



Office for Standards  
in Education

## St Martin's School

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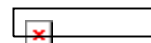
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### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY



#### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the

school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the school**

St Martin's is a co-educational independent day school. There are 91 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11 years of whom 43 are girls and 48 are boys. The school was founded in 1914 as a Church of England primary school although pupils from all denominations are admitted. It is situated in a private residential area to the north of Bournemouth town centre. It aims to ensure that pupils grow up in a friendly supportive environment where personal attention and achievement are foremost. The school has a very good record of its pupils passing selection tests to local grammar schools and gaining entry or scholarships to independent secondary schools.

### **Summary of main findings**

St Martin's School is a happy, caring and friendly school. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and gain places in secondary schools of their choice. The school's ethos promotes high levels of self-esteem in pupils who develop into mature and confident young people by the time they leave. Teaching is satisfactory overall and a significant proportion is good. Although the curriculum is broad, it would benefit from more detailed planning to ensure that there is a clearer progression in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

### **What the school does well:**

- the school provides a happy and secure learning environment where pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem;
- the percentage of 11 year old pupils gaining grammar school places and scholarships is high;
- pupils make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics. They learn to read quickly;
- provision for the spiritual, social and moral development of pupils is good. Pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to their school and towards learning ; and
- teachers know their pupils well and make the most of the opportunities that small class numbers provide to give individual support in lessons.

### **What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:**

There are a number of issues that the school must address in order to meet the regulations in full. These are:

- to ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn more about other faiths and cultures;
- to ensure that all matters relating to attendance registers, health and safety policies, pupil supervision, and the Disability, Discrimination Act are acted upon as set out in section 3 of this report;
- to ensure that procedures are in place to check the medical fitness of staff prior to appointment; and
- to improve facilities relating to hand drying and the safety of the gas flue identified in section

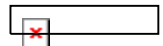
5 of this report.

## Next Steps

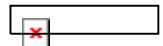
Whilst not specifically required by the regulations, the school may wish to consider the following points as areas for development:

- improving the detail in schemes of work to ensure that there is clarity in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to help the continuity of their learning year to year;
- improve day-to-day assessment so that the work given to pupils provides an appropriate and consistent challenge for different levels of ability, especially the higher attaining pupils; and
- provide more opportunities for teachers to attend in-service training to update their knowledge and understanding of current developments in curriculum and teaching.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION.



### 1.The quality of education provided by the school



#### The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is broad and includes most subjects of the National Curriculum. French is taught to older pupils. A very high proportion of time is devoted to English and mathematics, especially reading, writing and arithmetic, resulting in pupils making good progress throughout the school in these subjects. Progress in science is sound and benefits from specialist teaching in Key Stage 2. A high percentage of 11 year olds gain grammar school places and win scholarships to independent schools each year.

The time available for some subjects is limited and this, combined with a plethora of worksheets in some lessons, restricts the development of pupils' experiences and achievements. The oldest pupils learn about drugs, alcohol and smoking as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in their science lessons but this aspect of the curriculum lacks systematic planning for other year groups.

Continuity in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is helped through the use of commercial schemes and study guides. In all other subjects the curriculum overview has very little detail of how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects will be taught progressively throughout the school. This hinders the development of effective assessment and the continuity of pupils' learning throughout the school. In the kindergarten the curriculum caters appropriately for the needs of its pupils but does not develop the areas of learning in a systematic way especially in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world.

Pupils' physical development is catered for through regular games lessons and swimming in the local pool for Years 2 to 6. Those above the age of six have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. Older pupils play well and accompany hymn singing in assembly. Pupils sing tunefully in assembly.

The school has successfully developed its curriculum in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made good progress in using recognised programs, for example in word processing, presentations and databases. However, younger pupils do not yet have a systematically planned curriculum to develop the use of ICT in their learning.

There are no extra-curricular clubs or activities and only limited opportunities for outside visits to support the curriculum and pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 play chess as a weekly timetabled activity.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and about one third is good. Teachers know their pupils very well. Pupils appreciate the individual support and encouragement afforded by all teachers. Relationships are very good and teachers have high expectations of behaviour, to which most pupils respond readily. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard. In most lessons instructions and tasks are explained well, and pupils persevere to achieve what is expected of them.

