

St Martins School

The Derwent Campus, Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 0BR

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's vision and actions are inspirational. Together with the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors, she works with absolute determination in order for each child to succeed.
- The school is a calm and happy place of learning. Staff give pupils the self-confidence to try new things and achieve success. Pupils' personal development is excellent because leaders and all staff work together very effectively.
- Parents value the excellent support that the school provides to them and their families. They say the staff are 'amazing' and 'go the extra mile'.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They have exemplary attitudes towards their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils say they feel safe and secure.
- Pupils make excellent progress across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics, often from low starting points. All groups of pupils perform exceptionally well. This is because of outstanding teaching and assessment. Learning is tailored closely to pupils' needs. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The school's creative curriculum is outstanding. It contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils engage enthusiastically in a wide range of subjects, including outdoor education.
- Governors are hugely proud of their school and have very high aspirations. They regularly challenge leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' rates of progress remain outstanding.
- The school's own well-being team provides excellent support to pupils and their families and has strong working partnerships with a range of agencies. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and readiness to learn.
- The school places safeguarding at the heart of its work. Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Staff are well aware of the procedures to follow and pupils are looked after exceptionally well.
- Post-16 provision at Horizons is outstanding. Leaders base their 'Shaping Futures' curriculum firmly around the practical skills and attributes required for the world of work. As a result, students are able to achieve a wide range of accreditation. Leaders recognise the need to further develop courses for the lower-attaining students.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Explore, with the school's working partners, ways in which further accreditation for lower-attaining students within the post-16 provision can be achieved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is inspirational, and leadership is outstanding because all staff share her vision that pupils at St Martins deserve the highest quality of education. The senior leadership team, together with middle leaders, are ambitious and continually seek ways to improve further. Teachers are highly motivated and well trained. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress, often from low starting points.
- Teachers and their assistants are very thoughtful about their teaching. They are motivated and trusted by leaders to try something different and be innovative. They know each of their pupils very well, and so are able to pitch learning at exactly the right level for them to succeed.
- Parents are very happy with the school. They really appreciate the time taken by staff to make sure their children feel happy, safe and ready to learn. Many expressed the view that staff at this school go 'above and beyond' what is expected, and described them as 'amazing'. Parents of pupils who had previously found school difficult were thrilled with their progress after transfer to St Martins. Parents really value the support given to them by the well-being team, recognising the positive impact on their child's learning and progress.
- The creative curriculum, known as 'SHAPE', is exceptionally well planned to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, together with their well-being. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. During the inspection, post-16 students thoughtfully discussed issues related to the election campaign, and those in Years 7 and 8 considered the impact on the community when an animal was vulnerable, or became endangered, as they read a newspaper article about turtles.
- Pupils enjoy creating imaginative work using a range of materials. For example, in an art lesson, they reflected on the style and message portrayed by the artist Banksy and keenly developed their own work to a high standard. Pupils gain a good understanding of the natural world. They develop effective communication skills when studying outdoors, for example for the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and when gardening. Staff plan carefully to ensure that every opportunity is taken to reinforce learning. Pupils say they enjoy learning and their activities are fun.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the information the school holds about pupils' progress and place a strong focus on continuous improvement for every pupil. They regularly check teachers' planning and how well pupils are achieving. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make consistent and sustained progress. When they need additional support, this is quickly identified and put in place to ensure that no pupil falls behind expectations.
- A whole-school approach to staff training and development ensures that new skills and knowledge learned are shared through the whole school, and therefore benefit the learning and well-being of all pupils.
- Additional funding is very effectively used. Leaders and governors are highly successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need to make outstanding progress.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is totally committed to providing an excellent quality of education. Governors take pride in their school and provide excellent support to leaders and staff. The governing body has recently restructured and increased in number to include the skills of new governors, following an audit of need.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.
- The governing body robustly ensures that the school continues to improve. For example, together with leaders, the governors are giving consideration to the school becoming an academy.
- They systematically challenge leaders to ensure the effective use of resources and impact on learning outcomes, therefore making sure that progress is outstanding.
- Governors' training is highly valued and the impact is consistently evaluated. In this way, the governing body identifies needs and acts upon them swiftly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school places safeguarding at the heart of its work and the safety and well-being of the pupils is a high priority.
- Safeguarding is very closely monitored by the school when pupils work off-site within Junction 16 and Derby College.
- Checks regarding the suitability of staff are rigorous and the school maintains an accurate single central record.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring pupils' welfare and safety. All policies and procedures are regularly updated and staff are very well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Parents say that their children feel happy and secure at St Martins. Leaders engage very well with a range of different agencies to ensure that all pupils are safeguarded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and their assistants have exceptionally high expectations of pupils. Progress is exceptional because teachers know exactly where to pitch activities so that they constantly challenge pupils. Often, these activities capture pupils' imagination. They frequently have fun and become totally engrossed in their learning.
- Teachers and other adults know each pupil extremely well and build very strong relationships with them. The school is a happy and calm environment. In many lessons, and in an assembly visited during the inspection, pupils were seen to be delighted with both their own achievements and those of others.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' communication skills and this underpins all learning. Throughout the school, staff frequently ask probing questions to challenge pupils' thinking and develop their understanding.
- A range of multi-sensory experiences are provided which pupils find enthralling. They

