

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Martin’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address | Highfield Lane, Fangfoss, York YO41 5QG

School vision

In our caring, loving and hopeful community everyone can flourish.
 We use the model of Christ and Christian values to prepare our children for their journey into adulthood academically, spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially. With aspiration and self-belief, everyone can achieve their own excellence through effort.

‘Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it’ -
 Proverbs 22:6 and
‘I am with you always’ - Matthew 28:20

School strengths

- The school’s vision, deeply rooted in the Bible, is central to its life and purpose. It enables pupils and adults to flourish.
- Driven by the Christian vision, St Martin’s is a loving, inclusive community. Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families is transformational.
- There are well planned, invitational opportunities for pupils and staff to come together for reflection, celebration and prayer. As a result, collective worship contributes significantly to spiritual flourishing.
- Partnerships with the community, Church and diocese are strong. Reflecting the school’s values of compassion, responsibility, creativity and trust, they enhance a culture of well-being for all.
- Leaders have effectively raised the profile of religious education (RE). New approaches engage pupils and have enhanced their enjoyment of the subject.

Areas for development

- Share roles and responsibilities across staff and governors. This is to ensure everyone understands and contributes to ensuring St Martin’s continues to flourish as an effective Church school.
- Extend opportunities to support pupils’ understanding of injustice and inequality. This is to enable them to more independently enact positive change in the world.

Further strengthen pupils’ breadth of knowledge in religious education. This is to support their understanding of world religions as diverse, global faiths.

Inspection findings

St Martin’s is a joyful and compassionate school that is living out its Christian vision. That vision is at the heart of daily life and decisions, enabling pupils and adults to flourish together. Through welcome and support, there is a shared belief that everyone can and will achieve. This relentless focus on the individual has fostered a deep sense of belonging. As a result, St Martin’s achieves its aim to be a beacon of hope that shines out into its local community and beyond.

Inspired by the vision, leaders have set in place a caring and inclusive culture. There is a pride in being part of this loving school community. An atmosphere of care pervades the school, including bespoke provision to enable everyone to take part in all that the school has to offer. This includes a vast range of extra-curricular opportunities. An example is when pupils are asked to learn British Sign Language to support a pupil in school. This deep nurturing within the school community is evident in the smooth transitions. Careful planning and attention by staff ensures pupils joining school at the beginning of their journey have their needs met. Likewise, the school's values equip pupils in year 6 to move to key stage three with confidence and self-belief. As a result, those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or those who may be vulnerable, flourish alongside their peers. This approach is a strength of the school and has been transformational in enabling not just pupils, but also families, to thrive.

The school's value of compassion impacts on the adults in school too. Staff proactively tailor loving support, including for each other. They talk of each other as a family, supporting and caring for each other. They access a range of quality professional development. As a result, morale is high and staff feel valued because they are treated with respect. Governors are proud of their school and its leadership. They know the school well and have made brave spending decisions over time, such as additional pastoral support. Roles and responsibilities of staff and governors are not widely shared. This has led to variable understanding of how everyone is responsible for St Martin's being a flourishing Church school.

Pupils at St Martin's enthusiastically take on many responsibilities. They relish the rich opportunities given to them. Staff are careful to use these times as a mechanism for increasing confidence, especially in pupils who may not otherwise participate. Confidence is quickly acquired by the youngest children in the school, who are supported and encouraged by older pupils. Parents also value pupils' opportunities to develop independence and responsibility. Whether as eco leaders, school councillors, worship leaders or more, pupils make a positive difference. Through fundraising, local projects or sharing the work of the school, their local area is enhanced. Whilst there is an enthusiasm for action, opportunities for pupils to understand and challenge injustice and inequality are limited. Therefore, opportunities for pupils to more independently act and see themselves as agents of change are missed.

Pupils access the well-crafted, vision driven curriculum with growing confidence. This is exemplified in their confident demeanour and the way they live out their relationships in school. They are given the time, skills and confidence to express their views and ideas. For example, which values or commandments may be most important to them and why. St Martin's is supported by strong partnership work and effective training with the diocese. There is a determination to continue enhancing what spiritual thinking and development looks like across the school. This has enabled spirituality to be a recent area of development and growth. A range of planned and unplanned opportunities to explore emotions, to wonder and ask challenging questions are emerging. The reflection areas have been effective catalysts for beginning the school's spiritual journey. As a result, pupils leave St Martin's with self-belief. They value spiritual opportunities and are well prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

Collective worship is tailored to the needs of its pupils. Pupils and staff are invited and included. Whole school events are led with enthusiasm and passion by leaders and members of the Church community. The local clergy are a cherished and supportive presence. Together they support pupils' understanding of significant Christian festivals and their relevance to faith in today's world. Prayer and reflection are proudly supported by members of the pupil worship team. Three candles, representing the Christian belief in God as father, son and holy spirit, provide a focal point for this cherished time. Themes such as hope and trust are explored together and then deepened during class worship times. Pupils and adults alike value the different forms of worship St Martin's offers its school community. Whether through chances to come together in song and reflection, or an opportunity to share ideas and explore how the themes impact on society and themselves, these times are inspiring and special. Pupils are proud that worship includes everyone, whether they believe in God or not. This is a lived reality. As a result of these varied opportunities, spiritual flourishing is part of life of St Martin's.

School leaders have worked closely with the diocese over recent years to rejuvenate and to reinvigorate the teaching of RE. Enjoyment has risen as a result. The standard of work within RE is high. The ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource is valued by teachers, who deliver lessons with passion and enthusiasm. Learning is varied and vibrant, with children wanting to share views and ideas of an increasingly spiritual nature. Progress within RE is clearly evidenced and pupils talk about enjoying the subject, whether they believe in a religion or not. It is seen as a time where individual thoughts can be debated and which encourages curiosity. Marking is used to deepen pupils’ learning and assessment ensures that this is then embedded and consolidated. The next stage of refining the key knowledge in RE is at an early stage. This limits some pupils’ opportunities to explore and understand the diversity within Christianity and other religions and beliefs as global faiths.

St Martin’s is a school where Christian values of love and compassion are at its heart. Its flourishing is reflected in the confidence of pupils, the pride of staff and the joyful possibilities that are celebrated each day. Pupils are equipped with values that will serve them throughout their lives and which help them to live life in all its fullness.

The inspection findings indicate that St Martin’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information

Inspection date	06 March 2024	URN	118034	
VA/VC/Academy	VA	Pupils on roll	83	
Diocese	Diocese of York			
MAT/Federation				
Headteacher	Juliet Robinson			
Chair	Ruth Bloor			
Inspector	Rob Goffee		No.	C.23/24