

St Martin's School

22 Goodwyn Avenue, Mill Hill, London, NW7 3RG

Inspection dates

8–10 July 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

4

Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school because:

- The headteacher, who is the proprietor, has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- School policies and procedures are not regularly reviewed and updated, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. As a result, the school's work to safeguard pupils, including children in the early years, is inadequate.
- Safer recruitment procedures are not followed stringently. The school has not taken up references for all staff. Not all of the required information for staff is recorded on the single central register.
- Fire safety procedures have not been regularly reviewed and updated as required; as a consequence, the school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate.
- A number of parents and carers have lost confidence in the leadership of the school as they are not able to raise any concerns with school leaders.
- The arrangements made to use the available outside space do not meet pupils' needs.

The school has the following strengths:

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and considerate at all times.
- Teaching is good and is planned to meet the needs of pupils so that they achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because leaders have established clear assessment procedures. Teachers monitor pupils' progress well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make good progress in all areas of learning and in their personal development. They are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared academically for the next stage of their education.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, which enhances their learning and personal development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school does not meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) England Regulations 2010, as amended 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. Details are recorded in the report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Inspectors observed 13 lessons.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about it. They held meetings with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, staff members and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at documentation including procedures to ensure pupils are safe, policy statements, schemes of work, teachers' planning and records of pupils' progress.
- The inspectors considered the responses of 46 parents who completed Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire.
- Four questionnaire responses from staff were taken into account.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Martin's School is a co-educational, independent, day school situated in Mill Hill.
- The school seeks to provide an excellent academic education together with a stimulating, creative and broad curriculum. It 'aims to develop each child as an individual and to encourage mutual understanding and respect, and to instil a sense of self-worth'.
- The school originally opened in the 1920s and was acquired by the current proprietor 20 years ago. The proprietor is also the headteacher.
- The school is accommodated in an extended detached house.
- The school admits pupils aged from three to 11 years. There are currently 116 full-time pupils on roll and a further five that attend on a part-time basis in the pre-school (nursery).
- The school operates an Early Years Foundation Stage for children in the pre-school (nursery) and Reception classes. No children are in receipt of government funding. Pupils attending the school come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The school has identified three pupils as having special educational needs. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The proprietor has sole responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The school's previous inspection took place on 17–18 November 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all documentation and procedures relating to safeguarding are updated and implemented in line with current statutory guidance to promote and maintain pupils' safety at all times
 - ensuring that professional references are taken up for all staff and that all required information is included on the single central register so that statutory requirements are met
 - ensuring that the complaints policy is implemented effectively, so that parental concerns are responded too appropriately
 - providing teaching staff with opportunities for professional development so that they develop their teaching and raise achievement even further
 - ensuring that the available outdoor space is used effectively to meet pupils' needs.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b)).
 - Ensure that the anti-bullying policy is updated in line with current guidance (paragraph 10).
 - Ensure that the written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws is updated and effectively implemented (paragraph 11).
 - Ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is complied with (paragraph 12).
 - Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk policy and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(a) and 16(b)).
 - Ensure that the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school (paragraph 21(1)).
 - Ensure that accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils includes a washing