build their vocabulary and confidence, and staff share their progress with parents in order for them to build upon their successes at home.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They are highly skilled at assessing pupils' work. Progress is noted on a lesson-by-lesson basis and small steps in learning are carefully used in planning subsequent activities. These are designed to reinforce pupils' existing learning. Pupils are eager to reach their targets and equally keen to achieve more when they are further challenged.
- In English and mathematics, teachers' detailed planning ensures that each pupil has exactly the right resources they need for them to practise and consolidate their understanding.
- During the whole-school daily reading time, known to pupils and staff as 'drop everything and read', pupils share sections of their book with each other, read to an adult and practise their letters and sounds with great enthusiasm. A wide range of reading material is available from which they can choose, including both fiction and non-fiction. Newspapers are available each day and pupils enjoy discussing topical issues.
- All staff promote equality and are highly respectful of diversity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff are highly successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and this helps them to become successful learners. Teachers constantly encourage pupils not to give up when work seems too challenging.
- Pupils' well-being is paramount. They settle quickly into school because of the excellent quality of care and support provided. Parents are very pleased with how well the school looks after their children. One parent expressed the views of many when they said, 'Nothing is too much trouble, the staff are amazing, and they go the extra mile to help. My child can't wait to get to school in the morning.'
- All staff are highly sensitive to pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from a range of therapies and support which are provided both by staff and by outside agencies. The well-being team play an important role in supporting pupils, especially those who need to become calmer or more focused before they can learn. Staff ensure that pupils have access to a range of sensory activities whenever required. Family support, including home visits, is greatly appreciated by parents.
- Personal safety is a priority and staff consistently remind pupils about what they need to do to stay safe. Issues relating to e-safety are carefully woven into the curriculum. Pupils are well aware of how to behave safely when online.
- Pupils are given responsibilities around the school, to which they respond well. For example, they feed the fish or tidy books in their class library area.
- Pupils who attend courses at Derby College and Junction 16 are very well supported by staff who ensure that their safety and well-being is a high priority. As a result, pupils develop their independence and learn to manage their own resources.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. During the inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour were exemplary. Pupils get on very well with each other. They support and encourage each other and celebrate the successes of others. All are keen to gain 'tokens' for positive behaviour or work.
- Several pupils said that the school has really helped them develop confidence and improve their behaviour. This is because adults have provided support and enabled them to work through difficult situations. Bullying is not an issue and any problems are quickly dealt with.
- Most pupils attend well and parents say their child becomes unhappy if they have to miss a day of school. Staff work closely with families when periods of absence occur. These are mostly due to medical issues. Regular monitoring ensures that appropriate support is put in place, and, whenever possible, an individual programme of work, until the pupil returns to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils in this school make excellent progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Staff enable pupils to make excellent progress in developing their communication and thinking skills. Pupils, including those who previously lacked confidence or were non-verbal, are able to talk about their knowledge and understanding and hold very thoughtful conversations with adults.
- The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school, including those in this group who are the most able, make excellent progress due to the school's effective use of the pupil premium funding.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects, including art, physical education and the outdoor-learning programme. Through developing skills in these subjects, pupils also gain life skills, such as teamwork, cooperation and the value of exercise.
- Pupils are offered a range of vocational courses in addition to GCSE and functional skills. Staff track progress systematically and this means pupils are reaching their aspirational targets, even when they have previously had significant gaps in their learning.
- Due to the outstanding progress they make, pupils are very well prepared for the next steps in their education. They receive effective advice and guidance for transition and all move on to destinations that allow them to continue their education or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Teaching for post-16 students is outstanding and the leadership of the provision,

