Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Martin's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Learning to Love, Loving to Learn

Our loving and generous school family celebrates the worth of every individual. Inspired by the Christian message and St. Martin's humanity, we serve each other gladly, with compassion and gratitude. Our high expectations encourage everyone to flourish: spiritually, morally, intellectually and creatively.

St. Martin's Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- The school's Christian vision shapes decision-making and daily practice across the school. As a result, a nurturing and inclusive culture is established, where all members of the school community feel valued and respected.
- The school benefits from strong and effective partnerships with the parish church and the diocese, as well as from being a member of the deanery group. These relationships provide valuable support and high-quality training. They make a significant contribution in growing the school's Christian character and contribute positively to the life of the school.
- Leaders are ambitious and empathetic, leading by example. They have created a staff team who live out the vision. This enables the school community to make positive contributions through acts of service and care for one another.
- Collective worship deepens understanding of the Christian vision and supporting values, enabling the school community to reflect upon 'big questions'. Pupils and staff engage meaningfully in worship, contributing to their spiritual flourishing. They make thoughtful connections between worship themes and their daily lives.
- Guided by the vision, effective strategies are implemented to support pupil and adult wellbeing. As a result, pupils enjoy school, feel safe and thrive.

Development Points

- Establish a shared understanding of spirituality across the school community. This is to enable pupils to recognise, articulate and thoughtfully reflect upon the spiritual opportunities provided throughout the curriculum.
- Introduce a greater balance within the religious education (RE) curriculum and evaluate the impact of this upon pupils' knowledge and understanding of a diverse range of religions and worldviews. This is to enable pupils to experience the full breadth and challenge of a balanced curriculum.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

St. Martin's vision of 'learning to love, loving to learn' is deeply rooted in the example of St. Martin, who embodied Christ's teaching to love and serve others selflessly. It is a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils are respected and nurtured. The school's vision and associated values are central to decision-making and strategic planning. Leaders, including governors demonstrate a deep commitment to the vision. The ethos committee meet regularly to review its effectiveness and impact on the school community. Driven by compassion, the school has invested in staff and resources to support families in need. The ongoing evaluation ensures that Christian principles such as service, remain at the heart of the school's work. Clergy and leaders describe the church and school as 'being extensions of each other'. The church welcomes pupils as part of its worshipping community. The school serves as a focal point for the church's ministry to families and children. Staff exemplify the vision in their daily practice, actively modelling the school's values and intentionally weaving them into school life. Pupils appreciate rainbow awards which motivate them to live out the school values. Leaders respond to the needs of pupils and families to ensure that their academic and personal needs are met. By knowing each child individually and tailoring support accordingly, pupils feel special and valued as unique individuals. The influence of the whole team working closely together impacts lives beyond the school day.

Vision and Curriculum

Driven by the vision, leaders are committed to developing pupils to become confident, secure citizens whilst ensuring that they thrive academically. This has a direct impact on the flourishing of pupils at the school, particularly those with additional needs. Strategies and interventions are carefully tailored to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Targeted programmes focus on social and communication skills, such as establishing eye contact and building confidence in interactions. These enable pupils to develop meaningful relationships and make significant progress in their personal development. Pupils value the opportunities that their school offers for them to enhance their learning. For example, in response to their views, leaders introduced a wider range of after-school activities such as art and cricket. Where possible, learning is enhanced by carefully chosen visits which supports pupils' spiritual flourishing. Visits, such as the one to Buckingham Palace, inspires pupils to develop a sense of awe and curiosity about the world around them. Leaders plan for spiritual development across the curriculum. However, there is not a consistent, shared approach to enable pupils to develop the understanding and reflective skills they need to identify their spiritual growth.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a central and spiritually enriching part of school life. It offers pupils and adults opportunities to pause, reflect and pray. Staff sensitively support pupils to ensure inclusion and participation, for example, through the use of ear defenders. The school uses the biblical fruits of the spirit as a source of inspiration and learning. This incorporates thought-provoking, philosophical questions and enables the school community to foster values such as care, respect, and compassion. The school observes the cycle of the church calendar, including major Christian festivals. As a result, pupils' understanding and appreciation of worship are greatly enhanced. Worship is enriched by year groups who focus on school values, which are enjoyed and appreciated by parents. The school's use of contemplative storytelling methods creates an inclusive and reflective environment. Here, pupils, regardless of their faith background or prior knowledge, can encounter biblical stories with genuine wonder. This contributes significantly to their personal development and spiritual flourishing.

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Vision and School Culture

The vision is powerfully evident in the exceptional care shown to members of the school community. The school 'celebrates the worth of every individual' through actions that have a transformational impact on pupils' outcomes and experiences. These are exemplified through practical initiatives such as regular family drop-in sessions. The school provides food, and families can access support in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment. Staff speak with genuine appreciation about how leaders go above and beyond to support their wellbeing. Parents describe the school as a lifeline during difficult times. This culture of compassionate care, rooted in the example of St. Martin, ensures that individuals are valued and supported to flourish, regardless of their circumstances. Leaders invest in nurturing and empathetic staff, to ensure that pupils' needs are diligently planned for. Pupils flourish as a result of the care and compassion provided. Staff thrive in response to the professional and personal support they receive.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Because of their commitment to the vision, pupils have a keen sense of justice and responsibility towards others. They build strong bonds within school and are inspired to help others. Leadership roles such as the school council encourage pupil contributions. For example, the visit to the House of Commons where they enjoyed learning about how laws are made and shared this with the school community. Their views effectively contribute to supporting projects in the local community, such as the food bank. This experience enables pupils to appreciate the challenges of people who are homeless. Pupils know they can make a difference in the world and take action to do so. They do this by significantly reducing the amount of plastic they bring into school, demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship. Cherished partnerships with the church, diocese and deanery group enhance the school's Christian character. This is demonstrated through collaborative worship, targeted training in Christian leadership and sustained pastoral and spiritual support.

