

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Address Worples Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 7AA

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

**Overall grade** **Excellent**

**The impact of collective worship** **Excellent**

**The effectiveness of religious education (RE)** **Excellent**

#### School's vision

We believe every child is precious (Psalm 139:24) and welcome all in unconditional love (Matthew 22:34-40). We serve our community with respect (Romans 12:10), so all may enjoy life's fullness (John 10:10). Together, we learn to strive, aspire and succeed: as unique individuals, as members of a global society and as stewards of the Earth gifted to us (Genesis 1:26).

#### Key findings

- The school's deeply embedded Christian vision is understood by everyone. It creates exceptionally harmonious and respectful relationships, enabling the St Martin's community to flourish.
- The school has a robust and clearly defined understanding of spirituality which is relevant to its community. This understanding has contributed to the creation of inspiring ways for pupils to experience a spiritual dimension to their learning.
- St Martin's curriculum is broad, stimulating and inclusive. Provision for pupils with complex individual needs is a strength of the school. The curriculum continued to be delivered during the pandemic when the school was closed or partially closed.
- Collective worship incorporates opportunities for all to reflect on expressing the school's Christian vision. It addresses the needs and learning styles of infant school pupils so that they experience moments of significant spiritual growth. Pupils are central to evaluating collective worship and this drives continual improvement.
- The outstanding quality of the religious education (RE) leadership team ensures that the subject is highly valued by all. RE reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement, demonstrates pupils' progress and is led by an outstanding RE practitioner. Consequently, pupils flourish in RE.

#### Areas for development

- Expand the range of partnerships that the school supports. This is so that others can benefit from the remarkable impact of St Martin's vision and values, and the skills of the staff team.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

Through a deeply-considered and exceptionally well-embedded Christian vision, a sense of love and service permeates St Martin's infant school. It is a community that welcomes all in the belief that everyone should enjoy life in all its fullness. Governors articulate with clarity how their vision shapes every aspect of school life. They adopt policies and practices to enable change for all. The ambitious and passionate leadership of the two headteachers ensures the Christian vision is lived out strategically and operationally. The school is federated with St Martin's junior school. This has resulted in a highly successful partnership that pools expertise and resources to the benefit of both schools. For example, the school has the on-going support of a dedicated executive principal. School life is enriched by its close relationship with the local church. Church workers and school staff, particularly those who support children and families, work in partnership. This enables purposeful and deep links between the school, the Church, and the local community. Considerable support is given by the school for the benefit of those it can serve. For example, the school is known for its exemplary work with pupils who need additional support to access learning. Staff have worked alongside local pupil referral units to create exceptional practice. Consequently, the advice and support of St Martin's is sought by local schools. Staff unreservedly share their practice so that their excellence radiates beyond their own community. To this end, the RE leader is working with the Diocese to help it create a robust RE curriculum for its schools. All such initiatives are marked by a sense of generosity and service. They are informed by the vision and values that together define the character of this school.

Staff talk with enthusiasm about the influence for good that they achieve by living out the school's vision. They speak with a Christ-like love for the pupils they serve. They are generous with their time and commitment to their school and its community. Staff believe in the importance of their own spiritual development. They take time to reflect and pray with each other. For example, the maintenance staff prayer group prays daily for the good of the school. Faith diversity is constructively celebrated so that those of different faiths know that they belong in this community. Religious artefacts within prayer areas are used in ways that enhance a sense of inclusion. The cohesive relationships amongst staff exemplify the school's Christian vision. As a result, a harmonious culture of learning, that cultivates pupils' personal, spiritual and academic development, is created. In this atmosphere pupils readily flourish.

Providing for pupils with a range of additional needs is an indisputable strength of the school. The investment in training and resources for these groups exemplifies leaders' strong Christian commitment to diversity and inclusion. The mental health and wellbeing of all pupils and their families are given high priority. Excellent pastoral support arises from the vision, rooted in the belief that every child is precious. Parents explain that staff frequently go beyond their teaching roles in being readily available to listen to them and understand their family issues. Consequently staff build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem so that they are encouraged to fulfil their potential. The school's positive behaviour system, using a restorative approach of forgiveness and reconciliation, is highly effective. Staff are committed to this approach because it is recognised as an apt expression of the school's vision. It ensures pupils live and learn in harmony and, as a result, incidences of poor behaviour are very low.

Parents speak highly of the support they received during the pandemic when the school was unavoidably closed. At the start of the initial lockdown, staff hand-delivered learning resources to every pupil. Staff, already fully aware of the needs within their community, attentively applied additional support where needed. For example, the school hosted 'stay and play' sessions for pupils without outdoor spaces. Highly effective in-person and remote learning enabled this cohort to engage with their lessons and continue to make academic progress. Virtual collective worship was delivered daily, either by the school or the Church. Parents agreed that these services brought a sense of calm and focus to their day. RE remained a core subject during this time.

Collective worship is fundamental to the spiritual life of St Martin's. It is extremely well-planned and evaluated by leaders and pupils. Consequently, the school has created an innovative collective worship programme that directly supports its own diverse community. Collective worship is typically varied, engaging and invitational to all. It conscientiously addresses the needs of infant school pupils and inspires inquiring minds. Pupils are ambitious to act on what they have seen and heard in collective worship. They are keen to bless others and eagerly identify exciting ways to be advocates of change. These include food bank collections and table top sales. Through collective worship, pupils develop a thorough, age appropriate understanding of Christian theology and liturgy.

St Martin's values-led curriculum is ambitious and challenging. It enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. Leaders have a robust understanding of what spirituality means for their community. Consequently the curriculum incorporates excellent opportunities for pupils to explore spirituality across all subjects. In line with the school's spirituality statement, pupils are given opportunities to look back and reflect on their experiences.

Curriculum planning for RE is highly effective and is extremely well-led by the RE leader. Excellent support is given for all staff to build on their already outstanding subject knowledge and practice. Stimulating opportunities are created for pupils to reflect on their own and other religious viewpoints. They learn about different world faiths, particularly those practised within the school's cohort. The curriculum includes opportunities to visit different places of worship and to welcome guests who represent other faiths into school. As a result, pupils actively consider diversity, faith and culture across a range of religions. Pupils are proud of their RE learning and the special books which they say allow 'everyone to know our ideas'. In addition, the school delivers inventive RE days. The immersive experiences and creative activities of these enable pupils to develop a deeper understanding of Christianity.

Through an attitude of Christian service, the community of St Martin's works together to the benefit of all. The school is well-placed to continue to grow and develop as an exemplary Christian community.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

RE teaching and learning are Excellent. Working collaboratively, the Diocese and the school have created an imaginative and engaging RE curriculum. All pupils, including the most vulnerable and those who need additional help with their learning, flourish in RE. This results from the teachers' strong subject knowledge and rigorous systems for assessment.

**Contextual information about the school**

Date of inspection	24 March 2022	URN	125157
Date of previous inspection	7 May 2015		
School status	Voluntary aided infant school	NOR	270
Name of Federation	St Martin's CofE Voluntary Aided Schools		
Diocese	Guildford		
Headteacher	Kate Marchesi and Maggie Down		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Inspector's name	Delia Sheppard	No.	942