

# St Martin's School

22 Goodwyn Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 3RG

## Inspection dates

2 March 2017

### Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- The first progress monitoring inspection in July 2016 identified that, when appointing new staff, leaders had not ensured that all references stated whether or not the applicants were suitable to work with children. Leaders often relied on personal references to make recruitment decisions. In addition, there was no system in place for logging safeguarding concerns, including the actions taken to follow them up and their resolutions.
- In the school's action plan, leaders stated that all staff have now provided professional references and that a central register of concerns has been put in place. The action plan stated that the member of staff designated as the safeguarding lead was booked to attend update training in November 2016.
- Since that time, leaders, including the proprietor, have completely overhauled the school's recruitment procedures. Leaders have systematically sought references retrospectively for all members of staff, including checks that enquire into their backgrounds, education and qualifications. They have also revised all job descriptions. All references are in a format that asks referees explicitly if the applicant is suitable to work with children. In addition, three senior staff members have successfully completed safer recruitment training, and the designated safeguarding leader attended update training in November 2016.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Rigorous systems for logging safeguarding concerns have been established, following visits to schools that have outstanding practice and by attending safeguarding updates. The central register of safeguarding concerns, seen during the inspection, shows that all safeguarding concerns are followed up swiftly, recording the resolution or further actions that are needed.
- The school's comprehensive and effective safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016), and 'Working together to safeguard children' (March 2015). The policy explains clearly the local authority's protocols for making safeguarding referrals.
- Leaders and the proprietor have created a strong safeguarding ethos in the school. They

take safeguarding very seriously, which is demonstrated by the very careful attention given to all pupils and the school's good level of engagement with parents and external agencies.

- All the appropriate pre-employment checks on staff have been carried out in accordance with requirements and all staff have completed the required safeguarding training, including 'Prevent'.
- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.

*Paragraphs 11 and 12*

- The inspection in July 2016 identified concerns regarding fire safety and the robustness of risk assessments. The specific issue was that, although a fire risk assessment had been completed in August 2015, not all actions had been followed up. For example, fire doors were found to have been pinned open and intumescent fire strips were missing.
- In the school's action plan, leaders stated that the health and safety policy has been updated and that a self-audit against the risks identified has been completed. It also states that a fire department officer has visited the school and it has now 'passed all the checks'.
- Since that time, the effective health and safety policy was updated in January 2017, and a rigorous self-audit against the risks identified from the previous inspection has been successfully completed.
- A site visit made by the inspector, together with the headteacher and proprietor, confirmed that all fire doors have been correctly fitted with intumescent fire strips and appropriate fire-approved locks, approved by a fire safety consultant. No fire doors were seen to be pinned open, and all had the required signage on both sides of the doors. Evacuation routes and procedures have been strengthened considerably, including the identification of an additional evacuation/assembly area in a nearby church hall. The whole school has been de-cluttered of obsolete resources to ensure that the building is as free as possible from combustible materials. An independent fire consultant has also visited to advise on the very best practice in fire safety. The school has trained three fire wardens and all staff have completed fire extinguisher training. The school is now compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The requirements for these paragraphs are now met.

*Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The previous inspection found that some risk assessments for trips and activities were missing, for example those relating to pupils swimming at a pool away from the school site. Risk assessments that were available did not adequately consider risks and hazards. They were simply generic documents with an overarching 'low-, medium- or high-risk' question. They were not robust, and did not enable staff to think realistically about actions required to minimise risks to pupils' safety.
- The action plan stated that the risk assessment policy has been reviewed and that all visits now have a risk assessment in line with this new policy. Two members of staff had also been booked to attend specific risk assessment and safety training, with regard to school visits, in November 2016.
- Following this training, all risk assessments have been revised, including those relating to visits for swimming and sport. They are now much more robust and are very specific to

the potential risks of the activity. They contain a 'Plan B' to cover unexpected events, following the latest good practice guidance. In addition, the risk assessment policy was revised in January 2017 and is based on a recommended model policy from a neighbouring local authority. Evidence shows that the policy and risk assessments are being implemented effectively to reduce risks that have been identified.

- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.
- The school meets all the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- All the requirements for this part are met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

##### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor and senior leaders have made excellent progress towards meeting the unmet independent school standards.
- Leaders, including the proprietors, have successfully addressed all the aspects relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Staff have the necessary skills and knowledge, and a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have now addressed the remaining parts of the standards identified as unmet at the last inspection in July 2016. The requirements of this paragraph are met.
- All the requirements of the independent school standards are now met consistently.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. These include the standards and requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the effective implementation of the written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- Ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy, and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
- Ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and that they actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

## School Details

Unique reference number	101383
DfE registration number	302/6077
Inspection number	10026658

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	Preparatory day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Harwil Education Ltd
Chair	Joanna Willson
Headteacher	Jason Walak
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,650
Telephone number	020 8959 1965
Website	<a href="http://www.stmartinsmillhill.co.uk">www.stmartinsmillhill.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@stmartinsmillhill.co.uk">info@stmartinsmillhill.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	8–10 July 2015

## Information about this school

- St Martin's is an independent preparatory school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years and is registered to accept up to 120 pupils.
- It has operated since the 1920s, and is accommodated in an extended, detached house in Mill Hill, in the London Borough of Barnet.
- The school has been run by Harwil Education Limited since 1996. The new chair of the proprietorial board took over in December 2016.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2016, having previously been deputy headteacher at the school.

- There are currently 76 pupils on roll. The school prepares pupils for entrance examinations to grammar schools and independent secondary schools.
- Two pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The last inspection in July 2016 was the school's first progress monitoring visit to check how well the school was meeting the unmet standards identified at the time of the last full standard inspection in July 2015.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View).
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school aims to, 'provide a rich broad and challenging curriculum that puts the child at the heart of their learning and prepares them for their digital futures.'

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards, and other requirements that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- This is the second progress monitoring inspection since the full standard inspection in July 2015, to judge whether the school has met all the independent school standards.
- The Department for Education (DfE) wrote to the school on 9 December 2016 to confirm that the action plan submitted on 24 October 2016 had not been approved.
- The inspection focused on the school's progress in those parts of the action plan relating to Parts 3 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, headteacher and senior leaders. He scrutinised a wide range of documentation related to the independent school standards and reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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