Religious Education

RE holds a high profile within the school and is a well-respected subject among staff and pupils. Pupils gather as a candle is lit to begin their learning. This enables them to recognise its importance. Leaders provide clear and purposeful direction, ensuring that RE remains a core curriculum priority. The subject is well resourced, and both the school and the diocese provide high quality training and support. Exploring major worldviews and faiths is related to pupils' knowledge and understanding about Christianity. Pupils learn about Muslim prayer practices and the importance of prayer in Islam. They understand both the shared importance of prayer across faiths and the distinctive Christian understanding of relationship with God. While the new RE curriculum has been introduced and is well-resourced, it is not fully embedded. Consequently, pupils' knowledge of worldviews and religions, is not as deep or secure as intended.

Teachers deliver lessons that are engaging, well-paced, and appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils. Smaller group lessons enable pupils with SEND to learn with additional support. Pupils confidently articulate religious concepts and key Christian events, demonstrating a strong understanding of the subject. They recognise its importance in helping them appreciate diverse views and develop empathy and respect. A culture of respectful dialogue is embedded in RE lessons, where pupils feel that their views are valued. Pupils are consistently challenged through thought-provoking big questions, such as one explored by Year 5: 'Can people from different religions be friends?' These stimulate deep thinking and discussion. A rigorous assessment system is aligned with the curriculum. This enables teachers to track pupils' progress and identify areas in which they require additional support. As a result, pupils make strong progress.

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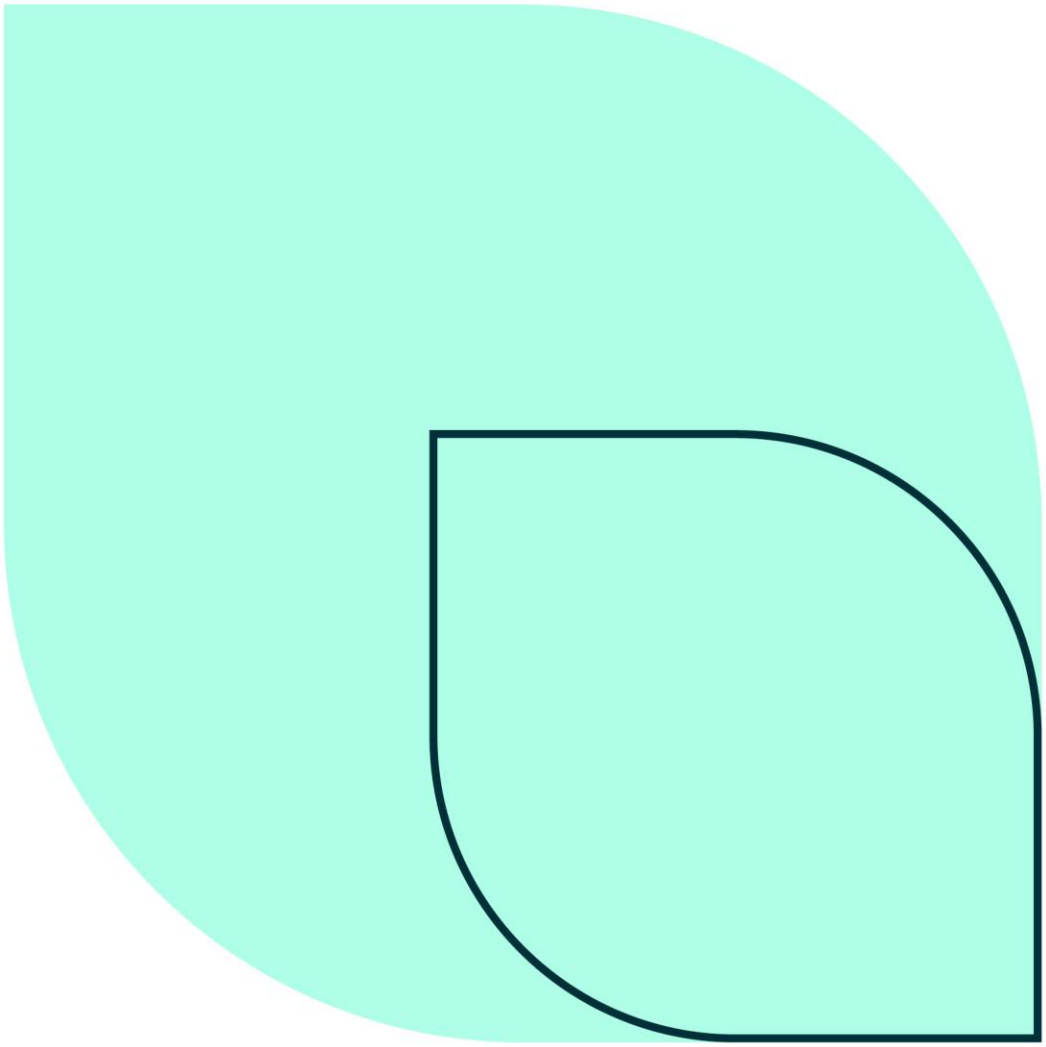
Information

Address	Hartington Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 3LJ		
Date	25 March 2026	URN	114539
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	213
Diocese	Chichester		
Headteacher	Jane Joshi		
Chair of Governors	Trevor Buxton		
Inspector	Tom Spurle