

Martin High School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	120255
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327242
Inspection date	3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ahson Mohammed

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Blythe
Headteacher	Martin Furniss
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Link Road Anstey Leicester LE7 7EB
Telephone number	01162 363291
Fax number	01162 352121

Age group	11–14
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to a change to the report following a complaint

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the quality of the curriculum, in particular, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning across different subjects
- the effectiveness of improvements to teaching and learning
- the impact of the school's self-evaluation systems on improvement planning and the promotion of community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; scrutiny of pupils' work; a range of school documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff, pupils and governors; and parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified.

Description of the school

The Martin High School is a popular and oversubscribed school that mainly serves the communities of Glenfield, Anstey and Cropston. A large majority of pupils are bussed in to school. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. Approximately 9% are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although more than usual have a statement of special educational needs. The school received the Healthy Schools Award last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has an exceptionally high regard for pupils' personal development and well-being, coupled with a strong ethos of meeting individual needs. This is acknowledged by parents, who recognise that each pupil is valued and supported within an ethos of a caring school community in which all pupils thrive. Pupils enter school with standards that are broadly average. They make excellent progress and attain standards that are significantly above average. This has been a trend for the past three years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same excellent progress as their peers.

Pupils achieve so well because they are eager to learn, each pupil is very well known and supported as an individual, and teaching is consistently good across the school. The teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good or better and this confirmed the school's view. Common features of these high quality lessons included: clear learning objectives; good subject knowledge; questioning that made pupils think deeply, thereby enhancing their understanding; and lively interaction that stimulated pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good support, making a positive contribution to pupils' progress. However, the level of challenge in lessons is not yet high enough to encourage pupils to experiment or discover independently, and this is why teaching is not yet outstanding. The quality of marking is generally good, with some excellent examples that are both evaluative and give clear advice to pupils as to how they could improve further. However, this standard is not consistent across all areas.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. The large majority of pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes towards their education and are proud of their association with Martin High. Behaviour observed during the inspection was exemplary. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and enjoy very positive relationships with each other and staff.

Those pupils who were interviewed said they felt safe and secure and trust staff to provide support when difficulties arise. Pupils accept responsibility readily and are willing to speak about their experiences at the school. Bullying is rare, but nonetheless pupils are very confident that if incidents of bullying were to arise they would be dealt with effectively. A few parents disagree about behaviour and bullying, but the overwhelming majority are very supportive of the school, and feel that their children make good progress, feel safe and enjoy school. The school council is an excellent forum in which pupils learn about democratic processes, leadership and the responsibilities that these roles command, along with the art of communication and compromise. They are developing excellent skills that prepare them very well for later life.

The quality of the curriculum and other activities is good. It is already effective in meeting the needs and interests of all pupils and helps them to recognise and value people from diverse backgrounds and issues. However, the school has embarked on modifying the curriculum further in line with its philosophy of meeting individual needs and nurturing 'holistic learners'. This is already beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Statutory requirements are met and the school makes the very best use of the resources at its disposal. A range of extra-curricular activities that allow pupils to develop their talents and interests is offered by the school.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and it is a key feature that underpins the success of the school. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place and meet current guidelines. Teachers know the pupils very well and are accessible to offer support

and guidance as required. They are totally committed to the welfare of all pupils; praise and direction are used very well. Pupils know this and, as a consequence, respect and value their teachers. One of the resulting benefits is that pupils participate enthusiastically during lessons and try their best, not just for themselves but to gain recognition from their teachers. This impacts positively on standards and is another reason why pupils do so well. There are strong systems in place to track and monitor pupils' progress, although these are not consistently applied across all areas of the curriculum. Any underachievement is identified at an early stage and targeted support is provided to help pupils rapidly improve their progress. Pupils are aware of their current and target attainment levels and demonstrate a determination to achieve them.

Outstanding distributed leadership has been developed; the school has a clear educational direction that has seen standards rise year after year. This success has been built on a strong commitment to high standards of care and respect for the individual. The pupils' views are collated often, so that the school has a clear understanding of its own community.

The headteacher is supported well by a very able senior leadership team who share his commitment. Managers are held to account and expectations are high. Heads of year fulfil their role by overseeing the pastoral provision and keeping an eye on pupils' progress, intervening when necessary. Heads of department evaluate performance in their subjects and implement strategies to address perceived weaknesses. The quality of self-evaluation is excellent and the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. For example, the senior leaders have rightly identified a relative weakness in terms of community cohesion at local and national levels, even though it is already very good within the school, where pupils demonstrate an awareness of faith, ethnicity and cultures to make a harmonious learning community. Links have been established and are developing in the international context with Manila. The governing body performs its function exceptionally well and provides very good support. The school has an outstanding capacity to continue to improve and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create opportunities to extend learning beyond the school and into the wider community and similarly involve members of the local community in school life.
- Ensure that opportunities are planned across all areas of the curriculum to challenge pupils to develop deeper and more independent learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Martin High School, Leicester LE7 7EB

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and carefully considered the many things you told me about your experiences within the school. I was particularly impressed by the maturity you showed in answering my probing questions about your learning. It is clear that you enjoy being at the school and taking part in the many activities it offers. You told me that in your opinion, Martin High School is a good school and you are happy to be part of it. I would like to say that I have found it to be better than good and I have categorised it as outstanding.

Here is what I found out on my visit.

- Pupils make excellent progress throughout the school.
- Standards of behaviour are excellent in lessons and around the school.
- The quality of teaching is good, which is why you do so well.
- The care, guidance and support shown by staff are excellent, and this is why you feel safe and secure.
- The curriculum is good as it meets all of your needs well, and the school has plans to make it even better.
- You work well together as a school community, regardless of your backgrounds and abilities.
- The school is well led.

I have asked the headteacher to ensure that opportunities are explored and developed to encourage you to work with the community beyond the school and to challenge you further in lessons, for example by creating more opportunities to develop your independent learning skills. You can help by thinking about what you are learning in lessons and what you need to do to improve your understanding.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ahson Mohammed

Lead inspector