facility in the room (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

- Ensure that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 relating to the procedures for the safeguarding and well-being of pupils are published on the school's internet website and are provided to parents on request (paragraph (32(1)(c))).
- Ensure that the leadership and management: demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1a),(1b) and (1c)).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership and management of the school are inadequate because the headteacher has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- School policies and procedures have not been regularly reviewed and updated to meet current statutory guidance, including that for safeguarding pupils. As a result, the school's work in safeguarding is inadequate, including for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Staff are not trained in current safeguarding procedures. Concerns regarding pupils' safety are not systematically recorded.
- Checks carried out on staff include their suitability to work with children through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). However, professional references have not been taken up systematically for all staff. The single central register of staff checks does not contain all the required information.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' welfare, health and safety are adequately promoted because health and safety checks have not been carried out systematically. Annual fire risk assessments have not been completed to ensure the safety of the building, and fire equipment has not been checked regularly.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their personal development and learning. However, because of failings in safeguarding and health and safety, leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate overall.
- The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and provides well for pupils' academic learning and personal development. Enrichment lessons in Spanish and Latin and extra-curricular clubs and sports enhance pupils' learning well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.
- Regular personal, social and health education in lessons and in assemblies ensures that pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils regularly raise money by taking part in competitions and in special awareness days for particular charities. School performances enhance pupils' overall learning experiences.
- The school has no middle managers but a number of teaching staff have specific areas of responsibility for the curriculum within the lower and upper school. Those responsible for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) manage their curriculum areas well. A strong focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT ensures that pupils cover an appropriate range of subjects and topics.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Pupils report that the rewards and sanctions are fair. British values are well promoted, through mock elections and regular lessons and assemblies. The headteacher ensures that the teaching of partisan views is prohibited.
- The school has recently appointed a special educational needs coordinator. Pupils with any identified learning difficulties are given regular additional one-to-one support.
- The school has a clear behaviour policy; rewards effectively promote good behaviour. Pupils win house points for effort, good work or a kind act. Sanctions are given to discourage bad behaviour.
- Pupils receive good advice and guidance for the next stage of their education. In discussion, several parents were positive about the school, stating that their children were happy and making good progress. However, almost a third of parental responses to Ofsted's online survey raised concerns about the leadership and management of the school, in particular the school's response to concerns raised and the quality of information regarding their child's progress. Inspection evidence confirms that these are valid concerns. Reports to parents do not always clarify how much progress children have made over the course of the year.
- The formal complaints procedure meets requirements. Policies are available in hard copy on request through the school office and on the school website.
- The governance of the school:
 - The proprietor/headteacher has sole responsibility for the governance of the school. Governance is inadequate because the proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
 - Governance of the school is ineffective because the proprietor has not ensured that school policies and procedures for the safeguarding and welfare, health and safety of pupils have been regularly reviewed and updated in line with statutory requirements.
 - The proprietor has a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and monitors this through an established performance management system as well as informally to maintain high

standards. However, targets are not always set for teachers to help them know how to improve the quality of their teaching further. Less experienced teachers do not have enough support from senior leaders. Teaching staff do not have enough opportunity for professional development.

- The proprietor manages the financial arrangements of the school appropriately; the school is suitably resourced for staff to carry out their work so that pupils can achieve well.
- The premises are small but adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The playground is well developed for play but, being small, does not allow for all pupils to run around and to play effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, courteous and considerate of each other so that a convivial atmosphere prevails.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are always well prepared and punctual to lessons. There is no disruption in lessons. Attendance rates are high.
- In discussion, pupils reported that they understand different kinds of bullying including homophobic and racist bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and if it does occur it is dealt with swiftly by teaching staff.
- Pupils from a range of nationalities work and play well together, demonstrating a strong community spirit. They demonstrate good awareness of the British values of respect and tolerance and understand the negative impact that any form of discrimination can have.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong. In all aspects of their school life pupils are considerate of others and are learning to be excellent citizens of the world. Pupils understand democracy and the law well through participating in mock elections, and through discussions in lessons on moral issues such as homelessness and the right to work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- The designated safeguarding lead and deputy lead have received appropriate safeguarding training but they have not acted upon this to make sure that procedures follow statutory guidance.
- The school's safeguarding policy does not meet current statutory requirements and was not available on the school website at the time of the inspection.
- Staff members have not received training on the latest safeguarding guidance to ensure they are up to date. However, the headteacher has given short briefings on safeguarding and staff are aware that they are responsible for the well-being and safety of children in their care.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children have been carried out through the Disclosure and Barring Service but the school has not taken up professional references for all staff. Not all of the required information is recorded on the single central register.
- Health and safety procedures are inadequate because policies and procedures, including for risk assessment, have not been updated as required.
- First-aid procedures meet requirements, with a suitable number of appropriately trained staff.
- Despite the school's failings, pupils report that they feel safe both in school and when on any school trip or outing. Pupils report that they know how to remain safe when working with computers. The school's work in e-safety is good and pupils have recently taken part in an e-safety day to promote their online safety awareness.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well from their starting points.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and many are highly experienced. They have high expectations and set pupils challenging tasks.
- Lessons are effectively planned so that pupils make good progress. Previous learning is taken into account and teachers reinforce learning well. Teachers' focused questions ensure pupils are engaged and

attentive.

