

St Martins School

Wisgreaves Road, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 8RQ

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All aspects of the school's work are outstanding and have improved since the previous inspection. This is because the headteacher has inspired a dynamic vision with pupils and their development at the heart of all that the school does, and which the whole school community fully believes in.
- The governing body, pupils and all staff in the school have helped to develop this clear philosophy around high expectations for all pupils. Leaders know the school extremely well and have clear plans in place to develop it further.
- Pupils in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the Galaxy Suite make outstanding progress during their time in the school, relative to their starting points. At the end of Key Stage 4, they have significantly narrowed the gap that existed between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally.
- Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account for improvements very effectively and successfully.
- Behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils see themselves as a part of a family. The pupils' vision statement says "it is an outstanding and caring place to learn, helping everyone to become independent and successful young people who make a positive contribution to their community". Inspectors found that this is true and that pupils are kept very safe in the school.
- It is clear from their attitudes to school and their attendance that pupils make strong progress in their personal development and are extremely proud to be a part of the 'family' of St Martins School.
- Outstanding teaching promotes pupils' strong achievement. Inspection findings and school records show that teaching across different subjects is consistently strong. Hence, all subjects perform equally well enabling pupils to learn exceptionally effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which four were joint observations with members of school's leadership team. Inspectors observed lessons in a wide range of subjects and in all key departments, covering all abilities. Pupils were also observed around the school at break and lunch times and at the beginning and end of the day.
- Meetings were held with the Headteacher and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of staff and some individual members of staff, therapists, and two groups of pupils. A majority of the schools staff completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Although no parents had responded to the on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', inspectors took account of parents' responses to the school's own surveys. The lead inspector also met with a parent who had requested a meeting.
- Various documents, including self-evaluation summaries, data and minutes from meetings of the governing body were scrutinised during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Muir, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Martins is a secondary school for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, including some who have moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs are educated in the Galaxy Suite of rooms for most of their timetable.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are more boys than girls and the proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils who need more support) is four times the national average.
- The school relocated to a new site in September 2012 and is now based on 'The Derwent Campus', on the edge of Derby City, alongside a mainstream secondary school. The school is planning with the local authority to extend its provision to include sixth form students from September 2013.
- The school currently holds several awards including: International Schools Award, Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy School status, Continuing Professional Development Mark and Eco-schools Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should build on the current data systems to further refine them so that pupils are able to use the information on their progress to help them to plan for their future.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The school's information about pupils' progress shows that, over time, nearly all make significantly more progress than expected when taking into account their starting points. The very few pupils who make slightly less progress than the others, do so due to external circumstances. Girls progress as well as boys and there are no differences in the achievement of pupils based on their ethnic backgrounds.
- Targets are set for pupils which are extremely aspirational, so there are high levels of challenge for all pupils in all departments. All pupils leave school with a recognised qualification. These range from entry level qualifications to GCSEs. Although GCSEs have been taken previously by a small number of pupils, the recent move to the new site is now making it easier for pupils to access GCSEs course in the partner mainstream school if appropriate. The school does not enter pupils early for GCSEs.
- Currently, all individuals and groups of pupils are monitored very closely for the progress they make. Although cohorts are small, and variable, it is clear that over time, there is a significant increase in the qualifications gained by pupils. The school compares the progress made by pupils to those nationally. This shows that progress is outstanding in all parts of the school, including for those who have autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs.
- Pupils who are receiving extra support through the pupil premium-funded activities are making even greater progress, especially in their reading and other literacy skills, and, as a result, the gap between their performance and that of other pupils, in the school and nationally, is closing.
- Reading is a high priority throughout the school and this is reflected in the recent introduction of a commercial scheme so that pupils are having daily tightly-structured sessions to support their literacy. The results of this show that pupils are improving their reading, as well as other literacy skills, and this has helped pupils to become independent and avid readers outside of lessons.
- The school's strong focus on developing pupils' personal skills and independence has been a significant factor in getting them to enjoy their learning and giving them the confidence to participate in lessons and group activities. These skills contribute significantly to their ability to make outstanding progress in their lessons.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- During this inspection, more than half of teaching observed was graded as outstanding, although the school's assessment shows that this proportion is typically closer to two-thirds. In the lessons which were jointly observed with a member of the school's leadership team, there was clear agreement between the judgments of the inspector and the school leader. This confirms that the school's assessment is accurate. All teaching is at least good and none is inadequate. Examination of books and records indicate that the impact of this high quality teaching is significant over time and enables pupils to learn a great deal.
- In all lessons, relationships and levels of trust are impressive and teachers provide a range of tasks and activities which keep all pupils engaged and enthused throughout. Teachers use questioning which keeps pupils on their toes and digs deeply into their understanding of what is being taught. A high-quality example of this was seen in an English lesson with a very wide range of abilities, yet the teacher's skilful questioning allowed all pupils to make outstanding

progress in their understanding of how to describe a character from Harry Potter.