In the most effective lessons teachers extend learning by:

- asking more probing questions, which require pupils to put forward their own ideas and views in class discussions;
- requiring explanations from pupils about how they solve problems, for example the method they have used to solve a mathematics question;
- providing more open-ended tasks in which pupils use their own initiative, for example while undertaking science investigations or working collaboratively developing a news letter; and
- teaching subject specific skills carefully in such a way as to provide appropriate challenge to pupils.

There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This occurs when learning objectives and explanations are unclear for pupils. In these lessons pupils make insufficient progress.

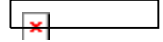
Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and in most lessons they emphasise and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and effectively. Teachers mark and assess pupils' class work and homework regularly. Not all marking provides helpful comments for pupils to develop their work. However, this is compensated to some extent by teachers discussing work with pupils on an individual basis; a process that pupils find helpful. The oldest pupils can identify which features of their writing they need to improve. Teachers do not always use their assessment effectively to inform the next stage of learning for pupils. Consequently, tasks for higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging in all lessons. School policies on assessment, marking and target setting are inconsistent in school documents and do not reflect teachers' current practice.

Teachers have had little opportunity for professional development in recent years and not all are aware of current developments in teaching and the curriculum.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

## 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of its pupils and reflects the very good ethos of the school. The school has a Christian foundation and this is effectively reflected in its daily assemblies, religious education lessons and general ethos. Pupils and adults are mutually respectful. Everyone is valued as a member of the school community.

In assembly pupils reflect on their own attitudes to others' behaviour and think about those who are less fortunate than themselves. In particular, during the inspection, pupils thought about an ex-pupil who is seriously ill. Assemblies effectively develop pupils' self-esteem through the award of certificates and celebration of their successes. Pupils respond positively and often applaud spontaneously. A music appreciation time following some assemblies allows pupils to hear classical music and learn about composers from around the world. Pupils listen carefully and are developing a good general knowledge about the music they hear.

Pupils behave well in and around school. They play well together at break times in pairs and small groups. Although school rules are not explicit, pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. They believe that there is no bullying and are clear about what to do if any should occur. When pupils have the chance to work collaboratively, they do so willingly and effectively. These opportunities promote good social skills and successful learning.

Pupils are well mannered and polite to teachers, visitors and each other. Older pupils can sustain conversation and present their views and ideas in a mature manner during discussions. They listen well to each other. In most lessons they are energetic in their willingness to answer questions and the older pupils appreciate and develop an appropriate balance of fun and study in lessons.

Opportunities to collect for charities, such as the Samaritans purse and Barnardo's, and listening to speakers in assembly, help pupils to consider others who may be less fortunate than themselves. Although there is some study of other countries and peoples around the world in geography, insufficient attention is given to aspects of the curriculum to help pupils learn about their own and other cultures and faiths in order to develop their understanding and tolerance.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

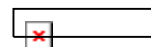
*While the school meets most of the requirements there is one issue which requires attention.*

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that its curriculum provides opportunities to help pupils acquire an appreciation of their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions( paragraph 2e).*

### 3.The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



There is a pervading atmosphere in school of pupils feeling valued as individuals. Most pupils behave well naturally and are polite, showing respect both to adults and to each other. They are enthusiastic about the merit system, which consists of good and bad marks, and encourages them to do their best in all aspects of school life. Staff understand and implement policies effectively. There is a designated child protection officer and a significant number of staff have had recent training in First Aid. Pupils are well supervised while on the school premises, although the staff to pupil ratio in the kindergarten does not meet requirements. The school has devised effective policies to ensure pupils' welfare including child protection and anti-bullying. The school has a health and safety policy although it has not yet given due regard to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers'. It does not include the health and safety of pupils taking part in off-site activities, such as swimming and educational visits.

