

Saint Martin's Catholic School, Stoke Golding

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120305
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313581
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Nada Trikić HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Glynn
Headteacher	Brenda Carson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Stoke Golding Nuneaton CV13 6HT
Telephone number	01455 212386
Fax number	01455 212046

Age group	11-14
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspection number	313581

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, scrutiny of documentation and parents' questionnaires, observation of lessons, and discussions with staff, students and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified.

Description of the school

Saint Martin's is a stable school community drawing students from a wide area. The majority of students come from White British backgrounds with few from minority ethnic groups. Very few are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school gained Healthy School status in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Martin's provides an outstanding standard of education and high quality support for students. The strong Catholic ethos and core values promoted by the headteacher, staff and governors permeate the work of the school and underpin the high achievements and outstanding personal and spiritual development of students. This is exhibited in excellent relationships and attendance, good behaviour and positive attitudes, which contribute to a very lively and thriving learning community. Students enjoy a wide range of experiences and opportunities beyond the school day, and are very proud of their school. Students say they feel very safe and valued as individuals within this strongly inclusive community. There are good opportunities for students to share their views and take responsibility, which contributes to their confidence and maturity. This results in a strong commitment to environmental issues and charity events. These activities, together with a range of educational visits, contribute greatly to their cultural and global awareness and instil a deep concern for others.

Students enter St Martin's with standards just above the national average. The school has consistently enabled students to attain exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 9 because of high expectations, challenging targets, strong parental backing, and outstanding care, guidance and support. Standards reached by boys in 2007 were higher than those for girls overall, a result against the national trend, because of a significant improvement in English. This resulted from the use of more engaging resources to enhance boys' reading. In 2007 the achievement of students in Year 9 was outstanding and in the top 1% of schools nationally, and an improvement on 2006 results. Rates of progress increased in English, mathematics and science as a result of effective individual tracking of progress, an emphasis on the use of levels in teaching, and thorough preparation for the Key Stage 3 tests. Teachers are generous with their time and provide any additional support required to support their students' progress. Academic support is very strong and students have a good understanding of their targets and what is needed to improve. Most marking is detailed, provides clear messages about standards, and good guidance on specific areas for improvement, to enable students to reach the next step in learning. The school recognises the need to strengthen the management and analysis of assessment information at whole-school and subject level to provide a sharper and more effective contribution to self-evaluation and school improvement.

Staff know students very well, individual needs are carefully and rigorously identified and support is personalised very effectively. This is shown in the successful systems of support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the good provision for English language support. Vulnerable students are supported very well and child protection, safeguarding and risk assessment procedures are extremely robust. Staff ensure that students work in a healthy and secure environment. Links with partner schools are very strong, leading to successful induction to the school, a feature strongly endorsed by parents.

Most teaching is good or better. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and lessons are well structured. Most lessons include an appropriate range of activities that actively engage students. Learning is often further enhanced by the expert use of questioning, and opportunities for discussion which challenge and encourage students to think for themselves. Tasks, however, are not always well matched to the ability level of students with too few opportunities for them to develop independent learning skills. Students report that they particularly enjoy the challenge of physical education lessons where they are given responsibility for their own learning and for improving their skills, well supported by clear guidance. Learning support assistants provide

effective and sensitive support to promote students' progress and involvement in lessons. In a small minority of lessons, tasks are not sufficiently engaging. As a result, some students lose interest and the pace of learning slows. Managers are aware, through monitoring, where improvements are required and take appropriate action. The introduction of 'learning walks' involving a range of staff observing different lessons is proving to be an effective strategy for sharing good practice. Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. Since her appointment, the headteacher has provided drive, enthusiasm and commitment to bring about change and improvement. Leaders have created a caring and vibrant community that has the overwhelming support of parents. An increasingly effective leadership team and an active governing body support the headteacher well. The successful extension of support staff roles has enabled leaders to focus more strongly on improvement. This is demonstrated through an increased focus on coaching and mentoring to provide greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The good curriculum has been enhanced by a stronger emphasis on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and by the developing citizenship, personal, social and health education programme. Most students actively participate in out-of-school learning, particularly in music, sport and study activities, and this is a strength of the school.