- The best teaching also provides rapid pace and well-planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and discuss their work with their peers. In the minority of cases where teaching was not outstanding, this was due to teachers getting their timing slightly wrong, so they were not able to provide pupils with sufficient time to demonstrate fully what they had learnt. Nonetheless, pupils did make good progress in these lessons.
- During lessons, pupils' targets are regularly referred to by pupils and staff, so that pupils are clear about the progress that they are making. This is supported through various methods of feedback by the teacher, including marking in their books. Pupils are aware of their levels in subjects and know how to improve their work. To help develop their skills in reflecting on their work, every lesson promotes 'ASK' (attitudes, skills and knowledge), so that pupils develop these areas which will benefit them as they move through their lives.
- Teachers and other staff relish and delight in their roles in supporting and promoting learning in the school and lead by example. This is based on all members of the school playing their part within a strong learning community and being enabled to reach their full potential. This was clearly demonstrated by the commitment of all members of the school community to contribute to the outstanding personal and academic progress that pupils make, in any way that they can.
- Staff are able to deliver lessons in areas that interest them, such as film-making, which enhance opportunities for pupils to gain new experiences. This is positively encouraged by the school's leadership.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have impressively positive attitudes to learning and love being members of the school community. It is very rare for there to be any misbehaviour in lessons because pupils are enjoying themselves.
 - Staff are exemplary role models and implement the behaviour policy consistently across the school. Attendance is above average and improving. The number of incidents of poor behaviour is decreasing and the number of fixed-term exclusion has gone down. Excellent support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties ensures that these pupils become much better at managing their own behaviour.
 - Pupils are continually exposed to new experiences and rapidly develop the highest of aspirations. This is exemplified by the employment of ex-pupils on the school staff who describe the key part that St Martins has played in getting them back on track. The links with the partner school are already starting to have a significant impact on widening learning and personal development opportunities for pupils in both schools.
 - The well-being and inclusion team has been a key factor in promoting the school's ethos of developing the whole pupil. It provides assessments and therapies which support pupils and their families extremely effectively. This has meant that all families are in contact with the school and are being supported, where appropriate, in being a partner in their child's education. Surveys, of all groups in the school community, show almost unanimous agreement that the school is doing well in all areas of its work.
 - The strength of the school community was seen during the assembly based on 'switch off
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fortnight'. All pupils were involved and some were sunbeams, some were atmosphere and some pollution to demonstrate global warming. There was a strong, vivid feeling of a whole school community at work. The school song, which finished the assembly demonstrated this further, with all pupils clapping, stamping their feet and singing at the top of their voices that "Puts all the other schools in the shade...It's the greatest school ever made".

- In all aspects of the school's life, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is achieved, in part, through the school's promotion of an awareness of those or who live in challenging circumstances. The school provides an outstanding array of opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons through visits to a wide range of countries. This school has organised visits to, or links with, schools in Mali, Argentina, South Korea and Ireland to name but a few. The St Martins school flag has even reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro during a visit to provide mosquito nets to a school in Tanzania.
- Improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes show that they become more reflective in how they view their place in the school and the wider world and how they see their futures.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is an exciting, vibrant and welcoming community. The dynamic and enthusiastic headteacher has created an outstanding vision which pervades all aspects of the life of the school. All staff, pupils and parents who responded to the school's questionnaires or who spoke to the inspector fully support this and the direction that the school is moving in. Pupils were very articulate in how they talked about the school being like a family for them and how they love coming to school. Leaders know the school very well and self-evaluation is strong so that areas for improvement are rapidly identified and successfully acted upon.
- The school has recently established new systems to improve the system for checking pupils' progress, including for those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium. This extra funding has been spent on providing a range of support, including an expanded programme of therapies, such as drama therapies for additional emotional support, and staff training for literacy support. However, the school is planning to refine the data systems further so that pupils are able to use the information to help them plan their routes into their post-16 education.
- The high proportion of outstanding teaching is due to the support and training teachers receive to develop their skills. Joint observations with leaders during the inspection showed that they have a correct view of the quality of teaching. The school's records have ample evidence of how the quality of teaching has improved even more, from already high standards, since the previous inspection.
- The work of all teachers, including the headteacher, is checked closely through strong systems for managing their performance. These are closely related to the national Teachers' Standards. A similar structure is in place for teaching assistants, including agreed standards against which to assess their performance. Targets set for all staff, which are used to improve their performance and to decide whether they should receive a pay rise, are closely linked to the progress of pupils.
- The outstanding range of subjects taught meets the needs of all pupils, so that they are ready for the next stage of their lives. The school has devised and implemented the highly innovative 'SHAPE curriculum', which meets the needs of all pupils and supports their outstanding achievement, personal development, behaviour, reading, writing and mathematics. The school

has links so subjects can be supplemented externally through the use of other organisations, such as colleges, farms, stables, the YMCA among others. These are monitored closely to ensure that they maintain outstanding outcomes. Pupils receive high-quality guidance and support when they are ready to move to the next stage of their lives.

- Incidents of racism are very rare. There have been no reports of other prejudice-based bullying such as homophobia. The ethos of the school is based on building on the potential of every member of the community. All pupils in the school have their needs met extremely well.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is small, but strong, as it is very active and has a very clear awareness of the strengths of the school and knows its areas for development well. It has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. There are strong systems in place for governors to scrutinise the work of the school in different areas, including checking how the pupil premium money is spent and what impact it is having on pupils' standards. Governors have the knowledge and skills to ask the necessary questions and hold the school to account. They review policies and procedures regularly and their contribution to the school's work has been significant in it remaining an outstanding school. They have a strong awareness of the performance of staff and pupils, what is being done to recognise and reward good teachers and to raise levels of performance, including for the headteacher, even further. Governors are involved in making decisions about salary progression and promotion. They have a full understanding of performance data and how the school compares with the national picture. They are involved in setting the budget. The school meets requirements with regard to safeguarding. Staff and governors have undertaken appropriate training in child protection and safer recruitment.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113042
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	403786

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	01332 758608
Chair	Derek Heal
Headteacher	Gary Dodds
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2009
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