Fire drills take place regularly and are adequately documented. There have been no alterations to the building since the latest fire officer's report, which was satisfactory, and all fire fighting appliances have recently been checked.

Whilst the admissions register is in order, the attendance registers do not meet requirements. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of pupils are not written in the front of the registers; some are completed in pencil and not in ink and some are completed for both morning and afternoon sessions in the morning. The school does not yet have in place a policy regarding accessibility for disabled people and consequently does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

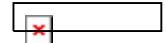
*The school meets many of the regulations.*

#### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*The school meets most of the requirements for registration, but in order to fully comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should*

- *draw up a policy to safeguard pupils' health and safety on activities outside school in accordance with DfES guidance: "Health and Safety of pupils on educational visits" (paragraph 3.2c);*
- *pay due regard to the DfES guidance 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers' within the school's health and safety policy(paragraph 3.4);*
- *ensure that there is an appropriate adult to pupil ratio in the kindergarten(paragraph 3.7)*
- *ensure that attendance registers are competed appropriately(paragraph 3.9);and*
- *take account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. (3.10).*

#### 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school is privately owned and run. The present headteacher is the son of the proprietor and he provides sound leadership. There are three full-time and seven part-time teaching staff, five of whom have recognised teaching qualifications. In addition, the school employs two instructors who teach swimming. All staff have been subject appropriate checks to confirm their suitability to work with children. However, there are no procedures to check their medical fitness prior to appointment.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

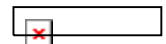
*The school meets most of the requirements for registration, but there is one issue which requires attention.*

##### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to fully comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that checks are carried out to confirm the medical fitness of staff prior to appointment ( paragraph 4c)*

#### 5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises are well maintained and are in good order, both in fabric and décor. Classrooms are on two floors of a large residential property. Each year group has one classroom except Years 5 and 6, who are together in the largest room. Some rooms are cramped for practical activities such as art, but pupils' sensible behaviour helps reduce any difficulties that arise. A small amount of specialist science accommodation is available in a room that is also used as a staff room. Outdoor areas provide adequate opportunities for games such as netball and football, although the hard playground area is cramped for games when all of the Years 5 and 6 class are together.

Whilst the washrooms and toilets are appropriate, the arrangements in the downstairs facilities for girls to dry their hands are unsatisfactory. Outside areas are safe but the boiler flue at the side entrance to the school is inadequately guarded.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school meets most of the regulations but there are two areas of health and safety that require*

attention.

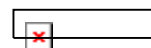
**What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?**

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003*

*the school should:*

- *ensure that girls have appropriate facilities for drying their hands in the downstairs cloakroom ( paragraph 5r); and*
- *ensure that the boiler flue next to the school side entrance is appropriately guarded (paragraph 5r).*

**6.The quality of information for parents and other partners**



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The school provides parents with a prospectus that outlines the aims and expectations of the school. Parents are kept further informed through regular, informative newsletters that are sent out by the school. Information regarding staffing levels and qualifications and policy documents is available from the school on request.

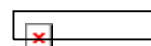
The school keeps parents well informed about the progress that their children are making through termly reports. Teachers are always available, both before and after school, to discuss with parents any concerns they have about their children. In the younger classes these reports give parents detailed information about their children's progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Reports for the older pupils include grades for achievement and effort, together with brief comments on all subjects.

The school was very co-operative in providing information to the inspection team both prior to and during the inspection.

**Does the school meet the requirements for registration?**

Yes

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



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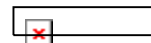
The school has recently written a new policy outlining its procedures for handling complaints which meets the requirements in full. This will be available by request to parents in the near future. The school keeps a written record of complaints and concerns raised by parents.



***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**SCHOOL DETAILS**



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Name of school:	St Martin's School
Type of school:	Primary - Church of England
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Number on roll:	91
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Fees:	Day: £750 -£1130 per term
Address of school:	15 Stokewood Road Bournemouth BH3 7NA
Email address:	N/A
Telephone number:	01202 760744
Fax number:	N/A
Headteacher:	Mr Tim Shenton
Proprietor:	Mr Townley Shenton
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Daniel Towl