Leaders know the strengths of the school and where improvement is needed. Although there are very strong individual approaches for monitoring each student's progress, efficient whole-school assessment and tracking systems are not yet in place to provide a timely and sharply focused analysis to drive improvement planning. School development priorities are correctly identified and progress discussed in governor meetings. However, these priorities are not routinely translated into rigorous action plans to set a clear direction at whole-school and subject level to support a coherent approach. Progress is not always monitored efficiently against measurable outcomes.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school through subject link roles that strengthen their knowledge and monitoring of the school. This approach is supporting greater teamwork across the school community. A good committee structure has supported strategic developments through the very effective targeting of resources. This is demonstrated through the investment in ICT to strengthen cross-curricular work. The business manager contributes effectively to the work of the school to ensure outstanding value for money. Governors have correctly identified the need to improve communications between the school and parents. They have created good plans to bring about this improvement, which will be welcomed by many parents who seek greater involvement in the development of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement plans to improve the management, analysis and use of assessment data to support improved self-evaluation.
- Ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to improvement planning to promote progress on school priorities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Saint Martin's Catholic School, Stoke Golding, CV13 6HT

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I came to inspect your school. I enjoyed talking to you, and hearing about how much you appreciated the support of staff and the additional activities on offer. You told me that staff know you very well and that the family atmosphere helped you to feel safe and secure. St Martin's is an outstanding school and continues to improve. The standards reached in school are exceptionally high. In 2007, students in Year 9 made outstanding progress since joining the school. This placed St Martin's in the top 1% of all schools nationally.

You told me that you particularly enjoy lessons where you are encouraged to work together on varied and interesting tasks. You felt that the introduction of interactive whiteboards in school and laptops meant that you were more involved in lessons. There are still some lessons where tasks do not challenge and engage you well enough and learning is less successful. Teachers are working hard to share good ideas across the school.

The headteacher and staff provide you with a very safe environment in which you feel valued. I could see that the strong Catholic ethos supports you in developing a set of beliefs and values as shown in your consideration of others. Your commitment to raising funds and the ways you support each other are superb. You told me that you have an opportunity through the school council to express your views and to take responsibility for making improvements in the school, such as the outdoor play area and recycling.

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership with outstanding features to support your success in school. Your school needs to improve a few areas in order to be even more successful. Leaders need to strengthen the ways in which assessment information is gathered and analysed to provide a more efficient approach to check on your progress. This will complement the individual support you receive. In addition, I have asked school leaders and governors to improve the quality and coordination of plans for improvement in order to accelerate progress on the school's priorities. Your parents provide overwhelming support for the school and assist you in your progress. Many parents would like to be more involved in the work of the school and governors have plans to bring this about.

I wish you every success for the future. Nada Trikić? Her Majesty's Inspector

25 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Saint Martin's Catholic School, Stoke Golding, CV13 6HT

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I came to inspect your school. I enjoyed talking to you, and hearing about how much you appreciated the support of staff and the additional activities on offer. You told me that staff know you very well and that the family atmosphere helped you to feel safe and secure. St Martin's is an outstanding school and continues to improve. The standards reached in school are exceptionally high. In 2007, students in Year 9 made outstanding progress since joining the school. This placed St Martin's in the top 1% of all schools nationally.

You told me that you particularly enjoy lessons where you are encouraged to work together on varied and interesting tasks. You felt that the introduction of interactive whiteboards in school and laptops meant that you were more involved in lessons. There are still some lessons where tasks do not challenge and engage you well enough and learning is less successful. Teachers are working hard to share good ideas across the school.

The headteacher and staff provide you with a very safe environment in which you feel valued. I could see that the strong Catholic ethos supports you in developing a set of beliefs and values as shown in your consideration of others. Your commitment to raising funds and the ways you support each other are superb. You told me that you have an opportunity through the school council to express your views and to take responsibility for making improvements in the school, such as the outdoor play area and recycling.

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership with outstanding features to support your success in school. Your school needs to improve a few areas in order to be even more successful. Leaders need to strengthen the ways in which assessment information is gathered and analysed to provide a more efficient approach to check on your progress. This will complement the individual support you receive. In addition, I have asked school leaders and governors to improve the quality and coordination of plans for improvement in order to accelerate progress on the school's priorities. Your parents provide overwhelming support for the school and assist you in your progress. Many parents would like to be more involved in the work of the school and governors have plans to bring this about.

I wish you every success for the future.

Nada Trikić
Her Majesty's Inspector