

# School inspection report

17 to 19 June 2025

## **St Martin's School**

15 Stoke Wood Road

Bournemouth

Dorset

BH3 7NA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and proprietors ensure that the Standards are consistently met by their careful focus and attention to all aspects of school life. They apply their knowledge and skills to compile detailed development plans to ensure that pupils make good progress academically and are supported pastorally. They are pro-active in their decision-making and take into account the needs of pupils when evaluating the work of the school.
2. Leaders demonstrate a firm emphasis on pupils' wellbeing through the warm and caring interactions that are established between staff and pupils. Leaders use their in-depth knowledge of the pupils to ensure that they always recognise and celebrate individual achievements. This leads to pupils developing their self-esteem and confidence within a nurturing environment in which they feel valued.
3. Teachers provide a varied and interesting curriculum that enables the pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects. Teachers display good subject knowledge. Leaders' decision to use subject specialist teachers enhances the learning experiences for pupils. Leaders monitor teaching and learning effectively. This enables them to amend the curriculum, if required, to match the needs of particular groups of pupils and ensure that they make good progress.
4. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that they support pupils of different prior attainment. They provide useful feedback as to how pupils can make further progress. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluating their own and each other's work; however, this is not consistently the case. Not all pupils have an awareness of the targets that would enable them to enhance their learning further and ensure they make the best possible progress.
5. Skilful teaching in the early years allows children to experience practical activities that enable them to make progress in their learning. Children are successfully supported to develop their oral language and mathematical skills, as well as be creative and learn about the world around them.
6. Pupils display high standards of behaviour and incidents of bullying are rare. Leaders and teachers consistently model the school's expectations of kind, considerate and respectful behaviour. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of these expectations and show empathy in the way that they interact with others.
7. Leaders manage attendance well and ensure that all families understand the importance of pupils attending school. They analyse attendance data and are effective at resolving any issues that might arise. Registers are taken twice daily, as per statutory requirements. At the start of the inspection, registers were not kept electronically, as required by the guidance. This was rectified during the inspection.
8. Teachers implement a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum that enables pupils to develop their understanding of supporting their own wellbeing. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to manage their own emotions and how to keep physically healthy.

9. Leaders foster a culture of inclusivity and respect. The Christian ethos is central to life at the school but there is also inclusion for those with all faiths and none. Pupils show respect towards all members of the school community, regardless of any differences.
10. Leaders' approach to safeguarding is thorough, supported by effective proprietorial oversight. Regular training ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities. As a result, pupils feel safe at school.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should ensure that:

- all pupils understand their individual targets in order to enhance their learning and progress
- attendance registers are kept electronically in line with statutory guidance.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders ensure that pupils' wellbeing is prioritised in line with the caring ethos of the school. They take time to get to know individual pupils and their families well, giving pupils a genuine sense of belonging and confidence in the school environment. Through the school's Christian ethos, leaders promote compassion so that pupils know how to be kind and considerate members of the community.
12. Leaders work well with proprietors to establish the strategic direction of the school. They adopt a collaborative approach when evaluating the school, incorporating the views of parents, staff and pupils in the process. They are responsive to the emerging needs of pupils, such as introducing a new scheme to enhance comprehension skills and developing a new outdoor learning area for children in the early years. They compile detailed action plans to implement changes, with due consideration given to the management of risk.
13. Proprietors support leaders by providing professional development opportunities and through scrutinising their work. This ensures that leaders have suitable knowledge and skills which they apply to fulfil their roles effectively and to meet the Standards consistently.
14. Leaders ensure a thorough approach to assessing and minimising risks through implementing a risk assessment policy. They create detailed risk assessments for activities, educational visits and the school premises, which are regularly reviewed. They communicate effectively with all staff about their role in mitigating risks.
15. Leaders implement policies to ensure that they are meeting statutory requirements. They regularly review policies with proprietors to confirm that policies remain effective and are consistently implemented. They ensure that policies are understood by staff and that changes are communicated in a timely manner.
16. Leaders provide suitable information for current and prospective parents either through the school website or by request from the school office. They communicate regularly with parents to ensure that they receive detailed information about their child's progress at school, through written reports and meetings with teaching staff.
17. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies, such as the attendance officer and safeguarding partners, in order to prioritise pupils' welfare. They collaborate with the local authority about the provision and funding of any pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
18. Leaders fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through their implementation of a suitable accessibility plan which is overseen by proprietors. This document is regularly reviewed to ensure that actions are effective in promoting equality of access to the school site and curriculum.
19. Leaders have an effective procedure for managing any parental complaints, both informally and formally. They follow appropriate timescales and keep suitable records, including of any actions in response. Proprietors know their role in the process should parents wish to escalate any complaints.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance**

