

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

## St Martin's VA Primary School

Address Shady Bower Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 2RE

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** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

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

### School's vision

We are a place of spirituality, diversity and opportunity; inspiring all, flourishing together.  
'... bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.' Colossians 1:10

### Key findings

- Dedicated, compassionate leadership empowers strong teamwork, inclusive of everyone's gifts. Leaders and staff model the importance of the vision to inspire and flourish together.
- Effective, empathetic governance has set a clear trajectory towards building a strong governing body. However, systems for governors to evaluate the effectiveness of St Martin's as a Church school are not fully in place.
- An inspiring and nurturing Christian community where pupils are known and valued, but where a shared understanding of spirituality within the curriculum is yet to be fully developed.
- Thoughtful and inclusive collective worship inspires and unites the whole school family, enabling all to enjoy and reflect upon God and the deeper aspects of life.
- The quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) enables pupils to grow richly in their religious understanding. The school celebrates the diversity of its pupil body. However, active encounters with members of diverse faith and belief communities from the locality and beyond are less frequent.

### Areas for development

- Develop more robust systems to enable leaders, including governors, to evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school.
- Develop a secure approach to spiritual development that is shared by all staff, enabling better planning, and tracking of spiritual growth.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to meet with people of diverse faith and beliefs from the local community and so nurture pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

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

St Martin's is a warm and welcoming school which proudly lives out its inclusive Christian vision for all to flourish together. It celebrates the diversity of its intake, offering beneficial opportunities for all to thrive. Through skilful and sensitive leadership, the school gives pupils a safe space to learn and grow in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Opportunities are provided for pupils to create strong friendships and follow pathways that enable them to achieve educational, personal, and spiritual growth.

Motivated by its vision to inspire, and to enable all pupils to flourish, the school makes admirable provision for a local community where there are significant levels of deprivation and an enormous diversity of spoken languages, cultures and faith and belief traditions. There is also a significantly transient population, and the school prides itself on giving a warm welcome, sometimes at very short notice, to whoever arrives at the door. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for by well-trained staff, who in turn are supported by a whole array of external agencies. Staff exhibit significant skill in stretching the more confident learners whilst proficiently structuring a learning environment for those who require more support. Testament to the success of this approach is that increasing numbers of pupils are working at greater depth.

The systems in place to cater for pupils' diverse educational needs are sophisticated. Provision is made for each child to receive bespoke input to establish their aptitudes and needs. Where specific issues are identified, specialist support is targeted to facilitate educational and emotional development. The adept use of a lively phonics programme has transformed the development of children's speaking and writing skills. The impact of these interventions is shown in the rapid progress made by pupils as they develop their literacy and numeracy skills to become confident, articulate learners.

During the Covid pandemic the school took active steps to ensure that families were well supported, enabling pupils to continue to flourish in their learning. Parental questionnaires show overwhelming appreciation for this provision.

The school has established strong partnerships, demonstrating an outward looking approach. Collaboration with the Diocese of Salisbury and Wiltshire local authority have been especially significant over recent years in the reorganisation of the governing body. The school also draws on courses and training provided by the Salisbury Diocesan Education team, to build their expertise on RE, spirituality and SIAMS.

Through well targeted, strategic interventions governance has now been placed on a firm footing. Governors are highly motivated to ensure the school's vision for all to flourish together is fulfilled. They exhibit a good understanding of the school, in the context of its wider community, and have overseen an important journey of school improvement. In particular, the appointment of the current head teacher has helped the school to make rapid and sustained progress. However, governors' meetings pay insufficient attention to the maintenance and development the school's Christian distinctiveness, and governance systems for monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness as Church school are currently underdeveloped.

There is a deep sense of spirituality embedded throughout the school community and this is valued by parents and pupils. Children are confident and thoughtful when describing the school's Christian values and explain with clarity why these principles make a tangible difference to their lives. However, they are not so fluent when articulating the school's Christian vision. Relational awareness is central to the way staff interpret the curriculum, creating connections and building mutual respect. However, a shared understanding of spiritual development across the curriculum is yet to be fully articulated.

RE is carefully planned and well led. Pupils enjoy the subject and are adept in the way they express their understanding of the topics they have been studying. They are keen to volunteer their own views, whilst also being knowledgeable about the beliefs and worldviews of others. Staff take RE seriously and give time to developing engaging approaches to its delivery. Religious texts are well utilised, and pupils demonstrate good religious literacy. However, opportunities for extended writing in RE are underdeveloped.

Input from the Bridge Youth Project offers pupils a chance to engage with active Christian voices. However, pupils have fewer openings to hear directly from the lived experiences of people from Christian and other faith and belief backgrounds from the locality or the wider community.

Collective worship is grounded in the vision to create a place of spirituality, diversity, and opportunity. It is carefully planned for each term, with inclusive themes that link to the school's Christian values. Leaders and class teachers are proficient in the way they connect worship to pupils' personal and family experiences. Worship and prayer are thoughtfully invitational, offering pupils opportunities to reflect on their own lives in the context of biblical stories and ethical teachings. Encouragement is given for them to participate in activities, spend time in thoughtful reflection and to express themselves through prayer. Pupils are articulate in their knowledge of gospel stories and the relevance these have to their lives, but their understanding of the trinitarian nature of God is not fully embedded.

The school participates in services at St Martin's Parish Church several times a year, and these occasions are valued by pupils and parents. Pupils enjoy being part of Eucharist services, linking well with the understanding they have developed through their RE lessons.

Collective worship continued to be prioritised throughout the Covid pandemic, even when the school was closed. Through worship in bubbles and the use of online and recorded resources pupils and families were able to feel connected to the school's vision and values.

The essential vision of St Martin's can be seen through the example of an inspiring unit linking Holocaust Memorial Day with World Day for Cultural Diversity. Focusing on the theme 'torn from home', pupils learned about the needs of marginalised groups, including traveller communities, through artwork based on the work of a French Roma artist. This sums up the way in which this thriving and nurturing school expresses its Christian care for the children of this diverse inner-city community.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

Teaching and learning in RE is consistently good because monitoring and evaluation are extensive. Through the regular scrutiny of books, learning walks and conferencing, evidence shows that pupils are learning and remembering well in RE. Leaders and teachers set high expectations for the subject. All groups of pupils flourish in RE, including those who are vulnerable. Pupils make good progress in line with other core subjects, with some pupils achieving exceptionally well in their RE. Assessment practices are consistent and embedded.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	9 November 2021	URN	126413
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2015		
School status	Maintained, Voluntary Aided	NOR	150
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Salisbury		
Headteacher	Jamie Liddell		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Ed Pawson	No.	904