- Lessons are prepared so that pupils experience a good range of activities and so develop good speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils work well at their own level in mathematics and English. From Year 4 onwards, pupils begin to work towards preparation for entrance examinations. This provides further challenge and extends their ability to work by themselves; they are well supported by teachers when they require help.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support by the special educational needs coordinator so that they build confidence and make good progress.
- Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' understanding. Regular testing ensures teachers know the areas that require further focus and can plan for next steps in learning. Teaching is planned so that pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding further by working on the areas for improvement.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils is good. Pupils arrive in the school with the expected range of abilities and skills typical for their ages. Pupils make consistently good, and at times outstanding, progress.
- Information from regular tests in all aspects of literacy and numeracy show that pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. From Year 4 onwards pupils prepare for examination entry to secondary schools. In Years 1 and 2, there is a strong focus on extending vocabulary and fluency through regular reading and creative writing.
- The most able pupils are stretched because they are enabled to set themselves challenging targets. This helps them to make consistently make good progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to reason and to solve problems so that they develop a good understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts.
- Scrutiny of pupils' past and present written work in English and mathematics shows good and consistent gains in understanding against targets which are substantially above those expected for their ages.
- Pupils with any identified learning difficulties are given additional support in literacy and numeracy so that they make good progress.
- Pupils' learning is enriched through regular French, art, music and physical education lessons, a good range of after-school clubs and additional after-school language lessons in Spanish and Latin for Years 5 and 6.
- A wide range of topic work in history and geography ensures that pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In a Year 3 lesson on river pollution, for example, key vocabulary was clearly explained as pupils discussed the topic. It was then used in creating a poster illustrating the dangers of pollution.
- Pupils take part in school performances and musical concerts. A good range of extra-curricular trips and visits is organised which further enhance pupils' learning experience.
- The school does not analyse information to show the progress of groups of learners. However, test results show that the vast majority of pupils are working at least in line with and often above expected levels for their age and ability.
- By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The majority of pupils gain places at their first choice of secondary school.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Provision in the early years is inadequate because the proprietor has not ensured that policies have been updated for the welfare, health and safety of children in the school, including those in the early years setting.
- The school requested exemption from the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements in October 2014, which was then granted by the Department for Education in November 2014.
- Leaders of the early years setting have established a strong community spirit and work very well together to provide for the children's education. They are clear about the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. They are keen to develop their expertise but have limited professional development opportunities. They support each other well so that the setting runs smoothly and ensures that children

enjoy a well-planned and engaging environment in which to learn and play.

- Children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge typical for their age, including in literacy, numeracy and in personal and social development. The strong focus on literacy and numeracy ensures that they make good progress in learning basic numbers and the sounds that letters make.
- Children are well prepared for entry to Year 1, with the vast majority in line with or exceeding expectations for their age.
- Good relationships enable children to settle and integrate well. Children behave well, listen attentively and respond appropriately to questions and requests. They relate well to the adults who look after them and play well together.
- Staff work well together and with parents and carers to extend children's knowledge and skills and to provide a positive learning experience. This enables children to develop confidence in their speaking and listening skills and to communicate with each other within the group.
- Staff keep parents and carers regularly informed about their children's progress in school and about their personal development and well-being.
- The outdoor arrangements provide a stimulating play space to help the children develop movement skills and to promote physical health.
- Children are well looked after on a day-to-day basis by the staff members. They are well supervised at all times. Staff carry out regular checks on the early years setting and resources to ensure children's health and safety. However, safeguarding policies and procedures, including those for safer recruitment, are not robust enough. This results in children's safety not being adequately assured.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	101383
Inspection number	454242
DfE registration number	302/6077

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Number of part time pupils	5
Proprietor	Mrs Angela Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	17-18 November 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,790
Telephone number	020 8959 1965
Email address	info@stmartinsmillhill.co.uk

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Piccadilly Gate
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