**20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders promote a curriculum that enables pupils to experience a suitably broad range of subjects and to develop their skills. There is an effective focus on building firm foundations in English and mathematics, with the addition of science, humanities and art to provide breadth of learning. Pupils also learn Spanish and Mandarin and benefit from specialist teaching in gymnastics, swimming, drama and music. They develop skills in digital technology and receive preparation for entrance examinations for selective schools, including verbal reasoning. The curriculum is well planned and carefully checked to ensure that content and coverage is appropriate to the pupils' needs and that it does not undermine British values. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education.
22. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, using their secure subject knowledge to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding incrementally. Teachers demonstrate a firm understanding of the aptitudes of the pupils and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers use high-quality resources, such as carefully chosen texts in English, and age-appropriate activities, such as investigations in science, to ensure that pupils are interested in their learning. As a result, pupils are motivated in lessons and demonstrate the hard-working attitude that is one of the school's values.
23. Teachers in the early years prioritise the development of communication and literacy through well-planned activities and high-quality interactions with the children. The curriculum is play-based and practical so that the children have numerous opportunities to converse with each other and with their teachers, such as when playing in the outdoor area or accessing creative activities set up by the teachers. This enables children to develop their vocabulary and use of sentences. Children learn letter sounds and apply these well when reading and writing simple sentences. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points and the majority meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
24. Teachers support pupils to make progress by ensuring that they provide additional help or extra challenges for pupils of different prior attainment. They give pupils timely and constructive feedback to help them make progress. In some year groups and subjects, pupils are involved in evaluating their own and each other's work which leads them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. This is not the case in all subjects and year groups which means that not all pupils have an explicit knowledge of how to extend their learning even further.
25. Leaders compile a suitable assessment framework that enables them to monitor pupils' learning. The assessments demonstrate that pupils make good progress overall from their starting points. As a result, pupils who sit entrance examinations for selective schools are typically successful in their applications.
26. Leaders ensure that assessments are used effectively by all staff to inform their teaching. Leaders are responsive and make changes to the curriculum as a result of analysing data, such as introducing the '99 club' which successfully encourages and motivates pupils to practise and hone their mental arithmetic skills. Leaders scrutinise assessment data to check that pupils are making good progress and that there are no anomalies for particular groups of pupils. When required, individual pupils are supported if any weakness or gaps are identified and this enables pupils to make further progress.



