

Inspection of St Martin's School

22 Goodwyn Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 3RG

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to come to this friendly school. They are especially polite and respectful. The calm atmosphere helps them to behave well at all times. Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe. They told us that they have no concerns about any kind of bullying. They know who they can turn to if they have any worries. Pupils, parents and the staff are all impressed with behaviour at the school. Pupils are very proud of their many responsibilities, for example as library and peer mentors, travel ambassadors, school councillors and charity representatives. These roles support them very well in learning about democracy and British values.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development. They nurture every pupil individually, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are determined that all pupils will be successful. They prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils learn new things in a sensible order. They take part in a wide range of additional activities to strengthen their learning and cultural awareness. Visits and visitors are carefully planned to fit in with what they are learning in class.

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

The headteacher and other leaders work together to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, broad and rich. Thorough planning for every subject shows what knowledge and skills should be taught each year. Planning accounts for the differing needs of the pupils, including those with SEND. Discussions with pupils about their work demonstrates that they are building knowledge and skills successfully and achieving well. However, pupils' knowledge and skills in computing are not as strong as they are in other areas of the curriculum. For example, their keyboard skills are not sufficiently advanced. Leaders have identified the next steps to strengthen provision and achievement in this subject.

Teachers assess pupils' learning and use the information to help them plan what they need to teach next. Pupils with SEND and those at risk of falling behind receive appropriate additional support. Mathematics, French and music are taught especially well. Effective use is made of specialist teachers in these subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge in all subjects except computing. Until recently, a specialist teacher taught this subject to all classes. Leaders have provided training for teachers to increase their knowledge in this subject.

Staff teach reading well. Children learn phonics from the start of the Nursery Year. Teaching is carefully structured to build on what pupils have already learned. Pupils read books that have been carefully chosen to match the phonics they know. As a result, they read confidently and develop a love of books. Pupils across the year groups read a wide range of books fluently and with good understanding.

Leaders support staff well in managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their learning. They enjoy lessons, listen carefully and

take part in discussions. Occasionally, particularly in the early years, activities do not engage the children's interest fully. When this happens, children lose concentration and learning is less effective.

Attendance and punctuality do not meet leaders' high expectations, but continue to improve. Leaders monitor attendance and follow up any unexplained absences rigorously.

Staff support pupils' resilience, confidence and independence successfully across the school. For example, residential visits from Year 2 onwards help build these qualities. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures through the taught curriculum, assemblies, visits and house meetings. Pupils learn to be responsible citizens in a multitude of ways and enjoy taking the lead in keeping the local area free from litter.

The early years provision prepares children well for the start of Year 1, including those with SEND. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is taught in a logical order. Children settle into school quickly, feel safe and behave well. Staff are very knowledgeable about mathematics and early reading. For example, in the Reception Year, staff provide children with sentences and books to read that include only the letter sounds they have learned. Occasionally, staff do not plan activities to meet the children's needs well enough or activities continue for far too long. As a result, children lose concentration.

Leaders are clear about what works well at the school and what needs to be developed next. They make sure that the independent school standards and the requirements for the early years foundation stage are met in full. They provide the right information for parents and handle complaints correctly. They make sure that staff are supported and challenged effectively. They provide the right opportunities for staff to develop professionally. Leaders have reduced staff workload by making the school's requirements for reporting to parents more manageable.

The board of directors and proprietor are setting up a governing body. They make sure that the roles and responsibilities for governance are carried out effectively and that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Links between the school and parents are effective. For example, parents appreciate the frequent workshops that support them in helping their children at home. Parents typically make positive comments, such as, 'This is a strong community' and 'This school is more like a family.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults at the school are checked for suitability for working with pupils. Staff receive frequent training in health and safety. The accommodation and its facilities are maintained well. Thorough checks are made on the safety of all equipment and appliances. Staff ensure that pupils' welfare is considered carefully. All required

policies are put into action. Risks are carefully assessed, and swift action is taken to remedy potential dangers.

Pupils are knowledgeable about health and safety matters and understand the purpose of fire drills and lockdown procedures. They are also particularly knowledgeable about e-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum in computing is not implemented effectively. Teachers are not well trained to teach all the knowledge and skills required as highlighted in the school's planning. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills are weaker in aspects of computing. Leaders need to develop and implement a systematic programme to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching computing.
- There are occasions when children in the early years are given tasks that are insufficiently matched to their needs and interests. When this happens, children lose concentration and learning is less effective than at other times. Teachers in the early years setting need to make sure that the activities maintain the children's interest and engage them fully in their learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	101383
DfE registration number	302/6077
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10123196
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Number of part-time pupils	8
Proprietor	Harwil Education Limited
Chair	Joanna Wilson
Headteacher	Samantha Mbah
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,025
Telephone number	020 8959 1965
Website	www.stmartinmillhill.co.uk
Email address	info@stmartinmillhill.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 October 2017

Information about this school

- St. Martin's is an independent preparatory school. It is situated in an extended detached house in Mill Hill.
- It is registered to take up to 120 pupils from the ages of 3 to 11. There is a nursery with full-time and part-time places and a Reception class in the early years provision.
- Pupils come from a wide range of heritages. Few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed after the previous inspection.
- The school was previously inspected 3–5 October 2017.

Information about this inspection

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

- We visited all classes, many with the headteacher.
- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, leaders of the subjects considered, the proprietor and three members of the board of directors.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, French and computing. When looking at these subjects, we spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils. We visited lessons, looked at planning and at examples of pupils' work.
- When looking at safeguarding, we checked the school's documentation, the school website and the premises. We spoke with members of the board of directors, the proprietor, leaders, pupils, parents, teachers and other staff.
- In addition, visits were made to the playground.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Flood	Ofsted Inspector

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