Students were adamant that there is no bullying because, as one student whose circumstances made him vulnerable put it, 'Teachers at this school are really good at cracking down on bullying.' The use of exclusion as a sanction over the last few years has been exceptionally low in comparison to that of other schools.

The school is a delightful place for students to learn and develop in. Unsurprisingly then, attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Inspection findings that leadership and management are good were strongly endorsed by staff responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, who were almost unanimous in expressing appreciation for how well the headteacher and senior staff lead and manage the school. Parents and carers were also unusually positive about the school's efforts to keep them informed and to seek their views.

Senior leaders and the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. For example, the governing body has already noted the achievement of more-able students lags behind that of other students, but the school's actions have not yet improved the situation. Staff appreciate the good-quality training they receive, which is determined by their performance in appraisals against a school, a departmental and an individual target for the year. While there are many strengths in leadership and management, monitoring of provision has not been sufficiently systematic, which has left too wide variation in the quality of lesson planning, schemes of work and departmental self-evaluation. Consequently, the quality of teaching and the curriculum have remained good since the previous inspection, but

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there is little evidence that the current approach is rapidly improving provision for it to become outstanding soon. Nevertheless, sustained good achievement, and students' excellent conduct and attitudes to learning indicate the school has a good capacity to tackle the areas for improvement.

The school's vision for students' well-being and achievement is well articulated and shared by all, but strategic planning lacks precise success criteria, timescales and measurable outcomes. There were minor departures from statutory requirements in the operation of some management procedures, although these were quickly rectified before the inspection finished. There are few differences in the performance and participation of different student groups because the school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well meaning there is no discrimination. It is clear that the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals has improved over the last few years, but achievement of the more-able remains an improvement priority.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs well – particularly those of disabled students and those with special educational needs. The range and variety of after-school activities is outstanding and those, like the jazz and blues workshop, make an excellent contribution to promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The limited application and development of literacy skills, in particular, across the curriculum mean it is not yet outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



11 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Martin High School, Anstey, Leicestershire LE7 7EB

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school. We were particularly impressed with how polite and well behaved you are. It was clear to us that this is a happy school.

We have judged your school to be good. The teaching you receive is mostly good and helps you to get better results in the tests at the end of Year 9 than most other students across the country. The range of after-school clubs and activities you can attend is excellent. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. The headteacher and senior staff are doing a good job of making your school successful and a good place to learn.

I have asked the headteacher to continue to improve the school by:

- making sure teachers give more difficult work to those who can learn quickly and usually get top marks
- giving you more opportunities to work in small groups or independently
- helping some teachers to explain to you more clearly what you are aiming to achieve by the end of the lesson
- making sure all teachers mark your work often and explain to you what you need to do to improve
- checking carefully that these things are happening and are helping all of you to learn even more.

You can help too by keeping up your good attendance and by acting on the comments your teachers write to help you improve.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector

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