27. Leaders maintain a clear identification and support process for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Specialist staff provide individually tailored support within lessons and additional sessions when required. This ensures that pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Leaders conduct termly review meetings to monitor pupils' progress and to foster effective relationships with parents. If required, leaders make referrals to external agencies to ensure that individual pupils gain additional specialist support. Leaders ensure that they involve the local authority and other specialists in reviewing provision for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), and that any funding is appropriately allocated.
28. Leaders keep a register of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) so that they can consider whether any extra support is required. The nature of support depends on the level of language acquisition and includes using visual clues, offering additional sessions for oral and written English, and being supported in class by teaching staff. These strategies ensure that pupils who speak EAL make good progress in their fluency in English.
29. Leaders provide a range of recreational activities at lunchtime and after school in order to enrich the curriculum. This enables pupils to develop new skills in practical and informal ways, through clubs such as mindfulness, football, ukulele, Rubix's cube and science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Leaders review activities regularly with a view to introducing new clubs if required.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**30. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. Leaders provide a well-structured PSHE programme that is effective in enabling pupils to learn about how to look after their own physical and mental health, such as the importance of healthy eating and how a positive mindset can have a positive impact. This is enhanced through specific activities, such as wellbeing Wednesday and an annual wellbeing day. These events help pupils to deepen their understanding of issues such as why it is important to talk about their emotions or any concerns.
32. Leaders implement a suitable and age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) programme that is in line with statutory requirements. Teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to learn about how to form healthy friendships and how to navigate any conflict within these friendships. Older pupils consider how their bodies will change as they get older so that they are informed and prepared for the processes that they will experience.
33. Pupils behave well as a result of the nurturing atmosphere established by staff and the consistent implementation of the behaviour policy. They show consideration for others which is reinforced by consistent modelling and positive praise from leaders and teachers. Pupils diligently follow school rules and display the school's values of respect and compassion in their interactions with others. They welcome visitors warmly and look to support other members of the school community.
34. Leaders adopt a pro-active approach to prevent bullying. Pupils sign the school's anti-bullying charter annually and regularly discuss aspects of bullying in class. As a result, they demonstrate a well-developed understanding of what constitutes bullying and why it is wrong. Incidents of bullying are rare, and leaders have thorough systems to deal with it effectively if it does occur. This includes support for all parties involved and an appropriate restorative approach to rebuild relationships.
35. Teachers in the early years provide stimulating and purposeful activities to promote the children's physical development. This includes riding bikes and trikes to develop their gross motor skills and playing with dough to develop their fine motor skills. Pupils build on their physical skills as they move from the early years through the school.
36. Leaders implement a well-planned and suitably resourced physical education (PE) programme. This includes lessons using the school field to develop their skills in team sports, such as hockey, cricket and netball. The PE curriculum is enhanced by specialist gymnastic teaching for all pupils, which successfully enables pupils to develop their agility and co-ordination. Weekly swimming sessions from Year 2 provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their physical strength and stamina.
37. Leaders promote spirituality through the Christian ethos of the school. There are regular collective worship assemblies which focus on bible stories and their moral messages. The religious education (RE) curriculum focuses on Christianity and also provides opportunities for pupils to learn about a variety of world religions, so that they understand how different people express their faith and beliefs.
38. Leaders manage the premises well. They carefully identify risks and consider how they can be mitigated, such as keeping the site secure and free from hazards. They undertake and record checks regularly, ensuring that any action is promptly instigated. They ensure that pupils take part in regular fire drills and have established procedures for lockdown drills in case of emergency.

39. Teachers adopt a vigilant approach to supervision of pupils throughout the school day in order to protect their welfare. This includes when in the school building, during play times, and when venturing outside of school. To further promote pupils' welfare, leaders ensure that effective first aid provision is available, including access to paediatric first aid for children in the early years.
40. All pupils in Year 6 have positions of responsibility, such as head pupil and house captain. These roles involve them being role models in the process of guiding and mentoring younger pupils. This enables pupils to develop their confidence and independence, as well as make them feel that they are an integral part of the school community.
41. Leaders comply with the latest statutory guidance relating to attendance registers. They promote the importance of high attendance and liaise effectively with parents and the local attendance officer about any issues with attendance. Leaders inform the local authority about any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times. At the start of the inspection, leaders were not keeping the registers electronically. This was rectified during the course of the inspection.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. Teachers in the early years help children to develop their social skills so that they learn to be considerate to each other. Teachers and children take part in weekly circle time activities to discuss key aspects of topics such as what it means to be a good friend and how to resolve friendship issues. Teachers plan a variety of activities that encourage the children to work collaboratively. At these times, teachers model how to take turns and share with each other, and how to praise others when they do something well. This helps children to relate positively to others and play kindly with their peers.
44. Teachers build on these social skills with older pupils to help them develop their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. For example, the whole class 'going the extra mile' (GEM) scheme promotes social cohesion and establishes a sense of collective ownership in following school rules and encouraging each other to make the right choices.
45. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their economic understanding through different curriculum areas. Children in the early years use pretend money in their play, such as in their ice cream shop role-play area. In mathematics, pupils learn how to calculate sums of money. The PSHE curriculum covers topics such as borrowing and budgeting so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of finances. Pupils also consider the difference between 'wants and needs' so that they can think about the moral aspects of spending money. Before they leave, pupils in Year 6 complete an enterprise project, putting their economic skills into practice when compiling and implementing their business plans.
46. Leaders promote and uphold British values through the curriculum and assemblies. Lessons in PSHE help pupils to develop their understanding of how democracy and the rule of law operates through the work of Parliament. Pupils apply their understanding of democracy through activities at school, such as agreeing class rules at the start of each year and when electing members to school council. Leaders ensure that staff are trained and have an awareness of fundamental British values. They know how to promote balanced viewpoints and challenge any partisan views.
47. The nurturing and cohesive ethos of the school promotes acceptance and tolerance of all groups of pupils, regardless of any differences. Through modelling by staff and discussions in assemblies and PSHE lessons, pupils have a well-developed understanding of inclusion and the importance of treating everyone fairly. They learn about differences, such as gender, culture and religion, to enable them to consider their own identity as well as celebrate the identities of others.
48. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community in meaningful ways. Pupils visit a local care home to sing Christmas carols and to play board games with residents. They take part in litter picking activities in the local area and at the beach. Leaders also encourage pupils to develop their sense of responsibility and empathy when undertaking charity fundraising events. These events are often organised and led by pupils, such as school council arranging a cake sale and a 'break the school rules' day to raise money for their chosen charities.
49. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared for life beyond school. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 6 as they take part in transition sessions for their secondary schools. Pupils take part in a cycling proficiency course, road safety awareness and swim safety training to promote safety and