known as Horizons, is highly effective.

- The high expectations of all staff, together with the effective support they provide, enable all students to make excellent progress from their starting points and within their individually tailored programmes of study.
- Some students improve their English and mathematics qualifications, and all keenly engage with study courses that provide appropriate progression from their previous study in other courses. All who are leaving this summer have planned destinations into training, education or employment.
- The 'shape your future' curriculum is firmly based around practical skills and the attributes required for the world of work. Partnerships with Derby College and Junction 16 allow students to follow their interests through work experience and training.
- Students are expected to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. They learn to self-regulate when things are not going their way and, as a result, are able to reflect on their own behaviour and that of others.
- Parents are very happy with the courses offered and the arrangements staff make to prepare students for the future. They say that staff are always available to help when needed and they 'highly recommend' the provision to others.
- The safety of students is a high priority and staff ensure that detailed risk assessments are put in place for all practical activities, including those which students take part in off-site.
- Staff have identified the need to further develop accreditation for the lower-attaining students. They plan to explore additional opportunities through their current partnerships. They recognise that this will be particularly important as the number of students requiring a place at Horizons is growing.

School details

Unique reference number	113042
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10031116

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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Jones
Headteacher	Debbie Gerring
Telephone number	01332 571151
Website	www.stmartins.derby.sch.uk
Email address	d.gerring@stmartins.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Martins is a secondary special school for pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs. These include moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A few pupils have physical difficulties. The increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs are taught in the department known as Galaxy for a substantial part of their timetable.
- The vast majority of post-16 students are taught at the school's provision known as Horizons, which is situated in the city centre. Students' learning is centred on work

skills, work placements, functional skills and enterprise training. The school works with Derby College and the alternative provider, Junction 16, to provide practical experiences and a range of accreditation.

- All pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is located on the Derwent Campus, on the edge of Derby City, alongside a mainstream secondary academy. St Martins has very recently benefited from the addition of its own new reception area, enabling easy access and egress and providing a sense of ownership for staff and pupils.
- Over half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- The school is a teaching school and founder member of the Derby Teaching Schools Alliance, and the headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE). The school benefits from collaboration within the alliance and provides support to mainstream and special schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. All lessons and part-lessons visited were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings and informal discussions were held with pupils to ascertain their views on what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and files of work and listened to some pupils reading. Inspectors also considered the responses to a recent school pupil questionnaire.
- Twelve parents' written responses to Parent View were considered, alongside discussions with parents at the school. The 43 responses to the staff online survey were also considered.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation and policies. Information about pupils' current progress and targets were examined. Documents checking the quality of teaching and learning, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding were also considered.
- A number of meetings were held with members of the governing body, school leaders and staff, including those in the well-being team, and a telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.

Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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