independence. Pupils also develop their teamwork skills through collaborative projects, such as enterprise and charity fundraising.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

51. Leaders have established a robust safeguarding culture within which all staff understand that the welfare of pupils is a collective responsibility. Staff receive regular training, including induction training for new staff and training to prevent extremism. This equips staff with the knowledge and skills to be confident in reporting and recording any concerns about pupils. This includes raising any issues, even minor ones, about adults working with the pupils. Staff are knowledgeable about the importance of preventing child-on-child abuse and are suitably aware of contextual safeguarding issues. Proprietors have a suitable oversight of safeguarding and receive regular training and updates to enable them to fulfil this role effectively.
52. Leaders take considered and appropriate action when there are any safeguarding concerns, with detailed and effective liaison with outside agencies and families. They keep thorough records, including any actions taken, and ensure that the appropriate information is shared with staff at school.
53. Leaders have a thorough understanding of safe recruitment procedures which they use to compile a detailed and accurate single central record of appointments. This process ensures that all staff are suitable to work with children. Proprietors oversee safe recruitment by reviewing files for new staff and discussing processes with leaders.
54. Pupils feel safe at school as a result of the trusting relationships that they experience with their teachers and peers. They speak confidentially to adults or make use of worry boxes if they want to raise any individual concerns. Through well-structured digital technology lessons and the PSHE curriculum, pupils develop an effective understanding of how to stay safe online, such as how to undertake internet searches safely and what to do if they encounter anything online that worries them.
55. Leaders liaise with an external company to implement suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems in order to protect pupils when working online at school. The systems are frequently tested to ensure that they remain effective. Leaders receive reports regularly and this enables them to take appropriate action when required.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	St Martin's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	839/6003
<b>Address</b>	15 Stoke Wood Road Bournemouth Dorset BH3 7NA
<b>Phone number</b>	01202 292011
<b>Email address</b>	admin@stmartinsschool.net
<b>Website</b>	www.stmartinsschool.net
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Timothy Shenton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kerri Male
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	80
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 to 17 June 2022

## Information about the school

57. St Martin's School is an independent co-educational day school in Bournemouth, Dorset. It was founded in 1914 and is situated in a residential area close to the town centre. The school has been owned by the same family since 1976. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher took up post in April 2023, and leaders have developed a new outdoor learning area for the early years.
58. There is one class in the early years. This comprises four children in Nursery and five children in Reception.
59. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
60. The school has identified English as an additional language for nine pupils.
61. The school states its aims are to teach pupils the benefits of hard work and resilience both in and outside of the classroom. Great emphasis is placed on good manners, respectful conduct and demonstrating compassion for others, all within a Christian ethos.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

17 to 19 June 2025

62. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

63. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

64. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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